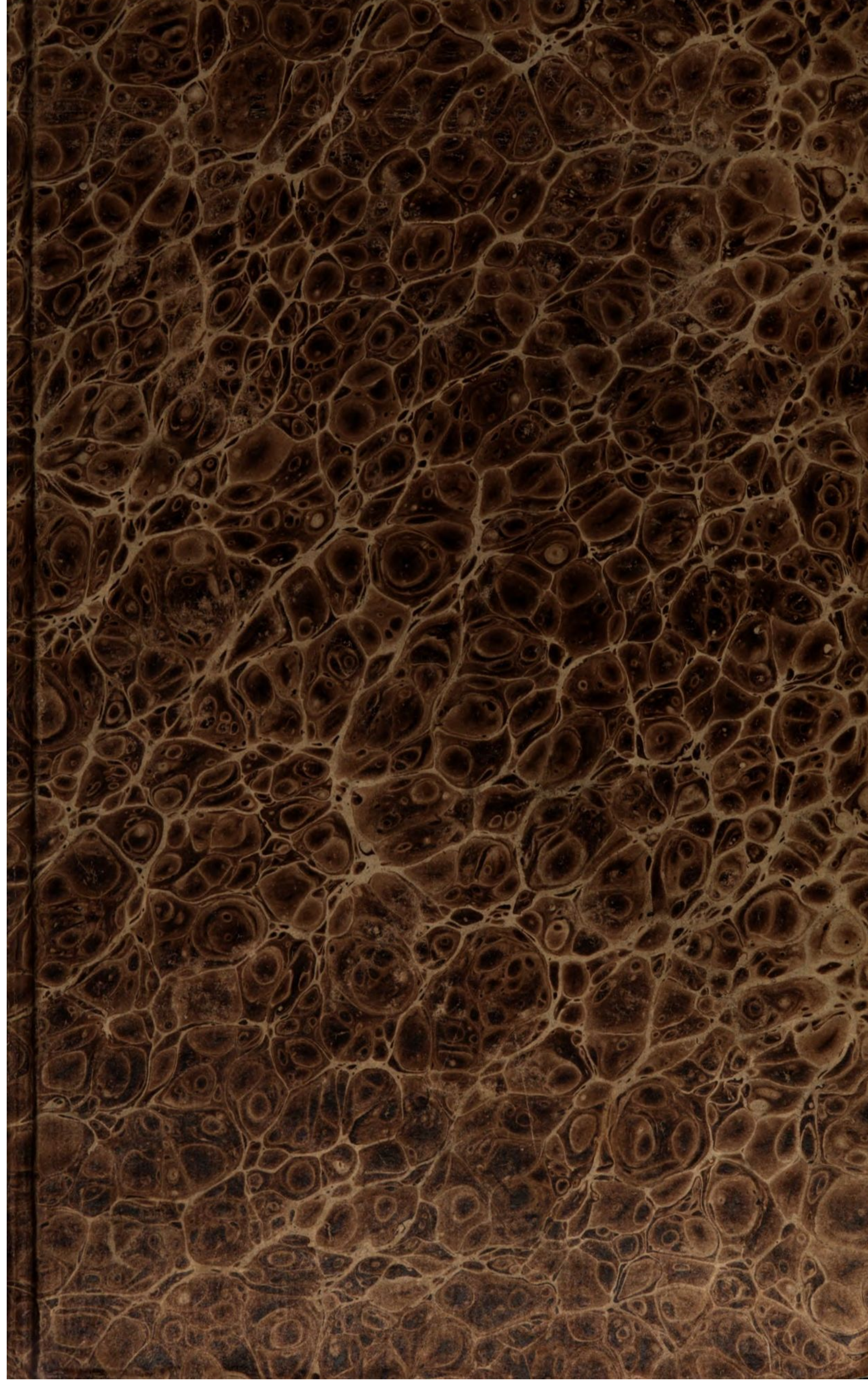




879

Bibl. Mont.

879-3

<36624897630011

<36624897630011

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

NEW PUBLICATIONS

AT ONE THIRD OF THE LONDON PRICES,

By A. AND W. GALIGNANI, 18, RUE VIVIENNE, PARIS.

TRAVELLING GUIDES.

The Guides published by Messrs. Galignani are incalculably superior to any others, being principally the result of personal observation.

NEW PARIS GUIDE, or *Stranger's Companion through the French Metropolis*, 14th edition, 18mo. 10fr., or 11fr. bound; with a map and twelve engravings; containing an accurate description of all the public edifices, gardens, &c.; and the political, scientific, commercial, religious, and moral institutions of the capital; a historical sketch of Paris, and directions to the traveller, previous to his setting out, upon his landing in France, and on his arrival and residence at Paris; the different roads from the coast to the capital: description of the *Environs of Paris*, with a **PLAN FOR VIEWING PARIS IN A WEEK**, Directory of Parisian Tradesmen, a comparison of French and English weights and measures, coins, &c.

GUIDE THROUGH FRANCE, 8th edit. 18mo. price 10fr. or 11fr. bound; containing a historical, geographical, and picturesque description of every remarkable place in the kingdom; with notices of the roads, inns, climate, productions, antiquities, commerce, coins, &c., &c., &c.

GUIDE THROUGH SWITZERLAND AND SAVOY, or a new geographical, historical, and picturesque description of every remarkable place in these countries; notices of the climate, productions, curiosities, antiquities, manners, customs, mode of travelling, hotels; with details of every object worthy the notice of the traveller, and forming a Complete Itinerary, by *G. Downes, A.M.*, 18mo. 10fr. or 11fr. bound.

GUIDE THROUGH ITALY, 18mo. 10fr.; containing an account of its antiquities, agriculture, customs; an itinerary of the routes, inns, value of coins, an accurate sketch of Rome, Florence, Naples, Milan, Venice, &c., forming a complete guide to the scholar, antiquary, and general tourist. A new edition (in the press).

GUIDE THROUGH HOLLAND AND BELGIUM, 6th edition, compiled from *Boyce, Reichard, Romberg, &c.*, 18mo. 7fr., or 8fr. bound; containing an account of Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, &c., and places rendered interesting by the victory of Waterloo; also the history, manners, and commerce of the United Netherlands, an itinerary of the routes, inns, &c.

SCHREIBER'S GUIDE DOWN THE RHINE, exhibiting the course of that river from Schaffhausen to Holland, and describing the Moselle from Coblenz to Treves, with the towns, villages, prospects, &c., in the vicinity, and the mineral springs; the routes, modes of conveyance, inns, coins, &c., with an accurate Map. 18mo. 8fr. or 9fr. bound.

GUIDE THROUGH GERMANY, containing the modes and expenses of travelling, coins, inns, &c. The posts and relays on all the roads, and a topographical account of the cities, towns, and villages, their productions, commerce, literary societies, and curiosities. With an Itinerary of Hungary and Turkey. By *M. Reichard*, embellished with a map. 18mo. 10fr. or 11fr. bound.

INFORMATION AND DIRECTIONS FOR TRAVELLERS ON THE CONTINENT. By *Mariana Starke*. 1 thick vol. small 8vo. 13fr. or 15fr. 50c. bound.

THE DIARY OF AN INVALID, or Journal of a Tour in pursuit of health, in Italy, Switzerland, France and Portugal, by *Henry Matthews, Esq.* 12mo. 10fr.

GUIDE DE L'ÉTRANGER A LONDRES, ou description de cette ville, son histoire, ses monumens, établissemens, curiosités, etc., et une description des environs précédée d'un Itinéraire des routes de Paris à Londres, accompagnée de Cartes, par *J. W. Lake*, 18mo. 7fr.

USEFUL WORKS FOR TRAVELLERS.

THE TOURIST'S POCKET JOURNAL, with ruled columns for expenses, and space for observations. 18mo. half bound, 3fr. 50c.

THE FRENCH INTERPRETER, 14th edit. 18mo. 5fr., or 6fr. bound; or copious dialogues on every subject, a vocabulary, notes and letters, the value of coins; presenting in the most distinct manner the pronunciation with the Parisian accent. By *F. W. Blagdon*.—Persons studying this cannot fail to acquire a quick and true pronunciation of French.

NOUVEAU MANUEL DU VOYAGEUR, or Traveller's

Pocket Companion, 7th edition, 18mo. 5fr. or 6fr. bound; consisting of conversations in *English, French and Italian*; a complete vocabulary, tables of coins, models of letters, &c., by *M. Boldoni*.

THE TRAVELLER'S COMPANION FOR CONVERSATION; by *Madame de Genlis*; in six languages—English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Russian, 5th edition, 18mo. 7fr., or 8fr. bound.

GRAGLIA'S POCKET DICTIONARY, English-Italian and Italian-English. 2 vols. 18mo. 8fr., or 10fr. bound.

LORD BYRON.

BYRON'S COMPLETE WORKS, including all his suppressed Poems, and attributed Pieces; printed in a clear, bold, and legible type, IN ONE VOL. OCTAVO, with a copious Life of the Author, a beautiful Portrait, and a facsimile of his Lordship's writing in an original letter never before published, ONLY 25fr.

—The same on vellum paper, extra boards, 35fr.

—The same on vellum paper, royal 8vo. 60fr.

It is unnecessary to point out the advantages of possessing this splendid edition in so portable and elegant a form, and at considerably less than half the cost of the most common and imperfect editions.

—The same in 13 vols. 32mo. on vellum paper, ONLY 45fr.

This beautiful edition, from its size, is admirably suited for a Lady's library, or as a pocket-companion.

—Another Edition, 16 vols. 12mo. vellum paper, 70fr.

HOURS OF IDLENESS: a series of juvenile poems, original and translated, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 4fr. With the Critique of the *Edinburgh Review*, which elicited from his Lordship the "*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*."

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS, a satire, and other suppressed Poems, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 3fr.

THE CURSE OF MINERVA, a poem, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. price 1fr. 50c.—This satire was printed, but never published, in England.

WALTZ, an Apostrophic Hymn. By *Horace Hornem*, 12mo. 1fr. 50c. This is attributed to Lord Byron.

MORGANTE MAGGIORE, from the *Italian of Pulci*. By *Lord Byron*. 12mo. 2fr.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES OF LORD BYRON, from the copies prepared by his Lordship for publication, 12mo. 2fr.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED, a drama, by *Lord Byron*. 3fr.

THE ISLAND; or *Christian and his Comrades*, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 3fr.

THE AGE OF BRONZE. *Carmen seculare et annus haud mirabilis*. By *Lord Byron*. 2fr.

WERNER, a tragedy, by *Lord Byron*. 4fr. 50c.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 2fr.

HEAVEN AND EARTH, a mystery, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 2fr. 50c.

DON JUAN, a poem, by *Lord Byron*, complete in 3 vols. 12mo. 15fr.; or may be had separately, Cantos I. and II. 1 vol. 12mo. vellum paper, 3fr.

—Cantos III. IV. V. 3fr.

—Cantos VI. VII. VIII. 3fr. Common paper, 2fr.

—Cantos IX. X. XI. 3fr. Ditto, 2fr.

—Cantos XII. XIII. XIV. 3fr. Ditto, 2fr.

—Cantos XV. XVI. 3fr. Ditto, 2fr.

CAIN, a mystery, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 3fr. 50c.

SARDANAPALUS, a Tragedy, by *Lord Byron*, 4fr. 50c.

THE TWO FOSCARI, a Tragedy, by *Lord Byron*, 4fr. 50c.

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE, a poem, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 2fr.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE, a historical tragedy, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 4fr. 50c.

LETTER TO —, ON THE REV. W. L. BOWLES'S STRICTURES ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF POPE, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 2fr. 50c.

MAZEPPA, a poem, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 2fr. 50c.

BEPPA, a Venetian Story, by *Lord Byron*, 12mo. 2fr.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE, complete, 2 vols. 32mo. beautifully printed, 8fr.

THE VAMPIRE, 12mo. 3fr.—This most terrific and interesting tale was given out as *Lord Byron's* on its publication in London.

LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON, by J. W. Lake, 32mo. 3fr.

CONVERSATIONS OF LORD BYRON; detailing the principal occurrences of his private life; his opinions on society, and literary men; being the substance of a journal kept during a residence with his lordship at Pisa, in the years 1821 and 1822. By *Thomas Medwin, Esq.* 2 vols, 12mo, 10fr. This edition is more complete than the London one.

"This work possesses great sources of attraction; it is discursive, full of anecdote and criticism, and teems with all the great names of the age; it is at once interesting and amusing; every body will read it. Mr Medwin has collected these Conversations with industry, and reported with fidelity."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

GREECE in 1823 and 1824; being a series of letters and other documents on the Greek Revolution; written during a visit to that country, by the Hon. Col. L. Stanhope, and containing some most curious details relative to *Lord Byron*, 2 vols. 12mo. 12fr.—Illustrated by a fac-simile of *Lord Byron's* hand writing.

This is a very interesting work. It is concluded by the best report on the state of affairs in Greece which has ever appeared.—(Times.)

This is a publication of sterling value. Its contents are documents and materials towards a very important part of a very important history; and its interest is not of a mere ephemeral description.—(Monthly Magazine.)

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF LORD BYRON, including his letters to his mother, written from Portugal, Spain, Greece, and other parts of the Mediterranean. Published from the originals, by R. C. Dallas, Esq. 3 vols. 12mo. 16 fr.

(For this work an injunction was granted by the Lord Chancellor, and it can never be published in England.)

"We are indebted to the French Press for this interesting publication, which our boasted liberties did not suffice to procure us. These letters are graceful, elegant, and eminently remarkable for their ease and simplicity. Lord Byron's Correspondence is in reality such as very few persons could produce, and possesses a high place in our estimation."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

A NARRATIVE OF LORD BYRON'S LAST JOURNEY TO GREECE, extracted from the Journal of Count Peter Gamba, who attended his Lordship on that expedition, 12mo. 6fr.

"This narrative is perhaps the most important of all that Lord Byron's death has brought forward to establish his place in the rolls of Fame."—(Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE LAST DAYS OF LORD BYRON, with his Lordship's opinions on the state of Greece, by Major W. Parry; to which are added Reminiscences of Lord Byron, contained in letters addressed to the Hon. Col. Leicester Stanhope. 12mo. 6fr.

"The interest which every circumstance connected with the history of Lord Byron naturally excites, has produced this volume. The events which it relates are remarkable for the peculiar views it takes of the character of Lord Byron and the persons by whom he was surrounded. Upon the state of the Greeks the book affords some curious information."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

AN IMPARTIAL PORTRAIT OF LORD BYRON, as a Poet and a man, compared with all the evidences and writings regarding him. By Sir Egerton Brydges, Bart. 12mo. 3fr.

"The scorching beams of Lord Byron's sun have sunk beneath the horizon, but the milder reflexion from them still irradiates the sky. I have accompanied his progress from its first dawning ray, when scarcely noticed by others, to his premature exit; and now, with a still growing enthusiasm, I continue to throw fresh flowers on his tomb."—Preface.

NARRATIVE OF LORD BYRON'S VOYAGE TO CORSICA AND SARDINIA, from minutes made by the passengers, and extracts from the Journal of his Lordship's Yacht the *Mazeppa*, kept by Cap. Benson, R. N. 3fr.

THOMAS MOORE.

MOORE'S POETICAL WORKS, including his Irish Melodies, National Airs, Ballads, Sacred Songs, &c., with a comprehensive sketch of his Life, and embellished with a handsome Portrait, printed in a bold, clear, and legible type, complete in one volume octavo, ONLY 20fr. in boards; 30fr. on vellum paper; or 45fr. on large vellum paper, with Proof Portrait on India paper, of which only 50 copies have been printed.

This splendid edition comprises the whole of Mr. Moore's Poetical Works. It is unnecessary to point out the advantages of possessing these celebrated works

in their present elegant and portable form, and at so moderate a price. The Melodies, Canzonets, &c., about 300 in number, have never been printed in England but with the music, which alone amounts to not less than fifteen times the price of this entire edition. This unique publication will be found, in arrangement and execution, one of the most perfect that has ever appeared, and is uniform with Messrs. Galignani's edition of the Works of Lord Byron, complete in 1 vol.

—The same, Pocket edition, in 7 vols., 32mo. vellum paper, price only 25fr.

This Diamond Edition, from its beauty, and convenient size, is admirably suited for a lady's library or for the pocket.

COMPLETE WORKS OF THOMAS MOORE, 9 thick vols. 12mo. vellum paper, price ONLY 50fr.: with a Portrait and Sketch of his Life: containing *Lalla Rookh*; *Loves of the Angels*; *Memoirs of Captain Rock*; *Rhymes on the Road*; *Odes and Epistles*; *Two-penny Post Bag*; *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*; *Corruption and Intolerance*; *The Sceptic*; *Irish Melodies*; *Sacred Melodies*; *National Melodies*; *Letter to the Catholics*; *M. P.*, or the *Blue Stocking*; *Fudge Family*; *Odes of Anacreon*; *Little's Poems*, and upwards of 300 Canzonets, Songs, &c., &c. This is the only uniform 12mo. edition of Mr. Moore's works.

—The same on common paper, 7 vols. 12mo. 28fr.

Persons having the 1st Edition of Moore's Works, may purchase an additional volume to complete their set.

LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. R. B. SHERIDAN, by Thomas Moore, 2 vols. 12mo, 20fr.

"What a galaxy of beauty is here! These admirable memoirs abound in the very finest specimens of the ornate style—it cannot fail to improve those ambitious of fine writing."—(London Magazine.)

"This is as magnificent a piece of Biography as we have in our language, and it has added another to the brilliant laurels already won by the Author."—(Monthly Review.)

"Mr Moore has in this Work fully maintained his claim to the intellectual superiority of which he had before given many proofs, added to which, it is a production abounding in the several characteristics of interest, spirit, and fearless integrity. The powers by which the extraordinary man who is the subject of the Memoirs arrived at celebrity, and the unfortunate habits through which fame was all that he achieved, are depicted with a master-hand—his triumphs as a dramatist, and his glorious eloquence, are portrayed with a power which could only proceed from a kindred spirit."—(Lit. Gazette.)

MEMOIRS OF CAPTAIN ROCK, the celebrated Irish Chieftain, with some account of his ancestors, written by himself (Thomas Moore), 12mo. 6fr.

"This is a complete History of Ireland, and ought to be the manual of every one wishing for information on that country; it is full of instruction and amusement—an entertaining and melancholy volume, which Englishmen ought to be ashamed, and Irishmen afraid, to read."—(London Magazine.)

LOVES OF THE ANGELS, by Thomas Moore, Esq. 12mo, 4fr.

—The same, 8vo. beautifully printed, 7fr.

RHYMES ON THE ROAD, AND FABLES FOR THE HOLY ALLIANCE, with other Poems, by Thomas Moore, 12mo. 4fr.

THE IRISH MELODIES, SACRED MELODIES, NATIONAL AIRS, Canzonets, Songs, and Ballads, by Thomas Moore, 1 thick vol. 12mo. 8fr.

"Moore is one of the few writers who will survive the age in which he so deservedly flourishes. He will live in his Irish melodies.—They will go down to posterity with the music,—both will last as long as Ireland, or as music and poetry."—(Lord Byron.)

LITTLE'S POEMS, AND ODES OF ANACREON, by Thomas Moore, 12mo. 8fr.

LALLA ROOKH, by Thomas Moore, 1 vol. 32mo. 5fr.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S PROSE WORKS, complete in 5 vols. 8vo. (heretofore published in 69 vols.) beautifully printed, with portrait, 125fr.

—The same on vellum paper, 175fr.

—The same on vellum paper, royal 8vo. proof Portrait on India paper, 250fr.

From the legibility and boldness of the type, it is almost incredible that so many volumes could have been compressed into so small a compass, thereby rendering it available to the economist as well as to the traveller. This edition, from its moderate price, beauty and the correctness of its text, leaves nothing to desire, and for execution challenges a comparison with the finest specimens of typography of modern times, and justly ranks with Messrs. Galignani's editions of the Complete Works of Lord Byron and the Poetical Works Complete of Thomas Moore, each in 1 vol. 8vo.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, containing the Lay of the Last Minstrel; Rokeby; Harold the Dauntless; the Lord of the Isles; Marmion; Lady of the Lake; Thomas the Rhymer; the Bridal of Triermain; the Vision of Don Roderic; the Field of Waterloo; Halidon Hill; Songs, Ballads, Fragments, and Miscellanies, 7 vols. 12mo. elegantly printed, with a beautiful portrait, only 40fr. **ONE THIRD** the price of the London edition.

HALIDON HILL, a Dramatic Sketch, by Sir Walter Scott, 12mo. 3fr.

LIVES OF THE NOVELISTS, by Sir Walter Scott, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

MEMOIRS OF JONATHAN SWIFT, D. D., Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, by Sir Walter Scott, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

LIFE OF JOHN DRYDEN, by Sir Walter Scott, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

"Of these Lives we need hardly say more than that they display the usual intelligence, and discrimination of the author."—(Literary Gazette.)

A LEGEND OF MONTROSE, by Sir Walter Scott, 2 vols. 32mo. 4fr.

GOETZ OF BERLICHINGEN, WITH THE IRON HAND, a tragedy from the German, by Sir Walter Scott, 12mo. 4fr.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, a poem, by Sir Walter Scott, 8vo. 3fr.

NOVELS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT: elegantly printed in 12mo. at **ONE THIRD** the price of the London edition—

Woodstock, 3 vols. 13fr. *Fortunes of Nigel*, 13fr.

Tales of the Crusaders, 4 vols. 17fr. *Guy Mannering*, 13fr.

Redgauntlet, 13fr. *Kenilworth*, 13fr.

St Ronan's Well, 13fr. *The Pirate*, 13fr.

Quentin Durward, 13fr. *Waverley*, 13fr.

Peveril of the Peak, 4 vols. 17fr. *Rob Roy*, 13fr.

The Abbot, 13fr. *The Antiquary*, 13fr.

The Monastery, 13fr. *Tales of my Landlord*,

Ivanhoe, 13fr. —1st Series, 4 vols. 17fr.

—2d Series, 4 vols. 17fr.

—3d Series, 4 vols. 17fr.

The whole of Sir Walter Scott's Works complete in 76 vols. 12mo. 338fr.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, in the press.

LADY MORGAN.

ITALY, by Lady Morgan, 3 vols. 12mo. price only 25fr., a **FOURTH** of the price of the London edition.

"Lady Morgan's fearless and excellent work upon Italy."—(Lord Byron.)

"Lady Morgan has given us more information on the actual state of Society in Italy, than can be found in any of the numerous publications which have made their appearance since the peace."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

"This work may be consulted for its facts by the historian, the traveller, and the topographer."—(Monthly Magazine.)

LETTER TO THE REVIEWERS OF "ITALY," by Lady Morgan, including an answer to a Pamphlet entitled "Observations upon the calumnies and misrepresentations in Lady Morgan's Italy." 12mo. 1fr. 50c.

LIFE OF SALVATOR ROSA, by Lady Morgan, 2 vols. 12mo. 10fr.

"Lady Morgan has surprised us by the 'Life and Times of Salvator Rosa.' We could not have given her credit for the talents shown in this first essay in Historical composition, not only for the depth of her reflexions, but for the extent of her taste and judgment, connected with Italian Literature and Art."—(Monthly Review.)

"Lady Morgan has produced two of the most amusing volumes we have met with, even in this biographical age."—(Edinburgh Magazine.)

ABSENTEEISM, by Lady Morgan, 12mo. 4fr. 50c.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S WORKS, 10 vols. 12mo. elegantly printed on fine paper, with a beautiful Portrait, 46fr.

THE SKETCH BOOK, by Washington Irving, Esq. 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

BRACEBRIDGE HALL, by the same, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

SALMAGUNDI; or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq. and others.—By the same, 2 vols. 12mo. 8fr.

KNICKERBOCKER'S HUMOROUS HISTORY OF NEW YORK, by the same, 2 vols. 12mo. 8fr.

TALES OF A TRAVELLER, by the same, 2 volumes 12mo. 10fr.

"It seems probable to us that Mr. Irving might prove no contemptible rival to Goldsmith, whose turn of mind he very much inherits, and of whose style he particularly reminds us. Like him, too, Mr. Irving possesses the art of setting ludicrous perplexities in the most irresistible point of view, and, we think, equals him in the variety of his humour."—(Quarterly Review.)

GOLDSMITH'S MISCELLANEOUS WORKS, a beautiful edition, edited by Washington Irving, Esq. 4 vols. 8vo. 28fr.; on vellum paper, 40fr.; and on large vellum paper,

72fr. with fine portraits of Goldsmith and Irving, by Wedgwood.

COOPER.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, by Cooper (the American Walter Scott), 3 vols. 12mo. 13fr.

LIONEL LINCOLN, or Legends of the Thirteen Republics, by the same, 3 vols. 12mo. 13fr.

THE PILOT, a tale of the sea, by the same, 3 vols. 12mo. 13fr.

THE SPY, a tale of the neutral ground, by the same, 3 vols. 12mo. 13fr.

THE PIONEERS, or Sources of the Susquehanna, a descriptive tale, by the same, 3 vols. 12mo. 13fr.

"The ability displayed in the Novels of this author has rendered him a decided favorite. His characters are well drawn, spirited, distinct, and natural, and might have figured with great credit on the pages of the Scotch Novelist."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

HAZLITT.

TABLE TALK, or Original Essays, by William Hazlitt, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

"This work contains some of the most valuable of those treasures which its Author has produced from his vast stores of feeling and of thought. We are acquainted with no other living writer who can depict the intricacies of human character with so firm and masterly a hand, who can detect with so fine an intuition the essences of opinion and prejudice—or follow with so unerring a skill the subtle windings of the deepest affections."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

SPIRIT OF THE AGE, or Contemporary Portraits, by William Hazlitt, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

"We have here another Work from the acute, brilliant, spirit-stirring, and always entertaining pen of the Author of 'Table Talk.' Those who desire to gain an available notion of the intellectual characters of Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Southey, Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Crabbe, Jeremy Bentham, Mr. Godwin, Mr. Irving, Horne Tooke, Mr. Canning, Sir J. Mackintosh, Mr. Malthus, Mr. Gifford, Mr. Jeffrey, Mr. Brougham, Sir F. Burdett, Lord Eldon, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Cobbett, Elia, and Mr. Knowles, will not easily find what they seek, under so distinct, striking, and rememberable a form as here."—(New Monthly Magazine.)

MISS EDGEWORTH.

MORAL TALES, 2 vols. 12mo. 9fr.

POPULAR TALES, 2 vols. 12mo. 10fr.

PARENT'S ASSISTANT, 6 vols. 18mo. 12fr.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE HISTORY OF PARIS, from the earliest period to the present day; containing a description of its antiquities, public buildings, institutions, with facts and anecdotes hitherto unpublished, to illustrate the æras of French History, particularly the Revolution; a notice of the church of St. Denis, important statistical tables from official sources, &c., 3 vols. 8vo. 36fr.

We are thankful to the author for supplying a desideratum in our literature. This work will soon find its way into every good library.—(Chronicle.)

This curious publication, which is the first of the kind that has appeared, we particularly recommend to notice.—(Literary Gazette.)

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND from the First Invasion of the Romans, by John Lingard, D. D. 10 vols. 8vo. 75fr. Six volumes more of this valuable work are shortly expected to complete the History to the Reign of George IV.

"There is no history with which this may not challenge a comparison—it is the fruit of great industry, learning, and acuteness, directed by no ordinary talents; Dr. Lingard has the perspicuity of Robertson with more freedom and fancy, his diction has the ornament of Gibbon without his affectation or obscurity, and to the merits of diligence and critical research, Hume must yield the palm to Dr. Lingard. He possesses the rare merit of having collected his materials from original historians and records; his narrative has a freshness of character, a stamp of originality not to be found in any other history of England."—(Edinburgh Review.)

A HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, by A. F. Mignet, 12mo. 10fr.

"Mr. Mignet's History of the French Revolution is a chef-d'œuvre superior to everything that has appeared for the last fifty years."—(London Magazine.)

"No History of the French Revolution throws on the causes and result of that great event so much light as the book of Mignet. This work of Mignet leaves every other on the same subject far behind. Every thing in it bears the marks of a master mind. It is characterised by profound thought and clear illustration; and by impartiality and candour in a very singular degree."—(Edinburgh Theological Magazine.)

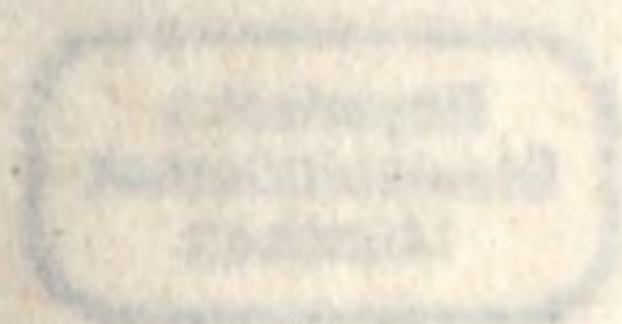
THE
PROSE WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT.
THE
PROSE WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

PARIS

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALLONNE.

PRINTED BY A. SMITH, NEWSPAPER, No. 10.

1827.



THE
PROSE WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT

PRINTED BY J. SMITH, RUE MONTMORENCY, No. 16.

THE
PROSE WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING

THE ABBOT. KENILWORTH. THE PIRATE. THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL.
QUENTIN DURWARD.

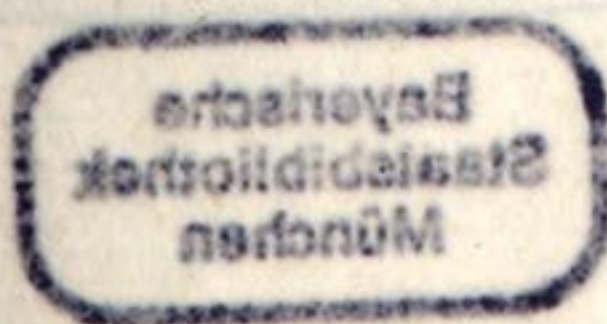


PARIS

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALIGNANI,

N° 18, RUE VIVIENNE.

1827.



THE

PROSE WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING

THE ABBOT, KENILWORTH, THE PIRATE, THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL,
QUEENIN DERWAD.



PARIS

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALLIGNY

N. 10, RUE VIVIERE.

1837.

Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek
München

THE
PROSE WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The Abbot;

BEING

THE SEQUEL OF "THE MONASTERY."

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM

THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY,"

TO

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK,

OF HIS MAJESTY'S — REGIMENT OF INFANTRY.

DEAR CAPTAIN,

I AM sorry to observe, by your last favour, that you disapprove of the numerous retrenchments and alterations which I have been under the necessity of making on the manuscript of your friend, the benedictine; and I willingly make you the medium of apology to many, who have honoured me more than I deserve.

I admit that my retrenchments have been numerous, and leave gaps in the story, which, in your original manuscript, would have run well nigh to a fourth volume, as my printer assures me. I am sensible, besides, that, in consequence of the liberty of curtailment you have allowed me, some parts of the story have been huddled up without the necessary details. But, after all, it is better that the traveller should have to step over a drain, than to wade through a morass—that the reader should have to suppose what may easily be inferred, than be obliged to creep through pages of dull explanation. I have struck out, for example, the whole machinery of the White Lady, and the poetry by which it is so ably supported, in the original manuscript. But you must allow that the public taste gives little encouragement to those legendary superstitions which formed the delight alternately and the terror of our predecessors. In like manner, much is omitted illustrative of the impulse of enthusiasm in favour of the ancient religion in Mother Magdalen and the abbot. But we do not feel deep sympathy, at this period, with what was once the most powerful and animating principle in Europe, with the exception of that of the Reformation, by which it was successfully opposed.

You rightly observe, that these retrenchments

VOL. III.

have rendered the title no longer applicable to the subject, and that some other would have been more suitable to the work, in its present state, than that of THE ABBOT, who made so much greater figure in the original, and for whom your friend, the benedictine, seems to have inspired you with a sympathetic respect. I must plead guilty to this accusation; observing, at the same time, in manner of extenuation, that though the objection might have been easily removed, by giving a new title to the work, yet, in doing so, I should have destroyed the necessary cohesion between the present history and its predecessor, THE MONASTERY, which I was unwilling to do, as the period, and several of the personages, were the same.

After all, my good friend, it is of little consequence what the work is called, or on what interest it turns, providing it catches the public attention; for the quality of the wine (could we but ensure it) may, according to the old proverb, render the bush unnecessary, or of little consequence.

I congratulate you upon your having found it consistent with prudence to establish your tilbury, and approve of the colour, and of your boy's livery (subdued green and pink). As you talk of completing your descriptive poem on the "Ruins of Kennahair, with notes by an Antiquary," I hope you have procured a steady horse.—I remain, with compliments to all friends, dear captain, very much

Yours, &c., &c., &c.,

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Domum mansit—lanam fecit.

Ancient Roman Epitaph.

She keepit close the hous, and birlit at the quhele.

GAWAIN DOUGLAS.

THE time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly, makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character, as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find our-

selves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions. Nearly twice that space had glided away over the head of Halbert Glendinning and his lady, betwixt the conclusion of that narrative in which they played a distinguished part, and the commencement of the present.

Two circumstances only had embittered their union, which was otherwise as happy as mutual affection could render it. The first of these was, indeed, the common calamity of Scotland, being the distracted state of that unhappy country, where every man's sword was directed against his neighbour's bosom. Glendinning had proved what Murray expected of him, a steady friend, strong in battle, and wise in counsel; adhering to him from motives of gratitude, in situations where by his own unbiassed will he would either have stood neuter, or have joined the opposite party. Hence, when danger was near, and it was seldom far distant, Sir Halbert Glendinning, for he now bore the rank of knighthood, was perpetually summoned to attend his patron on distant expeditions, or on perilous enterprizes, or to assist him with his counsel in the doubtful intrigues of a half barbarous court. He was thus frequently, and for a long space, absent from his castle and from his lady; and to this ground of regret we must add, that their union had produced no children to occupy the attention of the Lady of Avenel, while she was thus deprived of her husband's domestic society.

On such occasions she lived almost entirely secluded from the world, within the walls of her paternal mansion. Visiting amongst neighbours was a matter entirely out of the question, unless on occasion of solemn festival, and then it was chiefly confined to near kindred. Of these the Lady of Avenel had none who survived; and the dames of the neighbouring barons affected to regard her less as the heiress of the house of Avenel, than as the wife of a peasant, the son of a church vassal, raised up to mushroom eminence by the capricious favour of Murray.

This pride of ancestry, which rankled in the bosom of the more ancient gentry, was more openly expressed by their ladies, and was, moreover, embittered not a little by the political feuds of the time; for most of the southron chiefs were friends to the authority of the queen, and very jealous of the power of Murray. The Castle of Avenel was, therefore, on all these accounts, as melancholy and solitary a residence for its lady as could well be imagined. Still it had the essential recommendation of great security. The reader knows that the fortress was built upon an islet in a small lake, and was only accessible by a causeway, intersected by a double ditch defended by two draw-bridges; so that, without artillery, it might in these days be considered as impregnable. It was only necessary, therefore, to secure against surprise; and the service of six able men within the castle was sufficient for that purpose. If more serious danger threatened, an ample garrison was supplied by the male inhabitants of a little hamlet, which, under the auspices of Halbert Glendinning, had arisen on a small piece of level ground, betwixt the lake and the

hill, nearly adjoining to the spot where the causeway joined the mainland. The Lord of Avenel had found it an easy matter to get inhabitants, as he was not only a kind and beneficent overlord, but well qualified, both by his experience in arms, his high character for wisdom and integrity, and his favour with the powerful Earl of Murray, to protect and defend those who dwelt under his banner. In leaving his castle for any length of time, he had, therefore, the consolation to reflect, that this village afforded, on the slightest notice, a band of thirty stout men, which was more than sufficient for its defence; while the families of the villagers, as was usual on such occasions, fled to the recesses of the mountains, drove their cattle to the same places of shelter, and left the enemy to work their will on their miserable cottages.

One guest only resided generally, if not constantly, at the Castle of Avenel. This was Henry Warden, who now felt himself less able to the stormy task imposed on the reforming clergy; and having by his zeal given personal offence to many of the leading nobles and chiefs, did not consider himself as perfectly safe, unless when within the walls of the strong mansion of some assured friend. He ceased not, however, to serve his cause as eagerly with his pen, as he had formerly done with his tongue, and had engaged in a furious and acrimonious contest, concerning the sacrifice of the mass, as it was termed, with the Abbot Eustatius, formerly the sub-prior of Kennaquhair. Answers, replies, duplies, triplies, quadruples, followed thick upon each other, and displayed, as is not unusual in controversy, fully as much zeal as christian charity. The disputation very soon became as celebrated as that of John Knox and the Abbot of Corseraguel, raged nearly as fiercely, and, for aught I know, the pieces to which it gave rise may be as precious in the eyes of bibliographers. But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female; and his grave, stern, and absorbed deportment, which seldom showed any interest except in that which concerned his religious profession, made his presence rather add to than diminish the gloom which hung over the Castle of Avenel. To superintend the tasks of her numerous female domestics, was the principal part of the lady's daily employment; her spindle and distaff, her bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle, or upon the causeway, or occasionally, but more seldom, upon the banks of the little lake, consumed the rest of the day. But so great was the insecurity of the period, that when she ventured to extend her walk beyond the hamlet, the warder on the watchtower was directed to keep a sharp out-look in every direction, and four or five men held themselves in readiness to mount and sally forth from the village at the slightest appearance of alarm.

Thus stood affairs at the castle, when, after an absence of several weeks, the Knight of Avenel, which was now the title most frequently given to Sir Halbert Glendinning, was daily expected to return home. Day after day, however, passed away, and he returned not. Letters in those days were rarely written, and the knight must have resorted to

a secretary to express his intentions in that manner; besides, intercourse of all kinds was precarious and unsafe; and no man cared to give any public intimation of the time and direction of a journey, since it was always likely he might in that case meet with more enemies than friends upon the road. The precise day, therefore, of Sir Halbert's return was not fixed; but that which his lady's fond expectation had calculated upon in her own mind was long since passed, and hope delayed began to make the heart sick.

It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings, which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of flag-stones presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck, or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the lady in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night, in the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened; the sounds which she heard reminded her of former days, when her most important employment, as well as her greatest delight, was to assist Dame Glendinning and Tibb Tacket in milking the cows at Glendearg. The thought was fraught with melancholy.

"Why was I not," she said, "the peasant girl which in all men's eyes I seemed to be! Halbert and I had then spent our life peacefully in his native glen, undisturbed by the phantoms either of fear or of ambition. His greatest pride had then been to show the fairest herd in the halidome; his greatest danger to repel some pilfering snatcher from the Border; and the utmost distance which would have divided us, would have been the chase of some outlying deer. But, alas! what avails the blood which Halbert has shed, and the dangers which he encounters, to support a name and rank, dear to him because he has it from me, but which we shall never transmit to our posterity! With me the name of Avenel must expire."

She sighed as these reflections arose, and, looking towards the shore of the lake, her eye was attracted by a group of children of various ages, assembled to see a little ship, constructed by some village artist, perform its first voyage on the water. It was launched amid the shouts of tiny voices and the clapping of little hands, and shot bravely forth on its voyage with a favouring wind, which promised to carry it to the other side of the lake. Some of the bigger boys ran round to receive and secure it on the farther shore, trying their speed against each

other as they sprang like young fawns along the shingly verge of the lake. The rest, for whom such a journey seemed too arduous, remained watching the motions of the fairy vessel from the spot where it had been launched. The sight of their sports pressed on the mind of the childless Lady of Avenel.

"Why are none of these prattlers mine?" she continued, pursuing the tenor of her melancholy reflections. "Their parents can scarce find them in the coarsest food—and I, who could nurse them in plenty, I am doomed never to hear a child call me mother!"

The thought sunk on her heart with a bitterness which resembled envy, so deeply is the desire of offspring implanted in the female breast. She pressed her hands together, as if she was wringing them in the extremity of her desolate feeling, as one whom Heaven had written childless. A large stag-hound of the greyhound species approached at this moment, and, attracted perhaps by the gesture, licked her hands and pressed his large head against them. He obtained the desired caress in return, but still the sad impression remained.

"Wolf," she said, as if the animal could have understood her complaints, "thou art a noble and beautiful animal; but, alas! the love and affection that I long to bestow, is of a quality higher than can fall to thy share, though I love thee much."

And as if she were apologizing to Wolf for withholding from him any part of her regard, she caressed his proud head and crest, while, looking in her eyes, he seemed to ask her what she wanted, or what he could do to show his attachment. At this moment a shriek of distress was heard on the shore, from the playful group which had been lately so jovial. The lady looked, and saw the cause with great agony.

The little ship, the object of the children's delighted attention, had stuck among some tufts of the plant which bears the water-lily, that marked a little shoal in the lake about an arrow-flight from the shore. A hardy little boy, who had taken the lead in the race round the margin of the lake, did not hesitate a moment to strip off his *wylie-coat*, plunge into the water, and swim towards the object of their common solicitude. The first movement of the lady was to call for help; but she observed that the boy swam strongly and fearlessly; and as she saw that one or two villagers, who were distant spectators of the incident, seemed to give themselves no uneasiness on his account, she supposed that he was accustomed to the exercise, and that there was no danger. But whether, in swimming, the boy had struck his breast against a sunken rock, or whether he was suddenly taken with the cramp, or whether he had over-calculated his own strength, it so happened, that when he had disembarrassed the little plaything from the flags in which it was entangled, and sent it forward on its course, he had scarce swam a few yards in his way to the shore, than he raised himself suddenly from the water and screamed aloud, clapping his hands at the same time with an expression of fear and pain.

The Lady of Avenel instantly taking the alarm, called hastily to the attendants to get the boat ready. But this was an affair of some time. The only boat

permitted to be used on the lake was moored within the second cut which intersected the canal, and it was several minutes ere it could be unmoored and got under way. Meantime, the Lady of Avenel, with agonizing anxiety, saw that the efforts which the poor boy made to keep himself afloat, were now exchanged for a faint struggling, which would soon have been over, but for aid equally prompt and un-hoped for. Wolf, who, like some of that large species of greyhound, was a practised water-dog, had marked the object of her anxiety, and, quitting his mistress's side, had sought the nearest point from which he could with safety plunge into the lake. With the wonderful instinct which these noble animals have so often displayed in the like circumstances, he swam straight to the spot where his assistance was so much wanted, and, seizing the child's under-dress in his mouth, he not only kept him afloat, but towed him towards the causeway. The boat having put off with a couple of men, met the dog half-way, and relieved him of his burthen. They landed on the causeway, close by the entrance to the castle, with their yet lifeless burthen, and were met at the entrance of the gate by the Lady of Avenel, attended by one or two of her maidens, eagerly waiting to administer assistance to the sufferer.

He was borne into the castle, deposited upon a bed, and every mode of recovery resorted to, which the knowledge of the times, and the skill of Henry Warden, who professed some medical knowledge, could dictate. For some time it was all in vain, and the lady watched with unspeakable earnestness the pallid countenance of the beautiful child. He seemed about ten years old. His dress was of the meanest sort, but his long curled hair, and the noble cast of his features, partook not of that poverty of appearance. The proudest noble in Scotland might have been yet prouder could he have called that child his heir. While, with breathless anxiety, the Lady of Avenel gazed on his well-formed and expressive features, a slight shade of colour returned gradually to the cheek, suspended animation became restored by degrees, the child sighed deeply, opened his eyes—which to the human countenance produces the effect of light upon the natural landscape—stretched his arms towards the lady, and muttered the word "Mother," that epithet, of all others, which is dearest to the female ear.

"God, madam," said the preacher, "has restored the child to your wishes; it must be yours so to bring him up, that he may not one day wish that he had perished in his innocence."

"It shall be my charge," said the lady; and again throwing her arms around the boy, she overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses; so much was she agitated by the terror arising from the danger in which he had been just placed, and by joy at his unexpected deliverance.

"But you are not my mother," said the boy, collecting his recollection, and endeavouring, though faintly, to escape from the caresses of the Lady of Avenel; "you are not my mother—alas! I have no mother—only I have dreamt that I had one."

"I will read the dream for you, my love," answered the Lady of Avenel; "and I will be myself

your mother. Surely God has heard my wishes, and, in his own marvelous manner, hath sent me an object on which my affections may expand themselves?" She looked towards Warden as she spoke. The preacher hesitated what he should reply to a burst of passionate feeling, which, perhaps, seemed to him more enthusiastic than the occasion demanded. In the meanwhile, the large stag-hound, Wolf, which, dropping wet as he was, had followed his mistress into the apartment, and had sate by the bed-side a patient and quiet spectator of all the means used for resuscitation of the being whom he had preserved, now became impatient of remaining any longer unnoticed, and began to whine and fawn upon the lady with his great rough paws.

"Yes," she said, "good Wolf, and you shall be remembered also for your day's work; and I will think the more of you for having preserved the life of a creature so beautiful."

But Wolf was not quite satisfied with the share of attention which he thus attracted; he persisted in whining and pawing upon his mistress, his caresses being rendered still more troublesome by his long shaggy hair being so much and thoroughly wetted, till she desired one of the domestics, with whom he was familiar, to call the animal out of the apartment. Wolf resisted every invitation to this purpose, until his mistress positively commanded him to begone in an angry tone; when, turning towards the bed on which the boy still lay, half awake to sensation, half drowned in the meanders of a fluctuating delirium, he uttered a deep and savage growl, curled up his nose and lips, showing his full range of white and sharpened teeth, which might have matched those of an actual wolf, and then, turning round, sullenly followed the domestic out of the apartment.

"It is singular," said the lady, addressing Warden; "the animal is not only so good-natured to all, but so particularly fond of children. What can ail him at the little fellow whose life he has saved?"

"Dogs," replied the preacher, "are but too like the human race in their foibles, though their instinct be less erring than the reason of poor mortal man, when relying upon his own unassisted powers. Jealousy, my good lady, is a passion not unknown to them, and they often evince it, not only with respect to the preferences which they see given by their masters to individuals of their own species, but even when their rivals are children. You have caressed that child much and eagerly, and the dog considers himself as a discarded favourite."

"It is a strange instinct," said the lady, "and from the gravity with which you mention it, my reverend friend, I would almost say that you supposed this singular jealousy of my favourite Wolf was not only well-founded, but justifiable. But perhaps you speak in jest."

"I seldom jest," answered the preacher; "life was not lent to us to be expended in that idle mirth which resembles the crackling of thorns under the pot. I would only have you derive, if it so please you, this lesson from what I have said, that the best of our feelings, when indulged to excess, may give pain to others. There is but one in which we may indulge to the utmost limit of vehemence of which our bosom is capable, secure that excess cannot

exist in the greatest intensity to which it can be excited—I mean the love of our Maker.”

“Surely,” said the Lady of Avenel, “we are commanded by the same authority to love our neighbour?”

“Ay, madam,” said Warden, “but our love to God is to be unbounded—we are to love him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength. The love which the precept commands us to bear to our neighbour, has affixed to it a direct limit and qualification—we are to love our neighbour as our self; as it is elsewhere explained by the great commandment, that we do unto him as we would that he did unto us. Here there is a limit, and a bound, even to the most praiseworthy of our affections, so far as they are turned upon sublunary and terrestrial objects. We are to render to our neighbour, whatever be his rank or degree, that corresponding portion of affection with which we could rationally expect we should ourselves be regarded by those standing in the same degree of relation to us. Hence, neither husband nor wife, neither son nor daughter, neither friend nor relation, are lawfully to be made the objects of our idolatry. The Lord our God is a jealous God, and will not endure that we bestow on the creature that extremity of devotion which He who made us demands as his own share. I say to you, lady, that even in the fairest and purest and most honourable feelings of our nature, there is that original taint of sin which ought to make us pause and hesitate ere we indulge them to excess.”

“I understand not this, reverend sir,” said the lady; “nor do I guess what I can have now said or done, to draw down on me an admonition which has something a taste of reproof.”

“Lady,” said Warden, “I crave your pardon, if I have urged aught beyond the limits of my duty. But consider, whether, in the sacred promise to be not only a protectress, but a mother to this poor child, your purpose may meet the wishes of the noble knight your husband. The fondness which you have lavished on the unfortunate, and, I own, most lovely child, has met something like a reproof in the bearing of your household dog.—Displease not your noble husband. Men, as well as animals, are jealous of the affections of those they love.”

“This is too much, reverend sir,” said the Lady of Avenel, greatly offended. “You have been long our guest, and have received from the Knight of Avenel and myself that honour and regard which your character and profession so justly demand. But I am yet to learn that I have at any time authorized your interference in our family arrangements, or placed you as a judge of our conduct towards each other. I pray this may be forborne in future.”

“Lady,” replied the preacher, with the boldness peculiar to the clergy of his persuasion at that time, “when you weary of my admonitions—when I see that my services are no longer acceptable to you and the noble knight your husband, I shall know that my Master wills me no longer to abide here; and, praying for a continuance of his best blessings on your family, I will then, were the season the depth of winter, and the hour midnight, walk out on yonder waste, and travel forth through these waste moun-

tains, as lonely and unaided, though far more helpless, than when I first met your husband in the valley of Glendearg. But while I remain here, I will not see you err from the true path, no, not an hair’s breadth, without making the old man’s voice and remonstrance heard.”

“Nay, but,” said the lady, who both loved and respected the good man, though sometimes a little offended at what she conceived to be an exuberant degree of zeal, “we will not part this way, my good friend. Women are quick and hasty in their feelings; but, believe me, my wishes and my purposes towards this child are such as both my husband and you will approve of.” The clergyman bowed, and retreated to his own apartment.

CHAPTER II.

How steadfastly he fix’d his looks on me—
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears—
Then stretch’d his little arms and call’d me mother!
What could I do? I took the bantling home—
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.

JOANNA BAILLIE’S *Count Basil*.

WHEN Warden had left the apartment, the Lady of Avenel gave way to the feelings of tenderness which the sight of the boy, his sudden danger, and his recent escape, had inspired; and, no longer awed by the sternness, as she deemed it, of the preacher, heaped with caresses the lovely and interesting child. He was now, in some measure, recovered from the consequences of his accident, and received passively, though not without wonder, the tokens of kindness with which he was thus loaded. The face of the lady was strange to him, and her dress different and far more sumptuous than any he remembered. But the boy was naturally of an undaunted temper; and indeed children are generally acute physiognomists, and not only pleased by that which is beautiful in itself, but peculiarly acute in distinguishing and replying to the attentions of those who really love them. If they see a person in company, though a perfect stranger, who is by nature fond of children, the little imps seem to discover it by a sort of free-masonry, while the awkward attempts of those who make advances to them for the purpose of recommending themselves to the parents, usually fail in attracting their reciprocal attention. The little boy, therefore, appeared in some degree sensible of the lady’s caresses, and it was with difficulty she withdrew herself from his pillow, to afford him leisure for necessary repose.

“To whom belongs our little rescued varlet?” was the first question which the Lady of Avenel put to her hand-maiden Liliass, when they had retired to the hall.

“To an old woman in the hamlet,” said Liliass, “who is even now come so far as the porter’s lodge to inquire concerning his safety. Is it your pleasure that she be admitted?”

“Is it my pleasure?” said the Lady of Avenel, echoing the question with a strong accent of displeasure and surprise; “can you make any doubt of it? What woman but must pity the agony of the mother, whose heart is throbbing for the safety of a child so lovely!”

"Nay, but, madam," said Lilius, "this woman is too old to be the mother of the child; I rather think she must be his grandmother, or some more distant relation."

"Be she who she will, Lilius," replied the lady, "she must have a sore heart while the safety of a creature so lovely is uncertain. Go instantly and bring her hither. Besides, I would willingly learn something concerning his birth."

Lilius left the hall, and presently afterwards returned, ushering in a tall female very poorly dressed, yet with more pretension to decency and cleanliness than was usually combined with such coarse garments. The Lady of Avenel knew her figure the instant she presented herself. It was the fashion of the family, that upon every Sabbath, and on two evenings in the week besides, Henry Warden preached or lectured in the chapel of the castle. The extension of the protestant faith was upon principle, as well as in good policy, a primary object with the Knight of Avenel. The inhabitants of the village were therefore invited to attend upon the instructions of Henry Warden, and many of them were speedily won to the doctrine which their master and protector approved. These sermons, homilies, and lectures, had made a great impression on the mind of the Abbot Eustace, or Eustatius, and were a sufficient spur to the severity and sharpness of his controversy with his old fellow-collegiate; and he more than once threatened to levy his vassals, and assail and level with the earth that stronghold of heresy, the Castle of Avenel. But notwithstanding his impotent resentment, and notwithstanding also the disinclination of the country to favour the new religion, Henry Warden proceeded without remission in his labours, and made weekly converts from the faith of Rome to that of the reformed church. Amongst those who gave most earnest and constant attendance on his ministry, was the aged woman, whose form, too tall, and otherwise too remarkable to be forgotten, the lady had of late remarked frequently as being conspicuous amongst the little audience. She had indeed more than once desired to know who that tall, stately-looking woman was, whose appearance was so much above the poverty of her vestments. But the reply had always been, that she was an Englishwoman, who was tarrying for a season at the hamlet, and that no one knew more concerning her. She now asked her after her name and birth.

"Magdalen Græme is my name," said the woman; "I come of the Græmes of Heathergill, in Nicol-forest, a people of ancient blood."

"And what makes you," continued the lady, "so far distant from your home?"

"I have no home," said Magdalen Græme; "it was burnt by your Border-riders—my husband and my son were slain—there is not a drop's blood left in the veins of any one which is of kin to mine."

"That is no uncommon fate in these wild times, and in this unsettled land," said the lady; "the English hands have been as deeply dyed in our blood as ever those of Scotsmen have been in yours."

"You have right to say it, lady," answered Magdalen Græme; "for men tell of a time when this castle was not strong enough to save your father's

life, or to afford your mother and her infant a place of refuge.—And why ask ye me, then, wherefore I dwell not in mine own home, and with my own people?"

"It was indeed an idle question, where misery so often makes wanderers; but wherefore take refuge in a hostile country?"

"My neighbours were popish and mass-mongers," said the old woman; "it has pleased Heaven to give me a clearer sight of the Gospel, and I have tarried here to enjoy the ministry of that worthy man, Henry Warden, who, to the praise and comfort of many, teacheth the Evangel in truth and in sincerity."

"Are you poor?" again demanded the Lady of Avenel.

"You hear me ask alms of no one," answered the Englishwoman.

Here there was a pause. The manner of the woman was, if not disrespectful, at least much less than gracious; and she appeared to give no encouragement to farther communication. The Lady of Avenel renewed the conversation on a different topic.

"You have heard of the danger in which your boy has been placed?"

"I have, lady, and how by an especial providence he was rescued from death. May Heaven make him thankful, and me!"

"What relation do you bear to him?"

"I am his grandmother, lady, if it so please you; the only relation he hath left upon earth to take charge of him."

"The burthen of his maintenance must necessarily be grievous to you in your deserted situation," pursued the lady.

"I have complained of it to no one," said Magdalen Græme, with the same unmoved, dry, and unconcerned tone of voice in which she had answered all the former questions.

"If," said the Lady of Avenel, "your grandchild could be received into a noble family, would it not advantage both him and you?"

"Received into a noble family!" said the old woman, drawing herself up, and bending her brows until her forehead was wrinkled into a frown of unusual severity; "and for what purpose, I pray you?—to be my lady's page, or my lord's jack-man, to eat broken victuals and contend with other menials for the remnants of the master's meal? Would you have him to fan the flies from my lady's face while she sleeps, to carry her train while she walks, to hand her trencher when she feeds, to ride before her on horse-back, to walk after her on foot, to sing when she lists, and to be silent when she bids?—a very weather-cock, which, though furnished in appearance with wings and plumage, cannot soar into the air—cannot fly from the spot where it is perched, but receives all its impulses, and performs all its revolutions, obedient to the changeful breath of a vain woman? When the eagle of Helvellyn perches on the tower of Lanercost, and turns and changes to show how the wind sits, Roland Græme shall be what you would make him."

The woman spoke with a rapidity and vehemence which seemed to have in it a touch of insanity; and

a sudden sense of the danger to which the child must necessarily be exposed in the charge of such a keeper, increased the lady's desire to keep him in the castle if possible.

"You mistake me, dame," she said, addressing the old woman in a soothing manner; "I do not wish your boy to be in attendance on myself, but upon the good knight, my husband. Were he himself the son of a belted earl, he could not better be trained to arms, and all that befits a gentleman, than by the instructions and discipline of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"Ay," answered the old woman, in the same style of bitter irony, "I know the wages of that service;—a curse when the corslet is not sufficiently brightened,—a blow when the girth is not tightly drawn,—to be beaten because the hounds are at fault,—to be reviled because the foray is unsuccessful,—to stain his hands, for the master's bidding, in the blood alike of beast and of man,—to be a butcher of harmless deer, a murderer and defacer of God's own image, not at his own pleasure, but at that of his lord,—to live a brawling ruffian, and a common stabber,—exposed to heat, to cold, to want of food, to all the privations of an anchorite, not for the love of God, but for the service of Satan,—to die by the gibbet, or in some obscure skirmish,—to sleep out his life in carnal security, and to awake in the eternal fire, which is never quenched."

"Nay," said the Lady of Avenel, "but to such unhallowed course of life your grandson will not be here exposed. My husband is just and kind to those who live under his banner; and you yourself well know that youth have here a strict as well as a good preceptor in the person of our chaplain."

The old woman appeared to pause.

"You have named," she said, "the only circumstance which can move me. I must soon onward, the vision has said it—I must not tarry in the same spot—I must on—I must on; it is my weird. Swear, then, that you will protect the boy as if he were your own, until I return hither and claim him, and I will consent for a space to part with him. But especially swear, he shall not lack the instruction of the godly man who hath placed the gospel truth high above these idolatrous shavelings, the monks and friars."

"Be satisfied, dame," said the Lady of Avenel; "the boy shall have as much care as if he were born of my own blood. Will you see him now?"

"No," answered the old woman, sternly; "to part is enough. I go forth on my own mission. I will not soften my heart by useless tears and wailings, as one that is not called to a duty."

"Will you not accept of something to aid you in your pilgrimage?" said the Lady of Avenel, putting into her hand two crowns of the sun. The old woman flung them down on the table.

"Am I of the race of Cain," she said, "proud lady, that you offer me gold in exchange for my own flesh and blood?"

"I had no such meaning," said the lady, gently; "nor am I the proud woman you term me. Alas! my own fortunes might have taught me humility, even had it not been born with me."

The old woman seemed somewhat to relax her tone of severity.

"You are of gentle blood," she said, "else we had not parleyed thus long together.—You are of gentle blood, and to such," she added, drawing up her tall form as she spoke, "pride is as graceful as is the plume upon the bonnet. But, for these pieces of gold, lady, you must needs resume them. I need not money. I am well provided; and I may not care for myself, nor think how, or by whom, I shall be sustained. Farewell, and keep your word. Cause your gates to be opened, and your bridges to be lowered. I will set forward this very night. When I come again, I will demand from you a strict account, for I have left with you the jewel of my life! Sleep will visit me but in snatches, food will not refresh me, rest will not restore my strength, until I see Roland Græme. Once more, farewell."

"Make your obeisance, dame," said Lilius to Magdalen Græme, as she retired; "make your obeisance to her ladyship, and thank her for her goodness, as is but fitting and right."

The old woman turned short round on the officious waiting-maid. "Let her make her obeisance to me then, and I will return it. Why should I bend to her?—is it because her kirtle is of silk, and mine of blue lockeram?—Go to, my lady's waiting-woman. Know that the rank of the man rates that of the wife, and that she who marries a churl's son, were he a king's daughter, is but a peasant's bride."

Lilius was about to reply in great indignation, but her mistress imposed silence on her, and commanded that the old woman should be safely conducted to the mainland.

"Conduct her safe!" exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, while Magdalen Græme left the apartment; "I say duck her in the loch, and then we will see whether she is witch or not, as everybody in the village of Lochside will say and swear. I marvel your ladyship could bear so long with her insolence." But the commands of the lady were obeyed, and the old dame, dismissed from the castle, was committed to her fortune. She kept her word, and did not long abide in that place, leaving the hamlet on the very night succeeding the interview, and wandering no one asked whither. The Lady of Avenel inquired under what circumstances she had appeared among them, but could only learn that she was believed to be the widow of some man of consequence among the Græmes, who then inhabited the Debateable Land, a name given to a certain portion of territory which was the frequent subject of dispute betwixt Scotland and England; that she had suffered great wrong in some of the frequent forays by which that unfortunate district was wasted, and had been driven from her dwelling-place. She had arrived in the hamlet no one knew for what purpose, and was held by some to be a witch, by others a catholic devotee. Her language was mysterious, and her manners repulsive; and all that could be collected from her conversation seemed to imply that she was under the influence either of a spell or of a vow,—there was no saying which,—since she talked as one who acted under a powerful and external agency.

Such were the particulars which the lady's inquiries were able to collect concerning Magdalen Græme, being far too meagre to authorize any satisfactory deduction. In truth the miseries of the time,

and the various turns of fate incidental to a frontier country, were perpetually chasing from their habitations those who had not the means of defence or protection. These wanderers in the land were too often seen, to excite much attention or sympathy. They received the cold relief which was extorted by general feelings of humanity; a little excited in some breasts, and perhaps rather chilled in others by the recollection that they who gave the charity to-day might themselves want it to-morrow. Magdalen Græme, therefore, came and departed like a shadow from the neighbourhood of Avenel Castle.

The boy whom Providence, as she thought, had thus strangely placed under her care, was at once established a favourite with the lady of the castle. How could it be otherwise? He became the object of those affectionate feelings, which, finding formerly no object on which to expand themselves, had increased the gloom of the castle, and embittered the solitude of its mistress. To teach him, as far as her skill went, to attend to his childish comforts, to watch his boyish sports, became the lady's favourite amusement. In her circumstances, where the ear only heard the lowing of the cattle from the distant hills, or the heavy step of the warder as he walked upon his post, or the half-envied laugh of her maiden as she turned her wheel, the appearance of the blooming and beautiful boy gave an interest which can hardly be conceived by those who live amid gayer or busier scenes. Young Roland was to the Lady of Avenel what the flower, which occupies the window of some solitary captive, is to the poor wight by whom it is nursed and cultivated,—something which at once excited and repaid her care; and in giving the boy her affection, she felt, as it were, grateful to him for releasing her from the state of dull apathy in which she had usually found herself during the absence of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

But even the charms of this blooming favourite were unable to chase the recurring apprehensions which arose from her husband's delayed return. Soon after Roland Græme became a resident at the castle, a groom, dispatched by Sir Halbert, brought tidings that business of importance still delayed the knight at the Court of Holyrood. The more distant period which the messenger had assigned for his master's arrival at length glided away, summer melted into autumn, and autumn was about to give place to winter, and yet he came not.

CHAPTER III.

The waning harvest-moon shone broad and bright,
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night,
And while the folding portals wide were flung,
With trampling hoofs the rocky pavement rung.

LEYDEN.

"AND you too would be a soldier, Roland?" said the Lady of Avenel to her young charge, while, seated on a stone chair at one end of the battlements, she saw the boy attempt, with a long stick, to mimic the motions of the warder, as he alternately shouldered or ported or sloped his pike.

"Yes, lady," said the boy, for he was now familiar, and replied to her questions with readiness

and alacrity, "a soldier will I be; for there ne'er was a gentleman but who belted him with the brand."

"Thou a gentleman!" said Lilius, who, as usual, was in attendance; "such a gentleman as I would make of a bean-cod with a rusty knife."

"Nay, chide him not, Lilius," said the Lady of Avenel, "for, beshrew me, but I think he comes of gentle blood—see how it musters in his face at your injurious reproof."

"Had I my will, madam," answered Lilius, "a good birchen wand should make his colour muster to better purpose still."

"On my word, Lilius," said the lady, "one would think you had received harm from the poor boy—or is he so far on the frosty side of your favour because he enjoys the sunny side of mine?"

"Over heavens—forbode, my lady," answered Lilius; "I have lived too long with gentles, I praise my stars for it, to fight with either follies or fantasies, whether they relate to beast, bird, or boy."

Lilius was a favourite in her own class, a spoiled domestic, who was often accustomed to take more license than her mistress was at all times willing to encourage. But what did not please the Lady of Avenel, she did not chuse to hear, and thus it was on the present occasion. She resolved to look more close and sharply after the boy, who had hitherto been committed chiefly to the management of Lilius. He must, she thought, be born of gentle blood; it were shame to think otherwise of a form so noble, and features so fair. The very wildness in which he occasionally indulged, his contempt of danger, and impatience of restraint, had in them something noble. Assuredly the child was born of high rank; such was her conclusion, and she acted upon it accordingly. The domestics around her, less jealous or less scrupulous than Lilius, acted as servants usually do, following the bias, and flattering for their own purposes the humour of the lady; and the boy soon took on him those airs of superiority, which the sight of habitual deference seldom fails to inspire. It seemed, in truth, as if to command were his natural sphere, so easily did he use himself to exact and receive compliance with his humours. The chaplain, indeed, might have interposed to check the air of superiority which Roland Græme so readily indulged, and most probably would have willingly rendered him that favour; but the necessity of adjusting with his brethren some disputed points of church discipline had withdrawn him for some time from the castle, and detained him in a distant part of the kingdom.

Matters stood thus in the Castle of Avenel, when a winded bugle sent its shrill and prolonged notes from the shore of the lake, and was replied to cheerily by the signal of the warder. The Lady of Avenel knew the sounds of her husband, and rushed to the window of the apartment in which she was sitting. A band of about thirty spearmen, with a pennon displayed before them, winded along the indented shores of the lake, and approached the causeway. A single horseman rode at the head of the party, his bright arms catching a glance of the October sun as he moved steadily along. Even at that distance, the lady recognised the lofty plume,

bearing the mingled colours of her own liveries, blended with the holly-branch; and the firm seat and dignified demeanour of the rider, joined to the stately motion of the dark-brown steed, sufficiently announced Halbert Glendinning.

The lady's first thought was that of rapturous joy at her husband's return—her second was connected with a fear which had sometimes intruded itself, that he might not altogether approve the peculiar distinction with which she had treated her orphan ward. In this fear there was implied a consciousness, that the favour she had shown him was excessive; for Halbert Glendinning was at least as gentle and indulgent, as he was firm and rational in the intercourse of his household; and to her, in particular, his conduct had ever been most affectionately tender.

Yet she did fear, that, on the present occasion, her conduct might incur Sir Halbert's censure; and, hastily resolving that she would not mention the anecdote of the boy until the next day, she ordered him to be withdrawn from the apartment by Lillas.

"I will not go with Lillas, madam," answered the spoiled child, who had more than once carried his point by perseverance, and who, like his betters, delighted in the exercise of such authority,—*"I will not go to Lillas's gousty room—I will stay and see that brave warrior who comes riding so gallantly along the draw-bridge."*

"You must not stay, Roland," said the lady, more positively than she usually spoke to her little favourite.

"I will," reiterated the boy, who had already felt his consequence, and the probable chance of success.

"You will? Roland!" answered the lady, "what manner of word is that? I tell you, you must go."

"Will," answered the forward boy, "is a word for a man, and *must* is no word for a lady."

"You are saucy, sirrah," said the lady—"Lillas, take him with you instantly."

"I always thought," said Lillas, smiling, as she seized the reluctant boy by the arm, "that my young master must give place to my old one."

"And you, too, are malapert, mistress," said the lady; "hath the moon changed, that ye all of you thus forget yourselves?"

Lillas made no reply, but led off the boy, who, too proud to offer unavailing resistance, darted at his benefactress a glance, which intimated plainly how willingly he would have defied her authority had he possessed the power to make good his point.

The Lady of Avenel was vexed to find how much this trifling circumstance had discomposed her, at the moment when she ought naturally to have been entirely engrossed by her husband's return. But we do not recover composure by the mere feeling that agitation is mistimed. The glow of displeasure had not left the lady's cheek, her ruffled deportment was not yet entirely composed, when her husband, unhelmeted, but still wearing the rest of his arms, entered the apartment. His appearance banished the thoughts of every thing else: she rushed to him, clasped his iron-sheathed frame in her arms, and kissed his martial and manly face with an affection which was at once evident and sincere. The warrior returned her embrace and her caress with

VOL. III.

the same fondness; for the time which had passed since their union had diminished its romantic ardour, perhaps, but had rather increased its rational tenderness; and Sir Halbert Glendinning's long and frequent absences from his castle had prevented affection from degenerating into indifference.

When the first eager greetings were paid and received, the lady gazed fondly on her husband's face as she remarked,

"You are altered, Halbert—you have ridden hard and far to-day, or you have been ill."

"I have been well, Mary," answered the knight, "passing well have I been; and a long ride is to me, thou well knowest, but a thing of constant custom. Those who are born noble may slumber out their lives within the walls of their castles and manor-houses; but he who hath achieved nobility by his own deeds must ever be in the saddle, to show that he merits his advancement."

While he spoke thus, the lady gazed fondly on him, as if endeavouring to read his inmost soul; for the tone in which he spoke was that of melancholy depression.

Sir Halbert Glendinning was the same, yet a different person from what he had appeared in his early years. The fiery freedom of the aspiring youth had given place to the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician. There were deep traces of care on those noble features, over which each emotion used formerly to pass, like light clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not perhaps clouded, but still and grave like that of the sober autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more bare than in early youth, and the locks, which still clustered thick and dark on the warrior's head, were worn away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant pressure of the steel-cap or helmet. His beard, according to the fashion of the times, grew short and thick, and was turned into mustachios on the upper lip, and peaked at the extremity. The cheek, weather-beaten and embrowned, had lost the glow of youth, but showed the vigorous complexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glendinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right hand, to bear his banner in war, and to be his counsellor in time of peace; for his looks expressed the considerate firmness which can resolve wisely and dare boldly. Still, over these noble features, there now spread an air of dejection, of which, perhaps, the owner was not conscious, but which did not escape the observation of his anxious and affectionate partner.

"Something has happened, or is about to happen," said the Lady of Avenel; "this sadness sits not on your brow without cause—misfortune, national or particular, must needs be at hand."

"There is nothing new that I wot of," said Halbert Glendinning; "but there is little of evil which can befall a kingdom which may not be apprehended in this unhappy and divided realm."

"Nay, then," said the lady, "I see there hath really been some fatal work on foot. My Lord of Murray has not so long detained you at Holyrood, save that he wanted your help in some weighty purpose."

"I have not been at Holyrood, Mary," answered

the knight; "I have been several weeks abroad."

"Abroad! and sent me no word?" replied the lady.

"What would the knowledge have availed, but to have rendered you unhappy, my love?" replied the knight; "your thoughts would have converted the slightest breeze that curled your own lake into a tempest raging in the German ocean."

"And have you then really crossed the sea?" said the lady, to whom that idea conveyed notions of terror and of wonder; "really left your own native land, and trodden distant shores, where the Scottish tongue is unheard and unknown?"

"Really, and really," said the knight, taking her hand in affectionate playfulness, "I have done this marvelous deed—have rolled on the ocean for three days and three nights, with the deep green waves dashing by the side of my pillow, and but a thin plank to divide me from it."

"Indeed, my Halbert," said the lady, "that was a tempting of Divine Providence. I never bade you unbuckle the sword from your side, or lay the lance from your hand—I never bade you sit when your honour called to rise; but are not blade and spear dangerous enough to one man's life, and why would you trust rough waves and raging seas?"

"We have in Germany, and in the Low Countries, as they are called," answered Glendinning, "men who are united with us in faith, and with whom it is fitting we should unite in alliance. To some of these I was dispatched on business as important as it was secret. I went in safety, and I returned in security; there is more danger to a man's life betwixt this and Holyrood, than are in all the seas that wash the Lowlands of Holland."

"And the country, my Halbert, and the people," said the lady, "are they like our kindly Scots, or what bearing have they to strangers?"

"They are a people, Mary, strong in their wealth, which renders all other nations weak, and weak in those arts of war by which other nations are strong."

"I do not understand you," said the lady.

"The Hollander and the Fleming, Mary, pour forth their spirit in trade, and not in war; their wealth purchases them the arms of foreign soldiers, by whose aid they defend it. They erect dykes on the sea-shore to protect the land which they have won, and they levy regiments of the stubborn Switzers and hardy Germans to protect the treasures which they have amassed. And thus they are strong in their weakness; for the very wealth which tempts their masters to despoil them, arms strangers in their behalf."

"The slothful hinds!" exclaimed Mary, thinking and feeling like a Scotswoman of the period; "have they hands and fight not for the land which bore them? They should be notched off at the elbow."

"Nay that were but hard justice," answered her husband; "for their hands serve their country, though not in battle, like ours. Look at these barren hills, Mary, and at that deep winding vale by which the cattle are even now returning from their scanty browse. The hand of the industrious Fleming would cover these mountains with wood, and raise corn where we now see a starved and scanty sward of

heath and ling. It grieves me, Mary, when I look on that land, and think what benefit it might receive from such men as I have lately seen—men who seek not the idle fame derived from dead ancestors, or the bloody renown won in modern broils, but tread along the land as preservers and improvers, not as tyrants and destroyers."

"These amendments would be but a vain fancy, my Halbert," answered the Lady of Avenel; "the trees would be burnt by the English foemen, ere they ceased to be shrubs, and the grain that you raised would be gathered in by the first neighbour that possessed more riders than follow your train. Why should you repine at this? The fate that made you Scotsman by birth, gave you head, and heart, and hand, to uphold the name as it must needs be upheld."

"It gave me no name to uphold," said Halbert, pacing the floor slowly; "my arm has been foremost in every strife—my voice has been heard in every council, nor have the wisest rebuked me. The crafty Lethington, the deep and dark Morton, have held secret council with me, and Grange and Lindsay have owned, that in the field I did the devoir of a gallant knight—but let the emergence be past when they need my head and hand, and they only know me as son of the obscure portioner of Glendearg."

This was a theme which the lady always dreaded; for the rank conferred on her husband, the favour in which he was held by the powerful Earl of Murray, and the high talents by which he vindicated his right to that rank and that favour, were qualities which rather increased than diminished the envy which was harboured against Sir Halbert Glendinning, as a person originally of inferior and obscure birth, who had risen to his present eminence solely by his personal merit. The natural firmness of his mind did not enable him to despise the ideal advantages of a high pedigree which were held in such universal esteem by all with whom he conversed; and so open are the noblest minds to jealous inconsistencies, that there were moments in which he felt mortified that his lady should possess those advantages of birth and high descent which he himself did not enjoy, and regretted that his importance as the proprietor of Avenel was qualified by his possessing it only as the husband of the heiress. He was not so unjust as to permit any unworthy feelings to retain permanent possession of his mind, but yet they recurred from time to time, and did not escape his lady's anxious observation.

"Had we been blessed with children," she was wont on such occasions to say to herself, "had our blood been united in a son who might have joined my advantages of descent with my husband's personal worth, these painful and irksome reflections had not disturbed our union even for a moment. But the existence of such an heir, in whom our affections, as well as our pretensions, might have centred, has been denied to us."

With such mutual feelings, it cannot be wondered at that the lady heard her husband with pain verging towards this topic of mutual discontent. On the present, as on other similar occasions, she endea-

voured to divert her husband's thoughts from this painful channel.

"How can you," she said, "suffer yourself to dwell upon thoughts which profit nothing? Have you indeed no name to uphold? You, the good and the brave—the wise in council and the strong in battle—have you not to support the reputation your own deeds have won, a reputation more honourable than mere ancestry can supply? Good men love and honour you—the wicked fear, and the turbulent obey you; and is it not necessary you should exert yourself to ensure the endurance of that love, that honour, that wholesome fear, and that necessary obedience?"

As she thus spoke, the eye of her husband caught from hers courage and comfort, and it lightened as he took her hand and replied, "It is most true, my Mary, and I deserve thy rebuke, who forget what I am, in repining because I am not what I cannot be. I am now what their most famed ancestors were, the mean man raised into eminence by his own exertions; and sure it is a boast as honourable to have those capacities, which are necessary to the foundation of a family, as to be descended from one who possessed them some centuries before. The Hay of Loncarty, who bequeathed his bloody yoke to his lineage,—the "dark grey man," who first founded the house of Douglas, had yet less of ancestry to boast than what is mine. For thou knowest, Mary, that my name derives itself from a line of ancient warriors, although my immediate forefathers preferred the humble station in which thou didst first find them; and war and counsel are not less proper to the house of Glendonwyne, even in its most remote descendants, than to the proudest of their baronage."

He strode across the hall as he spoke, and the lady smiled internally to observe how much his mind dwelt upon the prerogatives of birth, and endeavoured to establish his claims, however remote, to a share in them, at the very moment when he affected to hold them in contempt. It will easily be guessed, however, that she permitted no symptom to escape her that could show she was sensible of the weakness of her husband; a perspicacity which perhaps his proud spirit could not very easily have brooked.

As he returned from the extremity of the hall, to which he had stalked while in the act of vindicating the title of the house of Glendonwyne in its most remote branches to the full privileges of aristocracy, "Where," he said, "is Wolf? I have not seen him since my return, and he was usually the first to welcome my home-coming."

"Wolf," said the lady, with a slight degree of embarrassment, for which, perhaps, she would have found it difficult to assign any reason even to herself, "Wolf is chained up for the present. He hath been surly to my page."

"Wolf chained up—and Wolf surly to your page!" answered Sir Halbert Glendinning; "Wolf never was surly to any one; and the chain will either break his spirit or render him savage—So ho, there—set Wolf free directly."

He was obeyed; and the huge dog rushed into the hall, disturbing, by his unwieldy and boisterous

gambols, the whole economy of reels, rocks, and distaffs, and extracting from Lillas, who was summoned to put them again into order, the natural observation, "That the laird's pet was as troublesome as the lady's page."

"And who is this page, Mary?" said the knight, his attention again called to the subject by the observation of the waiting-woman—"Who is this page whom every one seems to weigh in the balance with my old friend and favourite, Wolf?—When did you aspire to the dignity of keeping a page, or who is the boy?"

"I trust, my Halbert," said the lady, not without a blush, "you will not think your wife entitled to less attendance than other ladies of her quality."

"Nay, Dame Mary," answered the knight, "it is enough you desire such an attendant.—Yet I have never loved to nurse such useless menials—a lady's page—it may well suit the proud English dames to have a slender youth to bear their trains from bower to hall, fan them when they slumber, and touch the lute for them when they please to listen; but our Scottish matrons were wont to be above such vanities, and our Scottish youth ought to be bred to the spear and the stirrup."

"Nay, but, my husband," said the lady, "I did but jest when I called this boy my page; he is in sooth a little orphan whom we saved from perishing in the lake, and whom I have since kept in the castle out of charity.—Lillas, bring little Roland hither."

Roland entered accordingly, and flying to the lady's side, took hold of the plaits of her gown, and then turned round, and gazed with an attention, not unmingled with fear, upon the stately form of the knight.—"Roland," said the lady, "go kiss the hand of the noble knight, and ask him to be thy protector."—But Roland obeyed not, and, keeping his station, continued to gaze fixedly and timidly on Sir Halbert Glendinning.—"Go to the knight, boy," said the lady; "what dost thou fear, child? Go, kiss Sir Halbert's hand."

"I will kiss no hand save yours, lady," answered the boy.

"Nay, but do as you are commanded, child," replied the lady.—"He is dashed by your presence," she said, apologizing to her husband; "but is he not a handsome boy?"

"And so is Wolf," said Sir Halbert, as he patted his huge four-footed favourite, "a handsome dog; but he has this double advantage over your new favourite, that he does what he is commanded, and hears not when he is praised."

"Nay, now you are displeased with me," replied the lady; "and yet why should you be so? There is nothing wrong in relieving the distressed orphan, or in loving that which is in itself lovely and deserving of affection. But you have seen Mr Warden at Edinburgh, and he has set you against the poor boy."

"My dear Mary," answered her husband, "Mr Warden better knows his place than to presume to interfere either in your affairs or in mine. I neither blame your relieving this boy, or your kindness for him. But, I think, considering his birth and prospects, you ought not to treat him with injudicious

fondness, which can only end in rendering him unfit for the humble situation to which Heaven has designed him."

"Nay, but, my Halbert, do but look at the boy," said the lady, "and see whether he has not the air of being intended by Heaven for something nobler than a mere peasant. May he not be designed, as others have been, to rise out of a humble situation into honour and eminence?"

Thus far had she proceeded, when the consciousness that she was treading upon delicate ground at once occurred to her, and induced her to take the most natural, but the worst of all courses on such occasions, that of stopping suddenly short in the illustration which she had commenced. Her brow crimsoned, and that of Sir Halbert Glendinning was slightly overcast. But it was only for an instant; for he was incapable of mistaking his lady's meaning, or supposing that she meant intentional disrespect to him.

"Be it as you please, my love," he replied; "I owe you too much, to contradict you in aught which may render your solitary mode of life more endurable. Make of this youth what you will, and you have my full authority for doing so. But remember he is your charge, not mine—remember he hath limbs to do man service, a soul and a tongue to worship God; breed him, therefore, to be true to his master and to Heaven; and for the rest, dispose of him as you list—it is, and shall rest, your own matter."

This conversation decided the fate of Roland Græme, who from thenceforward was little noticed by the master, but indulged and favoured by the mistress of the mansion of Avenel.

This situation led to many important consequences, and, in truth, tended to bring forth the character of the youth in all its broad lights and deep shadows. As the knight himself seemed tacitly to disclaim alike interest and control over the immediate favourite of his lady, young Roland was, by circumstances, exempted from the strict discipline to which, as the retainer of a Scottish man of rank, he would otherwise have been subjected, according to all the rigour of the age. But the steward, or master of the household, such was the proud title assumed by the head domestic of each petty baron, deemed it not advisable to interfere with the favourite of the lady, and especially since she had brought the estate into the present family. Master Jasper Wingate was a man experienced, as he often boasted, in the ways of great families, and knew how to keep the steerage even when wind and tide chanced to be in contradiction.

This prudent personage winked at much, and avoided giving opportunity for further offence, by requesting little of Roland Græme beyond the degree of attention which he was himself disposed to pay; rightly conjecturing, that however lowly the place which the youth might hold in the favour of the Knight of Avenel, still to make an evil report of him would make an enemy of the lady, without securing the favour of her husband. With these prudential considerations, and doubtless not without an eye to his own ease and convenience, he taught the boy as much, and only as much as he chose to learn, readily admitting whatever apology it pleased his pupil to

allege in excuse for idleness or negligence. As the other persons in the castle, on whom such tasks were delegated, readily imitated the prudential conduct of the major-domo, there was little control used towards Roland Græme, who, of course, learned no more than what a very active mind, and a total impatience of absolute idleness, led him to acquire upon his own account, and by dint of his own exertions.

It followed also from his quality as my lady's favourite, that Roland was viewed with no peculiar good will by the followers of the knight, many of whom, of the same age, and similar origin with the fortunate page, were subjected to severe observance of the ancient and rigorous discipline of a feudal retainer. To these, Roland Græme was of course an object of envy, and, in consequence, of dislike and detraction; but the youth possessed qualities which it was impossible to depreciate. Pride, and a sense of early ambition, did for him what severity and constant instruction did for others. In truth, the youthful Roland displayed that early flexibility both of body and mind, which renders exercise, either mental or corporeal, rather matter of sport than of study; and it seemed as if he acquired accidentally, and by starts, those accomplishments, which earnest and constant instruction, enforced by frequent reproof and occasional chastisement, had taught to others. Such military exercises, such lessons of the period as he found it agreeable or convenient to apply to, he learned so perfectly, as to confound those who were ignorant how often the place of constant application is filled up by ardent enthusiasm. The lads, therefore, who were more regularly trained to arms, to horsemanship, and to other necessary exercises of the period, while they envied Roland Græme the indulgence or negligence with which he seemed to be treated, had little reason to boast of their own superior advantages; a few hours, with the powerful exertion of a most energetic will, seemed to do for him more than the regular instruction of weeks could accomplish for others.

Under these advantages, if, indeed, they were to be termed such, the character of young Roland began to develop itself. It was bold, peremptory, decisive, and overbearing; generous, if neither withstood nor contradicted; vehement and passionate, if censured or opposed. He seemed to consider himself as attached to no one, and responsible to no one, except his mistress; and even over her mind he had gradually acquired that species of ascendancy which indulgence is so apt to occasion. And although the immediate followers and dependents of Sir Halbert Glendinning saw his ascendancy with jealousy, and often took occasion to mortify his vanity, there wanted not those who were willing to acquire the favour of the Lady of Avenel by humouring and siding with the youth whom she protected; for although a favourite, as the poet assures us, has no friend, he seldom fails to have both followers and flatterers. These partisans of Roland Græme were chiefly to be found amongst the inhabitants of the little hamlet on the shore of the lake. These villagers, who were sometimes tempted to compare their own situation with that of the immediate and constant followers of the knight, who attended him on his frequent journeys to Edinburgh and elsewhere,

delighted in considering and representing themselves as more properly the subjects of the Lady of Avenel than of her husband. It is true, her wisdom and affection on all occasions discountenanced the distinction which was here implied; but the villagers persisted in thinking it must be agreeable to her to enjoy their peculiar and undivided homage, or at least in acting as if they thought so; and one chief mode by which they evinced their sentiments, was by the respect they paid to young Roland Græme, the favourite attendant of the descendant of their ancient lords. This was a mode of flattery too pleasing to encounter rebuke or censure; and the opportunity which it afforded the youth to form, as it were, a party of his own within the limits of the ancient barony of Avenel, added not a little to the audacity and decisive tone of a character which was by nature bold, impetuous, and uncontrolable.

Of two members of the household who had manifested an early jealousy of Roland Græme, the prejudices of Wolf were easily overcome; and in process of time the dog slept with Bran, Luath, and the celebrated hounds of ancient days. But Mr Warden, the chaplain, lived, and retained his dislike to the youth. That good man, single-minded and benevolent as he really was, entertained rather more than a reasonable idea of the respect due to him as a minister, and exacted from the inhabitants of the castle more deference than the haughty young page, proud of his mistress's favour, and petulant from youth and situation, was at all times willing to pay. His bold and free demeanour, his attachment to rich dress and decoration, his inaptitude to receive instruction, and his hardening himself against rebuke, were circumstances which induced the good old man, with more haste than charity, to set the forward page down as a vessel of wrath, and to presage that the youth nursed that pride and haughtiness of spirit which goes before ruin and destruction. Most of the attendants and followers of Sir Halbert Glendinning entertained the same charitable thought; but while Roland was favoured by their lady, and endured by their lord, they saw no policy in making their opinions public.

Roland Græme was sufficiently sensible of the unpleasant situation in which he stood; but in the haughtiness of his heart he retorted upon the other domestics the distant, cold, and sarcastic manner in which they treated him, assumed an air of superiority which compelled the most obstinate to obedience, and had the satisfaction to be dreaded at least, if he was heartily hated.

The chaplain's marked dislike had the effect of recommending him to the attention of Sir Halbert's brother Edward, who now, under the conventual appellation of Father Ambrose, continued to be one of the few monks who, with the Abbot Eustatius, were still permitted to linger in the cloisters of Kennaquhair. Respect to Sir Halbert had prevented their being altogether driven out of the abbey, though their order was now in a great measure suppressed, and they were interdicted the public exercise of their ritual, and only allowed for their support a small pension out of their once splendid revenues. Father Ambrose, thus situated, was an occasional, though very rare, visitant, at the Castle

of Avenel, and was at such times observed to pay particular attention to Roland Græme, who seemed to return it with more depth of feeling than consisted with his usual habits.

Thus situated, years glided on, during which the Knight of Avenel continued to act a frequent and important part in the convulsions of his distracted country; while young Græme anticipated, both in wishes and in personal accomplishments, the age which should enable him to emerge from the obscurity of his present situation.

CHAPTER IV.

Amid their cups that freely flow'd,
Their revelry and mirth,
A youthful lord taxed Valentine
With base and doubtful birth.

Valentine and Orson.

WHEN Roland Græme was a youth about seventeen years of age, he chanced one summer morning to descend to the mew in which Sir Halbert Glendinning kept his hawks, in order to superintend the training of an eyass, or young hawk, which he himself, at the imminent risk of neck and limbs, had taken from a celebrated eyrie in the neighbourhood, called Gledscraig. As he was by no means satisfied with the attention which had been bestowed on his favourite bird, he was not slack in testifying his displeasure to the falconer's lad, whose duty it was to have attended upon it.

"What, ho! Sir Knave!" exclaimed Roland, "is it thus you feed the eyass with unwashed meat, as if you were gorging the foul brancher of a worthless hoodie-crow, by the mass? and thou hast neglected its castings also for these two days. Think'st thou I ventured my neck to bring the bird down from the craig that thou shouldst spoil him by thy neglect?" And to add force to his remonstrances, he conferred a cuff or two on the negligent attendant of the hawks, who, shouting rather louder than was necessary under all the circumstances, brought the master falconer to his assistance.

Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel, was an Englishman by birth, but so long in the service of Glendinning, that he had lost his national attachment in that which he had formed to his master. He was a favourite in his department, jealous and conceited of his skill, as masters of the game usually are; for the rest of his character, he was a jester and a parcel poet (qualities which by no means abated his natural conceit), a jolly fellow, who loved a flagon of ale better than a long sermon, a stout man of his hands when need required, true to his master, and a little presuming on his interest with him.

Adam Woodcock, such as we have described him, by no means relished the freedom used by young Græme, in chastising his assistant. "Hey hey, my lady's page," said he, stepping between his own boy and Roland, "fair and softly, an it like your gilt jacket—hands off is fair play—if my boy has done amiss, I can beat him myself, and then you may keep your hands soft."

"I will beat him and thee too," answered Ro-

land, without hesitation, "an you look not better after your business. See how the bird is cast away between you. I found the careless lurdane feeding him with unwashed flesh, and she an eyass."*

"Go to," said the falconer, "thou art but an eyass thyself, child Roland—What knowest thou of feeding? I say that the eyass should have her meat unwashed until she becomes a brancher—'twere the ready way to give her the frounce to wash her meat sooner, and so knows every one who knows a gled from a falcon."

"It is thine own laziness, thou false English blood, that doest nothing but drink and sleep," retorted the page, "and leavest that lither lad to do the work, that he minds as little as thou."

"And am I so idle then," said the falconer, "that have three cast of hawks to look after, at perch and mew, and to fly them in the field to boot?—and is my lady's page so busy a man that he must take me up short?—and am I a false English blood?—I marvel what blood thou art—neither Englander nor Scot—fish nor flesh—a bastard from the Debateable Land, without either kith, kin, or ally!—Marry, out upon thee, foul kite, that would fain be a tercel gentle!"

The reply to this sarcasm was a box on the ear; so well applied, that it overthrew the falconer into the cistern in which water was kept for the benefit of the hawks. Up started Adam Woodcock, and seizing on a truncheon which stood by, would have soon requited the injury he had received, had not Roland laid his hand on his poniard, and sworn by all that was sacred, that if he offered a stroke towards him he would sheath it in his bowels. The noise was now so great that more than one of the household came in, and amongst others the major-domo, a grave personage, already mentioned, whose gold chain and white wand intimated his authority. At the appearance of this dignitary the strife was for the present appeased. He embraced, however, so favourable an opportunity to read Roland Græme a shrewd lecture on the impropriety of his deportment to his fellow-menials, and to assure him, that, should he communicate this fray to his master (who, though now on one of his frequent expeditions, was speedily expected to return), which but for respect to his lady he would most certainly do, the residence of the culprit in the Castle of Avenel would be but of brief duration. "But, however," added the prudent master of the household, "I will report the matter first to my lady."

"Very just, very right, Master Wingate," exclaimed several voices together; "my lady will consider if daggers are to be drawn on us for every idle word, and whether we are to live in a well-ordered household, where there is the fear of God, or amongst drawn dirks and sharp knives."

The object of this general resentment darted an angry glance around him, and suppressing with difficulty the desire which urged him to reply in furious or in contemptuous language, returned his dagger into the scabbard, looked disdainfully around upon the assembled menials, turned short upon his heel,

* There is a difference amongst authorities how long the nestling hawk should be fed with flesh which has previously been washed.

and pushing aside those who stood betwixt him and the door, left the apartment.

"This will be no tree for my nest," said the falconer, "if this cock-sparrow is to crow over us as he seems to do."

"He struck me with his switch yesterday," said one of the grooms, "because the tail of his worship's gelding was not trimmed altogether so as suited his humour."

"And I promise you," said the laundress, "my young master will stick nothing to call you slut and quean, if there be but a speck of soot upon his band-collar."

"If Master Wingate do not his errand to my lady," was the general result, "there will be no tarrying in the same house with Roland Græme."

The master of the household heard them all for some time, and then, motioning for universal silence, he addressed them with all the dignity of Malvolio himself.—"My masters,—not forgetting you, my mistresses,—do not think the worse of me that I proceed with as much care as haste in this matter. Our master is a gallant knight, and will have his sway at home and abroad, in wood and field, in hall and bower, as the saying is. Our lady, my benison upon her, is also a noble person of long descent, and rightful heir of this place and barony, and she also loves her will; as for that matter, show me the woman who doth not. Now she hath favoured, doth favour, and will favour, this jack-an-ape,—for what good part about him I know not, save that as one noble lady will love a messan dog, and another a screaming popinjay, and a third a Barbary ape, so doth it please our noble dame to set her affections upon this stray elf of a page, for nought that I can think of, save that she was the cause of his being saved (the more's the pity) from drowning." And here Master Wingate made a pause.

"I would have been his caution for a grey groat against salt water or fresh," said his adversary, the falconer; "marry, if he crack not a rope for stabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again!"

"Peace, Adam Woodcock," said Wingate, waving his hand; "I prithee, peace, man—Now, my lady liking this springald, as aforesaid, differs therein from my lord, who likes never a bone in his skin. Now, is it for me to stir up strife betwixt them, and put as 'twere my finger betwixt the bark and the tree, on account of a pragmatistical youngster, whom, nevertneless, I would willingly see whipped forth of the barony? Have patience, and this boil will break without our meddling. I have been in service since I wore a beard on my chin, till now that that beard is turned grey, and I have seldom known any one better themselves, even by taking the lady's part against the lord's; but never one who did not dirk himself, if he took the lord's against the lady's."

"And so," said Lilius, "we are to be crowed over, every one of us, men and women, cock and hen, by this little upstart?—I will try titles with him first, I promise you.—I fancy, Master Wingate, for as wise as you look, you will be pleased to tell what you have seen to-day, if my lady commands you?"

"To speak the truth, when my lady commands me," answered the prudential major-domo, "is in some measure my duty, Mistress Liliās; always providing for and excepting those cases in which it cannot be spoken without breeding mischief and inconvenience to myself or my fellow-servants; for the tongue of a tale-bearer breaketh bones as well as a Jeddart staff."

"But this imp of Satan is none of your friends or fellow-servants," said Liliās; "and I trust you mean not to stand up for him against the whole family besides?"

"Credit me, Mistress Liliās," replied the senior, "should I see the time fitting, I would with right good will give him a lick with the rough side of my tongue."

"Enough said, Master Wingate," answered Liliās; "then trust me his song shall soon be laid. If my mistress does not ask me what is the matter below stairs before she be ten minutes of time older, she is no born woman, and my name is not Liliās Bradbourne."

In pursuance of her plan, Mistress Liliās failed not to present herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one who is possessed of an important secret,—that is, she had the corner of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her blabbing, and an air of prim mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanour, which seemed to intimate, "I know something which I am resolved not to tell you!"

Liliās had rightly read her mistress's temper, who, wise and good as she was, was yet a daughter of grandame Eve, and could not witness this mysterious bearing on the part of her waiting-woman without longing to ascertain the secret cause. For a space, Mistress Liliās was obdurate to all inquiries, sighed, turned her eyes up higher yet to heaven, hoped for the best, but had nothing particular to communicate. All this, as was most natural and proper, only stimulated the lady's curiosity; neither was her importunity to be parried with—"Thank God, I am no make-bate—no tale-bearer;—thank God, I never envied any one's favour, or was anxious to propale their misdemeanour—only thank God, there has been no bloodshed and murder in the house—that is all."

"Bloodshed and murder!"—exclaimed the lady, "what does the quean mean?—If you speak not plain out, you shall have something you will scarce be thankful for."

"Nay, my lady," answered Liliās, eager to disburthen her mind, or, in Chaucer's phrase, to 'unbuckle her mail,' "if you bid me speak out the truth, you must not be moved with what might displease you—Roland Græme has dirked Adam Woodcock—that is all."

"Good heaven!" said the lady, turning pale as ashes, "is the man slain?"

"No, madam," replied Liliās, "but slain he would have been, if there had not been ready help; but maybe it is your ladyship's pleasure that this young esquire shall poniard the servants, as well as switch and baton them."

"Go to, minion," said the lady, "you are saucy—tell the master of the household to attend me instantly."

Liliās hastened to seek out Mr Wingate, and hurry him to his lady's presence, speaking as a word in season to him on the way, "I have set the stone a-trowling, look that you do not let it stand still."

The steward, too prudential a person to commit himself otherwise, answered by a sly look and a nod of intelligence, and presently after stood in the presence of the Lady of Avenel, with a look of great respect for his lady, partly real, partly affected, and an air of great sagacity, which inferred no ordinary conceit of himself.

"How is this, Wingate," said the lady, "and what rule do you keep in the castle, that the domestics of Sir Halbert Glendinning draw the dagger on each other, as in a cavern of thieves and murderers?—is the wounded man much hurt? and what—what hath become of the unhappy boy?"

"There is no one wounded as yet, madam," replied he of the golden chain; "it passes my poor skill to say how many may be wounded before Pasche,* if some rule be not taken with this youth;—not but the youth is a fair youth," he added, correcting himself, "and able at his exercise; but somewhat too ready with the ends of his fingers, the butt of his riding-switch, and the point of his dagger."

"And whose fault is that," said the lady, "but yours, who should have taught him better discipline than to brawl or to draw his dagger?"

"If it please your ladyship so to impose the blame on me," answered the steward, "it is my part, doubtless, to bear it—only I submit to your consideration, that unless I nailed his weapon to the scabbard, I could no more keep it still than I could fix quicksilver, which defied even the skill of Raymond Lullius."

"Tell me not of Raymond Lullius," said the lady, losing patience, "but send me the chaplain hither. You grow all of you too wise for me during your lord's long and repeated absences. I would to God his affairs would permit him to remain at home and rule his own household, for it passes my wit and skill!"

"God forbid, my lady!" said the old domestic, "that you should sincerely think what you are now pleased to say: your old servants might well hope, that after so many years' duty, you would do their service more justice than to distrust their grey hairs, because they cannot rule the peevish humour of a green head, which the owner carries, it may be, a brace of inches higher than becomes him."

"Leave me," said the lady; "Sir Halbert's return must now be expected daily, and he will look into these matters himself—leave me, I say, Wingate, without saying more of it. I know you are honest, and I believe the boy is petulant; and yet I think it is my favour which hath set all of you against him."

The steward bowed and retired, after having been silenced in a second attempt to explain the motives on which he acted.

* Easter.

The chaplain arrived; but neither from him did the lady receive much comfort. On the contrary, she found him disposed, in plain terms, to lay to the door of her indulgence all the disturbances which the fiery temper of Roland Græme had already occasioned, or might hereafter occasion, in the family. "I would," he said, "honoured lady, that you had deigned to be ruled by me in the outset of this matter, sith it is easy to stem evil in the fountain, but hard to struggle against it in the stream. You, honoured madam (a word which I do not use according to the vain forms of this world, but because I have ever loved and honoured you as an honourable and an elect lady),—you, I say, madam, have been pleased, contrary to my poor but earnest counsel, to raise this boy from his station, into one approaching to your own."

"What mean you, reverend sir?" said the lady; "I have made this youth a page—is there aught in my doing so that does not become my character and quality?"

"I dispute not, madam," said the pertinacious preacher, "your benevolent purpose in taking charge of this youth, or your title to give him this idle character of page, if such was your pleasure; though what the education of a boy in the train of a female can tend to, save to engraft foppery and effeminacy on conceit and arrogance, it passes my knowledge to discover. But I blame you more directly for having taken little care to guard him against the perils of his condition, or to tame and humble a spirit naturally haughty, overbearing, and impatient. You have brought into your bower a lion's cub; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest; and now you are surprised, and call out for assistance, when he begins to ramp, rend, and tear, according to his proper nature."

"Mr Warden," said the lady, considerably offended, "you are my husband's ancient friend, and I believe your love sincere to him and to his household. Yet let me say, that when I asked you for counsel, I expected not this asperity of rebuke. If I have done wrong in loving this poor orphan lad more than others of his class, I scarce think the error merited such severe censure; and if stricter discipline were required to keep his fiery temper in order, it ought, I think, to be considered, that I am a woman, and that, if I have erred in this matter, it becomes a friend's part rather to aid than to rebuke me. I would these evils were taken order with before my lord's return. He loves not domestic discord or domestic brawls; and I would not willingly that he thought such could arise from one whom I have favoured—What do you counsel me to do?"

"Dismiss this youth from your service, madam," replied the preacher.

"You cannot bid me do so," said the lady; "you cannot, as a christian and a man of humanity, bid me turn away an unprotected creature, against whom my favour, my injudicious favour if you will, has reared up so many enemies."

"It is not necessary you should altogether abandon

him, though you dismiss him to another service, or to a calling better suiting his station and character," said the preacher; "elsewhere he may be an useful and profitable member of the commonweal—here he is but a make-bate, and a stumbling-block of offence. The youth has snatches of sense and of intelligence, though he lacks industry. I will myself give him letters commendatory to Olearius Schinderhausen, a learned professor at Leyden, where they lack an under-janitor—where, besides gratis instruction, if God give him the grace to seek it, he will enjoy five merks by the year, and the professor's cast-off suit, which he disparts with biennially."

"This will never do, good Mr Warden," said the lady, scarce able to suppress a smile; "we will think more at large upon this matter. In the meanwhile, I trust to your remonstrances with the family for restraining these violent and unseemly jealousies and bursts of passion; and I entreat you to press on them their duty in this respect towards God, and towards their master."

"You shall be obeyed, madam," said Warden. "On the next Thursday I exhort the family, and will, with God's blessing, so wrestle with the demon of wrath and violence, which hath entered into my little flock, that I trust to hound the wolf out of the fold, as if he were chased away with ban-dogs."

This was the part of the conference from which Mr Warden derived the greatest pleasure. The pulpit was at that time the same powerful engine for affecting popular feeling which the press has since become, and he had been no unsuccessful preacher, as we have already seen. It followed as a natural consequence, that he rather over-estimated the powers of his own oratory, and, like some of his brethren about the period, was glad of an opportunity to handle any matters of importance, whether public or private, the discussion of which could be dragged into his discourse. In that rude age the delicacy was unknown which prescribed time and place to personal exhortations; and as the court-preacher often addressed the king personally, and dictated to him the conduct he ought to observe in matters of state, so the nobleman himself, or any of his retainers, were, in the chapel of the feudal castle, often incensed or appalled, as the case might be, by the discussion of their private faults, and by spiritual censures directed against them, specifically, personally, and by name.

The sermon, by means of which Henry Warden proposed to restore concord and good order to the Castle of Avenel, bore for text the well-known words, "*He who striketh with the sword shall perish by the sword*;" and was a singular mixture of good sense and powerful oratory, with pedantry and bad taste. He enlarged a good deal on the word 'strieth,' which he assured his hearers comprehended blows given with the point as well as with the edge, and, more generally, shooting with hand-gun, cross-bow or long-bow, thrusting with a lance, or doing any thing whatsoever by which death might be occasioned to the adversary. In the same manner, he proved satisfactorily, that the word 'sword' comprehended all descriptions, whether back-sword or basket-hilt, cut-and-thrust or rapier, falchion or scimitar. "But if," he continued, with still greater animation, "the

text includeth in its anathema those who strike with any of those weapons which man hath devised for the exercise of his open hostility, still more doth it comprehend such as, from their form and size, are devised rather for the gratification of privy malice by treachery, than for the destruction of an enemy prepared and standing upon his defence. Such," he continued, looking sternly at the place where the page was seated on a cushion at the feet of his mistress, and wearing in his crimson belt a gay dagger with a gilded hilt,—“such, more especially, I hold to be those implements of death, which, in our modern and fantastic times, are worn not only by thieves and cut-throats, to whom they most properly belong, but even by those who attend upon women, and wait in the chambers of honourable ladies. Yes, my friends,—this unhappy weapon, framed for all evil and for no good, is comprehended under this deadly denunciation, whether it be a stilet, which we have borrowed from the treacherous Italian, or a dirk, which is borne by the savage Highlandmen, or a whinger, which is carried by our own Border-thieves and cut-throats, or a dudgeon-dagger, which was invented by the devil himself, for a ready implement of deadly wrath, sudden to execute, and difficult to be parried. Even the common sword-and-buckler brawler despises the use of such a treacherous and malignant instrument, which is therefore fit to be used, not by men or soldiers, but by those who, trained under female discipline, become themselves effeminate hermaphrodites, having female spite and female cowardice added to the infirmities and evil passions of their masculine nature.”

The effect which this oration produced upon the assembled congregation of Avenel cannot very easily be described. The lady seemed at once embarrassed and offended; the menials could hardly contain, under an affectation of deep attention, the joy with which they heard the chaplain launch his thunders at the head of the unpopular favourite; Mistress Liliast crested and drew up her head with all the deep-felt pride of gratified resentment; while the steward, observing a strict neutrality of aspect, fixed his eyes upon an old scutcheon on the opposite side of the wall, which he seemed to examine with the most minute accuracy, more willing, perhaps, to incur the censure of being inattentive to the sermon, than that of seeming to listen with marked approbation to what appeared so distasteful to his mistress.

The unfortunate subject of the harangue, whom nature had endowed with passions which had hitherto found no effectual restraint, could not disguise the resentment which he felt at being thus directly held up to the scorn, as well as the censure, of the assembled inhabitants of the little world in which he lived. His brow grew red, his lip grew pale, he set his teeth, he clenched his hand, and then with mechanical readiness grasped the weapon of which the clergyman had given so hideous a character; and at length, as the preacher heightened the colouring of his invective, he felt his rage become so ungovernable, that, fearful of being hurried into some deed of desperate violence, he rose up, traversed the chapel with hasty steps, and left the congregation.

VOL. III.

The preacher was surprised into a sudden pause, while the fiery youth shot across him like a flash of lightning, eyeing him as he passed, as if he had wished to dart from his eyes the same power of blighting and of consuming. But no sooner had he crossed the chapel, and shut with violence behind him the door of the vaulted entrance by which it communicated with the castle, than the impropriety of his conduct supplied Warden with one of those happier subjects for eloquence, of which he knew how to take advantage for making a suitable impression on his hearers. He paused for an instant, and then pronounced, in a slow and solemn voice, the deep anathema: “He hath gone out from us because he was not of us—the sick man hath been offended at the wholesome bitter of the medicine—the wounded patient hath flinched from the friendly knife of the surgeon—the sheep hath fled from the sheepfold and delivered himself to the wolf, because he could not assume the quiet and humble conduct demanded of us by the great Shepherd.—Ah! my brethren, beware of wrath—beware of pride—beware of the deadly and destroying sin which so often shows itself to our frail eyes in the garments of light. What is our earthly honour? Pride, and pride only.—What our earthly gifts and graces? Pride and vanity.—Voyagers speak of Indian men who deck themselves with shells, and anoint themselves with pigments, and boast of their attire as we do of our miserable carnal advantages—Pride could draw down the morning-star from Heaven even to the verge of the pit—Pride and self-opinion kindled the flaming sword which waves us off from Paradise—Pride made Adam mortal, and a weary wanderer on the face of the earth which he had else been lord of—Pride brought amongst us sin, and doubles every sin it has brought. It is the outpost which the devil and the flesh most stubbornly maintain against the assaults of grace; and until it be subdued, and its barriers leveled with the very earth, there is more hope of a fool than of the sinner. Rend, then, from your bosoms this accursed shoot of the fatal apple; tear it up by the roots, though it be twisted with the cords of your life. Profit by the example of the miserable sinner that has passed from us, and embrace the means of grace while it is called to-day—ere your conscience is seared as with a firebrand, and your ears deafened like those of the adder, and your heart hardened like the nether millstone. Up, then, and be doing—wrestle and overcome; resist, and the enemy shall flee from you—watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation, and let the stumbling of others be your warning and your example. Above all, rely not on yourselves, for such self-confidence is even the worst symptom of the disorder itself. The pharisee perhaps deemed himself humble while he stooped in the Temple, and thanked God that he was not as other men, and even as the publican. But while his knees touched the marble pavement, his head was as high as the topmost pinnacle of the Temple. Do not, therefore, deceive yourselves, and offer false coin, where the purest you can present is but as dross—think not that such will pass the assay of Omnipotent Wisdom. Yet shrink not from the task, because, as is my bounden duty, I do not disguise from you its diffi-

culties. Self-searching can do much—Meditation can do much—Grace can do all.”

And he concluded with a touching and animating exhortation to his hearers to seek divine grace, which is perfected in human weakness.

The audience did not listen to this address without being considerably affected; though it might be doubted whether the feelings of triumph, received from the disgraceful retreat of the favourite page, did not greatly qualify in the minds of many the exhortations of the preacher to charity and to humility. And, in fact, the expression of their countenances much resembled the satisfied triumphant air of a set of children, who, having just seen a companion punished for a fault in which they had no share, con their task with double glee, both because they themselves are out of the scrape, and because the culprit is in it.

With very different feelings did the Lady of Avenel seek her own apartment. She felt angry at Warden having made a domestic matter, in which she took a personal interest, the subject of such public discussion. But this she knew the good man claimed as a branch of his christian liberty as a preacher, and also that it was vindicated by the universal custom of his brethren. But the self-willed conduct of her protégé afforded her yet deeper concern. That he had broken through, in so remarkable a degree, not only the respect due to her presence, but that which was paid in those days with such peculiar reverence, argued a spirit as untameable as his enemies had represented him to possess. And yet, so far as he had been under her own eye, she had seen no more of that fiery spirit than appeared to her to become his years and his vivacity. This opinion might be founded in some degree on partiality; in some degree, too, it might be owing to the kindness and indulgence which she had always extended to him; but still she thought it impossible that she could be totally mistaken in the estimate she had formed of his character. The extreme of violence is scarce consistent with a course of continued hypocrisy (although Liliás charitably hinted, that in some instances they were happily united) and therefore she could not exactly trust the report of others against her own experience and observation. The thoughts of this orphan boy clung to her heartstrings with a fondness for which she herself was unable to account. He seemed to have been sent to her by Heaven, to fill up those intervals of languor and vacuity which deprived her of so much enjoyment. Perhaps he was not less dear to her, because she well saw that he was a favourite with no one else, and because she felt, that to give him up was to afford the judgment of her husband and others a triumph over her own; a circumstance not quite indifferent to the best of spouses of either sex.

In short, the Lady of Avenel formed the internal resolution, that she would not desert her page while her page could be rationally protected; and, with the view of ascertaining how far this might be done, she caused him to be summoned to her presence.

CHAPTER V.

— In the wild storm,

The seaman hews his mast down, and the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deem'd precious :
So prince and peer, 'mid popular contentions,
Cast off their favourites.

Old Play.

It was some time ere Roland Græme appeared. The messenger (his old friend Liliás) had at first attempted to open the door of his little apartment with the charitable purpose, doubtless, of enjoying the confusion, and marking the demeanour of the culprit. But a square bit of iron, ycleped a bolt, was passed across the door on the inside, and prevented her charitable purpose. Liliás knocked, and called at intervals, “Roland—Roland Græme—*Master* Roland Græme (an emphasis on the word master), will you be pleased to do up the door?—What ails you?—are you at your prayers in private, to complete the devotion which you left unfinished in public?—Surely we must have a screened seat for you in the chapel, that your gentility may be free from the eyes of common folks!” Still no whisper was heard in reply. “Well, Master Roland,” said the waiting-maid, “I must tell my mistress, that if she would have an answer, she must send those on errand to you who can beat the door down.”

“What says your lady?” answered the page from within.

“Marry, open the door, and you shall hear,” answered the waiting-maid. “I trow it becomes her message to be listened to face to face; and I will not, for your idle pleasure, whistle it through a key-hole.”

“Your mistress’s name,” said the page, opening the door, “is too fair a cover for your impertinence—What says my lady?”

“That you will be pleased to come to her directly, in the withdrawing room,” answered Liliás. “I presume she has some directions for you concerning the forms to be observed in leaving chapel in future.”

“Say to my lady, that I will directly wait on her,” answered the page; and, returning into his own apartment, he once more locked the door in the face of the waiting-maid.

“Rare courtesy!” muttered Liliás; and, returning to her mistress, acquainted her that Roland Græme would wait on her when it suited his convenience.

“What! is that his addition, or your own phrase, Liliás?” said the lady, coolly.

“Nay, madam,” replied the attendant, not directly answering the question, “he looked as if he could have said much more impertinent things than that, if I had been willing to hear them.—But here he comes to answer for himself.”

Roland Græme entered the apartment with a loftier mien, and somewhat a higher colour than his wont; there was embarrassment in his manner, but it was neither that of fear nor of penitence.

“Young man,” said the lady, “what trow you am I to think of your conduct this day?”

"If it has offended you, madam, I am deeply grieved," replied the youth.

"To have offended me alone," replied the lady, "were but little—You have been guilty of conduct which will highly offend your master—of violence to your fellow-servants, and of disrespect to God himself, in the person of his ambassador."

"Permit me again to reply," said the page, "that if I have offended my only mistress, friend, and benefactress, it includes the sum of my guilt, and deserves the sum of my penitence—Sir Halbert Glendinning calls me not servant, nor do I call him master—he is not entitled to blame me for chastising an insolent groom—nor do I fear the wrath of Heaven for treating with scorn the unauthorized interference of a meddling preacher."

The Lady of Avenel had before this seen symptoms in her favourite of boyish petulance, and of impatience of censure or reproof. But his present demeanour was of a graver and more determined character, and she was for a moment at a loss how she should treat the youth, who seemed to have at once assumed the character not only of a man, but of a bold and determined one. She paused an instant, and then assuming the dignity which was natural to her, she said, "Is it to me, Roland, that you hold this language? Is it for the purpose of making me repent the favour I have shown you, that you declare yourself independent both of an earthly and a heavenly master? Have you forgotten what you were, and to what the loss of my protection would speedily again reduce you?"

"Lady," said the page, "I have forgot nothing. I remember but too much. I know, that but for you, I should have perished in yon blue waves," pointing as he spoke to the lake, which was seen through the window, agitated by the western wind. "Your goodness has gone farther, madam—you have protected me against the malice of others and against my own folly. You are free, if you are willing, to abandon the orphan you have reared. You have left nothing undone by him, and he complains of nothing. And yet, lady, do not think I have been ungrateful—I have endured something on my part, which I would have borne for the sake of no one but my benefactress."

"For my sake!" said the lady; "and what is it that I can have subjected you to endure, which can be remembered with other feelings than those of thanks and gratitude?"

"You are too just, madam, to require me to be thankful for the cold neglect with which your husband has uniformly treated me—neglect not unmingled with fixed aversion. You are too just, madam, to require me to be grateful for the constant and unceasing marks of scorn and malevolence with which I have been treated by others, or for such a homily as that with which your reverend chaplain has, at my expense, this very day, regaled the assembled household."

"Heard mortal ears the like of this!" said the waiting-maid, with her hands expanded, and her eyes turned up to heaven; "he speaks as if he were son of an earl, or of a belted knight the least penny."

The page glanced on her a look of supreme con-

tempt, but vouchsafed no other answer. His mistress, who began to feel herself seriously offended, and yet sorry for the youth's folly, took up the same tone.

"Indeed, Roland, you forget yourself so strangely," said she, "that you will tempt me to take serious measures to lower you in your own opinion, by reducing you to your proper station in society."

"And that," added Lillas, "would be best done by turning him out the same beggar's brat that your ladyship took him in."

"Lillas speaks too rudely," continued the lady, "but she has spoken the truth, young man; nor do I think I ought to spare that pride which hath so completely turned your head. You have been tricked up with fine garments and treated like the son of a gentleman, until you have forgot the fountain of your churlish blood."

"Craving your pardon, most honourable madam, Lillas hath *not* spoken truth, nor does your ladyship know aught of my descent, which should entitle you to treat it with such decided scorn. I am no beggar's brat—my grandmother begged from no one, here nor elsewhere—she would have perished sooner on the bare moor. We were harried out and driven from our home—a chance which has happened elsewhere and to others. Avenel Castle, with its lake and its towers, was not at all times able to protect its inhabitants from want and desolation."

"Hear but his assurance!" said Lillas; "he upbraids my lady with the distresses of her family!"

"It had indeed been a theme more gratefully spared," said the lady, affected nevertheless with the allusion.

"It was necessary, madam, for my vindication," said the page, "or I had not even hinted at a word that might give you pain. But believe, honoured lady, I am of no churl's blood. My proper descent I know not; but my only relation has said, and my heart has echoed it back and attested the truth, that I am sprung of gentle blood, and deserve gentle usage."

"And upon an assurance so vague as this," said the lady, "do you propose to expect all the regard, all the privileges, due to high rank and to distinguished birth, and become a contender for privileges which are only due to the noble? Go to, sir—know yourself, or the master of the household shall make you know you are liable to the scourge as a malapert boy. You have tasted too little the discipline fit for your age and station."

"The master of the household shall taste of my dagger, ere I taste of his discipline," said the page, giving way to his restrained passion. "Lady, I have been too long the vassal of a pantoufle, and the slave of a silver whistle. You must find some other to answer your call; and let him be of birth and spirit mean enough to brook the scorn of your menials, and to call a church vassal his master."

"I have deserved this insult," said the lady, colouring deeply, "for so long enduring and fostering your petulance. Begone, sir. Leave this castle to-night—I will send you the means of subsisting yourself till you find some honest mode of support, though I fear your imaginary grandeur will be above all others, save those of rapine and violence. Begone, sir, and see my face no more."

The page threw himself at her feet in an agony of sorrow. "My dear and honoured mistress—" he said, but was unable to bring out another syllable.

"Arise, sir," said the lady, "and let go my mantle—hypocrisy is a poor cloak for ingratitude."

"I am incapable of either, madam," said the page, springing up with the exchange of passion which belonged to his rapid and impetuous temper. "Think not I meant to implore permission to reside here; it has been long my determination to leave Avenel, and I will never forgive myself for having permitted you to say the word *begone*, ere I said, 'I leave you.' I did but kneel to ask your forgiveness for an ill-considered word used in the height of displeasure, but which ill became my mouth, as addressed to you. Other grace I asked not—you have done much for me—but I repeat, that you better know what you yourself have done, than what I have suffered."

"Roland," said the lady, somewhat appeased and relenting towards her favourite, "you had me to appeal to when you were aggrieved. You were neither called upon to suffer wrong, nor entitled to resent it, when you were under my protection."

"And what," said the youth, "if I sustained wrong from those you loved and favoured, was I to disturb your peace with idle tale-bearings and eternal complaints? No, madam, I have borne my own burthen in silence, and without disturbing you with murmurs; and the respect which you accuse me of wanting, furnishes the only reason why I have neither appealed to you, nor taken vengeance at my own hand in a manner far more effectual. It is well, however, that we part. I was not born to be a stipendiary, favoured by his mistress, until ruined by the calumnies of others. May Heaven multiply its choicest blessings on your honoured head, and, for your sake, upon all that are dear to you!"

He was about to leave the apartment, when the lady called on him to return. He stood still, while she thus addressed him: "It was not my intention, nor would it be just, even in the height of my displeasure, to dismiss you without the means of support; take this purse of gold."

"Forgive me, lady," said the boy, "and let me go hence with the consciousness that I have not been degraded to the point of accepting alms. If my poor services can be placed against the expense of my apparel and my maintenance, I only remain debtor to you for my life, and that alone is a debt which I can never repay; put up then that purse, and only say, instead, that you do not part from me in anger."

"No, not in anger," said the lady, "in sorrow rather for your wilfulness; but take the gold, you cannot but need it."

"May God evermore bless you for the kind tone and the kind word; but the gold I cannot take. I am able of body, and do not lack friends so wholly as you may think; for the time may come that I may yet show myself more thankful than by mere words." He threw himself on his knees, kissed the hand which she did not withdraw, and then hastily left the apartment.

Lilias, for a moment or two, kept her eye fixed on

her mistress, who looked so unusually pale, that she seemed about to faint; but the lady instantly recovered herself, and declining the assistance which her attendant offered her, walked to her own apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

Thou hast each secret of the household, Francis.
I dare be sworn thou hast been in the buttery
Steeping thy curious humour in fat ale,
And in the butler's tattle—ay, or chatting
With the glib waiting-woman o'er her comfits—
These bear the key to each domestic mystery.

Old Play.

UPON the morrow succeeding the scene we have described, the disgraced favourite left the castle; and at breakfast-time the cautious old steward and Mrs Lilias sat in the apartment of the latter personage, holding grave converse on the important event of the day, sweetened by a small treat of sweetmeats, to which the providence of Mr Wingate had added a little flask of racy canary.

"He is gone at last," said the abigail, sipping her glass; "and here is to his good journey."

"Amen," answered the steward, gravely; "I wish the poor deserted lad no ill."

"And he is gone like a wild-duck, as he came," continued Mrs Lilias; "no lowering of draw-bridges, or pacing along causeways for him. My master has pushed off in the boat which they call the little Herod (more shame to them for giving the name of a christian to wood and iron), and has rowed himself by himself to the further side of the loch, and off and away with himself, and left all his finery strewed about his room. I wonder who is to clean his trumpery out after him—though the things are worth lifting, too."

"Doubtless, Mrs Lilias," answered the master of the household; "in the which case, I am free to think, they will not long cumber the floor."

"And now tell me, Mr Wingate," continued the damsel, "do not the very cockles of your heart rejoice at the house being rid of this upstart whelp, that flung us all into shadow?"

"Why, Mrs Lilias," replied Wingate, "as to rejoicing—those who have lived as long in great families as has been my lot, will be in no hurry to rejoice at any thing. And for Roland Græme, though he may be a good riddance in the main, yet what says the very sooth proverb, 'Seldom comes a better.'"

"Seldom comes a better, indeed!" echoed Mrs Lilias. "I say, never can come a worse, or one half so bad. He might have been the ruin of our poor dear mistress (here she used her kerchief), body and soul and estate too; for she spent more coin on his apparel than on any four servants about the house."

"Mrs Lilias," said the sage steward, "I do opine that our mistress requireth not this pity at our hands, being in all respects competent to take care of her own body, soul, and estate into the bargain."

"You would not mayhap have said so," answered the waiting-woman, "had you seen how like Lot's wife she looked when young master took his leave."

My mistress is a good lady, and a virtuous and a well-doing lady, and a well-spoken of—but I would not Sir Halbert had seen her this morning for two and a plack."

"Oh, foy! foy! foy!" reiterated the steward; "servants should hear and see, and say nothing. Besides that, my lady is utterly devoted to Sir Halbert, as well she may, being, as he is, the most renowned knight in these parts."

"Well, well," said the abigail, "I mean no more harm; but they that seek least renown abroad, are most apt to find quiet at home, that's all; and my lady's lonesome situation is to be considered, that made her fain to take up with the first beggar's brat that a dog brought her out of the loch."

"And, therefore," said the steward, "I say, rejoice not too much, or too hastily, Mrs Lilies; for if your lady wished a favourite to pass away the time, depend upon it, the time will not pass lighter now that he is gone; since she will have another favourite to chuse for herself, and be assured she will not lack one."

"And where should she chuse one but among her own tried and faithful servants," said Mrs Lilies, "who have broken her bread and drank her drink for so many years? I have known many a lady as high as she, that never thought either of a friend or favourite beyond their own waiting-woman—always having a proper respect, at the same time, for their old and faithful master of the household, Mr Wingate."

"Truly, Mrs Lilies," replied the steward, "I do partly see the mark at which you shoot, but I doubt your bolt will fall short. Matters being with our lady as it likes you to suppose, it will neither be your crimped pinders, Mrs Lilies (speaking of them with due respect), nor my silver hair, or golden chain, that will fill up the void which Roland Græme must needs leave in our lady's leisure. There will be a learned young divine with some new doctrine—a learned leech with some new drug—a bold cavalier, who will not be refused the favour of wearing her colours at a running at the ring—a cunning harper that could harp the heart out of a woman's breast, as they say Signor David Rizzio did to our poor queen; these are the sort of folks who supply the loss of a well-favoured favourite, and not an old steward, or a middle-aged waiting-woman."

"Well," said Lilies, "you have experience, Master Wingate, and truly I would my master would leave off his pricking hither and thither, and look better after the affairs of his household. There will be a papistrie among us next, for what should I see among master's clothes but a string of gold beads! I promise you, *aves* and *credos* both!—I seized on them like a falcon."

"I doubt it not, I doubt it not," said the steward, sagaciously nodding his head; "I have often noticed that the boy had strange observances which savoured of popery, and that he was very jealous to conceal them. But you will find the catholic under the presbyterian cloak as often as the knave under the friar's hood—what then? we are all mortal—Right proper beads they are," he added, looking attentively at them, "and may weigh four ounces of fine gold."

"And I will have them melted down presently," she said, "before they be the misguiding of some poor blinded soul."

"Very cautious, indeed, Mrs Lilies," said the steward, nodding his head in assent.

"I will have them made," said Mrs Lilies, "into a pair of shoe-buckles; I would not wear the pope's trinkets, or whatever has once borne the shape of them, one inch above my instep, were they diamonds, instead of gold—But this is what has come of Father Ambrose coming about the castle, as demure as a cat that is about to steal cream."

"Father Ambrose is our master's brother," said the steward, gravely.

"Very true, Master Wingate," answered the dame; "but is that a good reason why he should pervert the king's liege subjects to papistrie?"

"Heaven forbid, Mrs Lilies," answered the sententious major-domo; "but yet there are worse folks than the papists."

"I wonder where they are to be found," said the waiting-woman, with some asperity; "but I believe, Mr Wingate, if one were to speak to you about the devil himself, you would say there were worse people than Satan."

"Assuredly I might say so," replied the steward, "supposing that I saw Satan standing at my elbow."

The waiting-woman started, and having exclaimed, "God bless us!" added, "I wonder, Mr Wingate, you can take pleasure in frightening one thus!"

"Nay, Mrs Lilies, I had no such purpose," was the reply; "but look you here—the papists are but put down for the present, but who knows how long this word *present* will last? There are two great popish earls in the north of England, that abominate the very word *reformation*; I mean the Northumberland and Westmoreland earls, men of power enough to shake any throne in Christendom. Then, though our Scottish king be, God bless him, a true protestant, yet here is the mother that was our queen—I trust there is no harm to say God bless her too—and she is a catholic; and many begin to think she has had but hard measure, such as the Hamiltons in the west, and some of our Border clans here, and the Gordons in the north, who are all wishing to see a new world; and if such a new world should chance to come up, it is like that the queen will take back her own crown, and that the mass and the cross will come up, and then down go pulpits, Geneva gowns, and black silk scull-caps."

"And have you, Mr Jasper Wingate, who have heard the word, and listened unto pure and precious Mr Henry Warden, have you, I say, the patience to speak, or but to think, of popery coming down on us like a storm, or of the woman Mary again making the royal seat of Scotland a throne of abomination? No marvel that you are so civil to the cowed monk, Father Ambrose, when he comes hither with his downcast eyes that he never raises to my lady's face, and with his low sweet-toned voice, and his benedicites, and his benisons; and who so ready to take them kindly as Mr Wingate?"

"Mrs Lilies," replied the butler, with an air which was intended to close the debate, "there are

reasons for all things. If I received Father Ambrose debonairly, and suffered him to steal a word now and then with this same Roland Græme, it was not that I cared a brass bodle for his benison or malison either, but only because I respected my master's blood. And who can answer, if Mary come in again, whether he may not be as stout a tree to lean to as ever his brother hath proved to us? For down goes the Earl of Murray when the queen comes by her own again; and good is his luck if he can keep the head on his own shoulders. And down goes our knight, with the earl, his patron; and who so like to mount into his empty saddle as this same Father Ambrose? The Pope of Rome can soon dispense with his vows, and then we should have Sir Edward the soldier, instead of Ambrose the priest."

Resentment and astonishment kept Mrs Liliass silent, while her old friend, in his self-complacent manner, was making known to her his political speculations. At length her resentment found utterance in words of great ire and scorn. "What, Master Wingate? have you eaten my mistress's bread, to say nothing of my master's, so many years, that you could live to think of her being dispossessed of her own Castle of Avenel, by a wretched monk, who is not a drop's blood to her in the way of relation? I, that am but a woman, would try first whether my rock or his cowl were the better metal. Shame on you, Master Wingate! If I had not held you as so old an acquaintance, this should have gone to my lady's ears, though I had been called pick-thank and tale-pyot for my pains, as when I told of Roland Græme shooting the wild-swan."

Master Wingate was somewhat dismayed at perceiving that the detail which he had given of his far-sighted political views had produced on his hearer rather suspicion of his fidelity than admiration of his wisdom; and endeavoured, as hastily as possible, to apologize and to explain, although internally extremely offended at the unreasonable view, as he deemed it, which it had pleased Mistress Liliass Bradbourne to take of his expressions; and mentally convinced that her disapprobation of his sentiments arose solely out of the consideration that though Father Ambrose, supposing him to become the master of the castle, would certainly require the services of a steward, yet those of a waiting-woman would, in the supposed circumstances, be altogether superfluous.

After his explanation had been received as explanations usually are, the two friends separated; Liliass to attend the silver whistle which called her to her mistress's chamber, and the sapient major-domo to the duties of his own department. They parted with less than their usual degree of reverence and regard; for the steward felt that his worldly wisdom was rebuked by the more disinterested attachment of the waiting-woman, and Mistress Liliass Bradbourne was compelled to consider her old friend as something little, if any thing, better than a time-server.

CHAPTER VII.

When I ha'e a saxpence under my thumb,
Then I get credit in ilka town;
But when I am poor, they bid me gae bye,
O poverty parts good company.

Old Song.

WHILE the departure of the page afforded subject for the conversation which we have detailed in our last chapter, the late favourite was far advanced on his solitary journey, without well knowing what was its object, or what was likely to be its end. He had rowed the skiff in which he left the castle to the side of the lake most distant from the village, with the desire of escaping the notice of the inhabitants. His pride whispered, that he would be, in his discarded state, only the subject of their wonder and compassion; and his generosity told him, that any mark of sympathy which his situation should excite, might be unfavourably reported at the castle. A trifling incident convinced him he had little to fear for his friends on the latter score. He was met by a young man some years older than himself, who had on former occasions been but too happy to be permitted to share in his sports in the subordinate character of his assistant. Ralph Fisher approached to greet him with all the alacrity of an humble friend.

"What, Master Roland, abroad on this side, and without either hawk or hound?"

"Hawk or hound," said Roland, "I will never perhaps hollo to again. I have been dismissed—that is, I have left the castle."

Ralph was surprised. "What, you are to pass into the knight's service, and take the black-jack and the lance?"

"Indeed," replied Roland Græme, "I am not—I am now leaving the service of Avenel for ever."

"And whither are you going then?" said the young peasant.

"Nay, that is a question which it craves time to answer—I have that matter to determine yet," replied the disgraced favourite.

"Nay, nay," said Ralph, "I warrant you it is the same to you which way you go—my lady would not dismiss you till she had put some lining into the pouches of your doublet."

"Sordid slave!" said Roland Græme, "dost thou think I would have accepted a boon from one who was giving me over a prey to detraction and to ruin, at the instigation of a canting priest and a meddling serving-woman? The bread that I had bought with such an alms would have choked me at the first mouthful."

Ralph looked at his quondam friend with an air of wonder, not unmixed with contempt. "Well," he said, at length, "no occasion for passion—each man knows his own stomach best—but, were I on a black moor at this time of day, not knowing whither I was going, I would be glad to have a broad piece or two in my pouch, come by them as I could.—But perhaps you will go with me to my father's—that is for a night, for to-morrow we expect my uncle Menelaws and all his folk; but, as I said, for one night——"

The cold-blooded limitation of the offered shelter to one night only, and that tendered most unwillingly, offended the pride of the discarded favourite.

"I would rather sleep on the fresh heather, as I have done many a night on less occasion," said Roland Græme, "than in that smoky garret of your father's, that smells of peat-smoke and usquebaugh, like a Highlander's plaid."

"You may chuse, my master, if you are so nice," replied Ralph Fisher; "you may be glad to smell a peat-fire, and usquebaugh too, if you journey long in the fashion you propose. You might have said God-a-mercy for your proffer though—it is not every one will put themselves in the way of ill-will by harbouring a discarded serving-man."

"Ralph," said Roland Græme, "I would pray you to remember that I have switched you before now, and this is the same riding-wand which you have tasted."

Ralph, who was a thick-set clownish figure, arrived at his full strength, and conscious of the most complete personal superiority, laughed contemptuously at the threats of the slight-made stripling.

"It may be the same wand," he said, "but not the same hand; and that is as good rhyme as if it were in a ballad. Look you, my lady's page that was, when your switch was up, it was no fear of you, but of your betters, that kept mine down—and I wot not what hinders me from clearing old scores with this hazel rung, and showing you it was your lady's livery-coat which I spared, and not your flesh and blood, Master Roland."

In the midst of his rage, Roland Græme was just wise enough to see, that by continuing this altercation, he would subject himself to very rude treatment from the boor, who was so much older and stronger than himself; and while his antagonist, with a sort of jeering laugh of defiance, seemed to provoke the contest, he felt the full bitterness of his own degraded condition, and burst into a passion of tears, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal with both his hands.

Even the rough churl was moved with the distress of his *quondam* companion.

"Nay, Master Roland," he said, "I did but as 'twere jest with thee—I would not harm thee, man, were it but for old acquaintance' sake. But ever look to a man's inches ere you talk of switching—why, thine arm, man, is but like a spindle compared to mine. But hark, I hear old Adam Woodcock hollowing to his hawk—Come along, man, we will have a merry afternoon, and go jollily to my father's, in spite of the peat-smoke and usquebaugh to boot. Maybe we may put you into some honest way of winning your bread, though it's hard to come by in these broken times."

The unfortunate page made no answer, nor did he withdraw his hands from his face, and Fisher continued in what he imagined a suitable tone of comfort.

"Why, man, when you were my lady's minion, men held you proud, and some thought you a papist, and I wot not what; and so, now that you have no one to bear you out, you must be companionable and hearty, and wait on the minister's examinations, and put these things out of folk's head; and if he says

you are in fault, you must jounk your head to the stream; and if a gentleman, or a gentleman's gentleman, gives you a rough word, or a light brow, you must only say, thank you for dusting my doublet, or the like, as I have done by you.—But hark to Woodcock's whistle again. Come, and I will teach you all the trick on't as we go on."

"I thank you," said Roland Græme, endeavouring to assume an air of indifference and of superiority; "but I have another path before me, and, were it otherwise, I could not tread in yours."

"Very true, Master Roland," replied the clown; "and every man knows his own matters best, and so I will not keep you from the path, as you say. Give us a grip of your hand, man, for auld lang syne.—What! not clap palms ere we part!—well, so be it—a wilful man will have his way—and so, farewell, and the blessing of the morning to you."

"Good morrow—good morrow," said Roland, hastily; and the clown walked lightly off, whistling as he went, and glad, apparently, to be rid of an acquaintance, whose claims might be troublesome, and who had no longer the means to be serviceable to him.

Roland Græme compelled himself to walk on while they were within sight of each other, that his former inmate might not augur any vacillation of purpose, or uncertainty of object, from his remaining on the same spot; but the effort was a painful one. He seemed stunned, as it were, and giddy; the earth on which he stood felt as if unsound, and quaking under his feet like the surface of a bog; and he had once or twice nearly fallen, though the path he trod was of firm green-sward. He kept resolutely moving forward, in spite of the internal agitation to which these symptoms belonged, until the distant form of his acquaintance disappeared behind the slope of a hill, when his heart gave way at once; and, sitting down on the turf, remote from human ken, he gave way to the natural expressions of wounded pride, grief, and fear, and wept with unrestrained profusion and unqualified bitterness.

When the first violent paroxysm of his feelings had subsided, the deserted and friendless youth felt that mental relief which usually follows such discharges of sorrow. The tears continued to chase each other down his cheeks, but they were no longer accompanied by the same sense of desolation; an afflicting yet milder sentiment was awakened in his mind, by the recollection of his benefactress, of the unwearied kindness which had attached her to him, in spite of many acts of provoking petulance, now recollected as offences of a deep dye, which had protected him against the machinations of others, as well as against the consequences of his own folly, and would have continued to do so, had not the excess of his presumption compelled her to withdraw her protection.

"Whatever indignity I have borne," he said, "has been the just reward of my own ingratitude. And have I done well to accept the hospitality, the more than maternal kindness of my protectress, yet to detain from her the knowledge of my religion?—but she shall know that a catholic has as much gratitude as a puritan—that I have been thoughtless, but not wicked—that in my wildest moments I have

loved, respected, and honoured her—and that the orphan boy might indeed be heedless, but was never ungrateful.”

He turned, as these thoughts passed through his mind, and began hastily to retread his footsteps towards the castle. But he checked the first eagerness of his repentant haste, when he reflected on the scorn and contempt with which the family were likely to see the return of the fugitive, humbled, as they must necessarily suppose him, into a suppliant, who requested pardon for his fault, and permission to return to his service. He slackened his pace, but he stood not still.

“I care not,” he resolutely determined; “let them wink, point, nod, sneer, speak of the conceit which is humbled, of the pride which has had a fall—I care not; it is a penance due to my folly, and I will endure it with patience. But if she also, my benefactress, if she also should think me sordid and weak-spirited enough to beg, not for her pardon alone, but for a renewal of the advantages which I derived from her favour—*her* suspicion of my meanness I cannot—I will not brook.”

He stood still, and his pride rallying with constitutional obstinacy against his more just feeling, urged that he would incur the scorn of the Lady of Avenel, rather than obtain her favour, by following the course which the first ardour of his repentant feelings had dictated to him.

“If I had but some plausible pretext,” he thought, “some ostensible reason for my return, some reason to allege which might show I came not as a degraded suppliant, or a discarded menial, I might go thither—but as I am, I cannot—my heart would leap from its place and burst.”

As these thoughts passed through his mind, something passed in the air so near him as to dazzle his eyes, and almost to brush the plume in his cap. He looked up—it was the favourite falcon of Sir Halbert, which, flying around his head, seemed to claim his attention, as that of a well-known friend. Roland extended his arm, and gave the well-known whoop, and the falcon instantly settled on his wrist, and began to prune itself, glancing at the youth from time to time an acute and brilliant glance of its hazel eye, which seemed to ask why he caressed it not with his usual fondness.

“Ah, Diamond!” he said, as if the bird understood him, “thou and I must be strangers henceforward. Many a gallant stoop have I seen thee make, and many a brave heron strike down; but that is all over, and there is no hawking more for me.”

“And why not, Master Roland,” said Adam Woodcock the falconer, who came at that instant from behind a few alder-bushes which had concealed him from view, “Why should there be no more hawking for you? Why, man, what were our life without our sports—thou know’st the jolly old song—

And rather would Allan in dungeon lie,
Than live at large where the falcon cannot fly;
And Allan would rather lie in sexton’s pound,
Than live where he follow’d not the merry hawk and hound.”

The voice of the honest falconer was hearty and

friendly, and the tone in which he half sung half recited his rude ballad, implied honest frankness and cordiality. But remembrance of their quarrel, and its consequences, embarrassed Roland, and prevented his reply. The falconer saw his hesitation, and guessed the cause.

“What now,” said he, “Master Roland? do you, who are half an Englishman, think that I, who am a whole one, would keep up anger at you, and you in distress? That were like some of the Scots (my master’s reverence always excepted), who can be fair and false, and wait their time, and keep their mind, as they say, to themselves, and touch pot and flagon with you, and hunt and hawk with you, and, after all, when time serves, pay off some old feud with the point of the dagger. Canny Yorkshire has no memory for such old sores. Why, man, an you had hit me a rough blow, maybe I would rather have taken it from you, than a rough word from another; for you have a good notion of falconry, though you stand up for washing the meat for the eyasses. So give us your hand, man, and bear no malice.”

Roland, though he felt his proud blood rebel at the familiarity of honest Adam’s address, could not resist its downright frankness. Covering his face with the one hand, he held out the other to the falconer, and returned with readiness his friendly grasp.

“Why, this is hearty now,” said Woodcock; “I always said you had a kind heart, though you have a spice of the devil in your disposition, that is certain. I came this way with the falcon on purpose to find you, and yon half-bred lubbard told me which way you took flight. You ever thought too much of that kestril-kite, Master Roland, and he knows nought of sport after all, but what he caught from you. I saw how it had been betwixt you, and I sent him out of my company with a wanion—I would rather have a rifler on my perch than a false knave at my elbow—And now, Master Roland, tell me, what way wing ye?”

“That is as God pleases,” replied the page, with a sigh which he could not suppress.

“Nay, man, never droop a feather for being cast off,” said the falconer; “who knows but you may soar the better and fairer flight for all this yet?—Look at Diamond there—’tis a noble bird, and shows gallantly with his hood and bells and jesses; but there is many a wild falcon in Norway that would not change properties with him—And that is what I would say of you. You are no longer my lady’s page, and you will not clothe so fair, or feed so well, or sleep so soft, or show so gallant—What of all that? if you are not her page, you are your own man, and may go where you will, without minding whoop or whistle. The worst is the loss of the sport, but who knows what you may come to? They say that Sir Halbert himself, I speak with reverence, was once glad to be the abbot’s forester, and now he has hounds and hawks of his own, and Adam Woodcock for a falconer to the boot.”

“You are right, and say well, Adam,” answered the youth, the blood mantling in his cheeks; “the falcon will soar higher without his bells than with them, though the bells be made of silver.”

"That is cheerily spoken," answered the falconer; "and whither now?"

"I thought of going to the Abbey of Kennaquhair," answered Roland Græme, "to ask the counsel of Father Ambrose."

"And joy go with you," said the falconer, "though it is like you may find the old monks in some sorrow; they say the commons are threatening to turn them out of their cells, and make a devil's mass of it in the old church, thinking they have forborne that sport too long; and troth I am clear of the same opinion."

"Then will Father Ambrose be the better of having a friend beside him!" said the page manfully.

"Ay, but, my young fearnought, replied the falconer, "the friend will scarce be the better of being beside Father Ambrose—he may come by the red-der's lick, and that is ever the worst of the battle."

"I care not for that," said the page, "the dread of a lick should not hold me back; but I fear I may bring trouble between the brothers by visiting Father Ambrose. I will tarry to-night at Saint Cuthbert's Cell, where the old priest will give me a night's shelter; and I will send to Father Ambrose to ask his advice before I go down to the convent."

"By Our Lady," said the falconer, "and that is a likely plan—and now," he continued, exchanging his frankness of manner for a sort of awkward embarrassment, as if he had somewhat to say that he had no ready means to bring out—"and now, you wot well that I wear a pouch for my hawks' meat, and so forth; but wot you what it is lined with, Master Roland?"

"With leather, to be sure," replied Roland, somewhat surprised at the hesitation with which Adam Woodcock asked a question so simple.

"With leather, lad?" said Woodcock; "ay, and with silver to the boot of that. See here," he said, showing a secret slit in the lining of his bag of office—"here they are, thirty good Harry groats as ever were struck in bluff old Hal's time, and ten of them are right heartily at your service; and now the murder is out."

Roland's first idea was to refuse this assistance; but he recollected the vows of humility which he had just taken upon him, and it occurred that this was the opportunity to put his new-formed resolution to the test. Assuming a strong command of himself, he answered Adam Woodcock with as much frankness as his nature permitted him to wear, in doing what was so contrary to his inclinations, that he accepted thankfully of his kind offer, while, to sooth his own reviving pride, he could not help adding, "he hoped soon to requite the obligation."

"That as you list—that as you list, young man," said the falconer, with glee, counting out and delivering to his young friend the supply he had so generously offered, and then adding, with great cheerfulness,—
"Now you may go through the world; for he that can back a horse, wind a horn, hollow a greyhound, fly a hawk, and play at sword and buckler, with a whole pair of shoes, a greenjacket, and ten lily-white groats in his pouch, may bid Father Care hang himself in his own jesses. Farewell, and God be with you!"

So saying, and as if desirous to avoid the thanks of his companion, he turned hastily round, and left Roland Græme to pursue his journey alone.

VOL. III.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
Grey moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is o'erthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll
The long-ribb'd aisles are burst and sunk,
The holy shrine to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk,
God's blessing on his soul!

Rediviva.

THE Cell of Saint Cuthbert, as it was called, marked, or was supposed to mark, one of those resting-places, which that venerable saint was pleased to assign to his monks, when his convent, being driven from Lindisfern by the Danes, became a peripatetic society of religionists; and bearing their patron's body on their shoulders, transported him from place to place, through Scotland and the borders of England, until he was pleased at length to spare them the pain of bearing him farther, and to chuse his ultimate place of rest in the lordly towers of Durham. The odour of his sanctity remained behind him at each place where he had granted the monks a transient respite from their labours; and proud were those who could assign, as his temporary resting-place, any spot within their vicinity. Few were more celebrated and honoured than the well-known Cell of Saint Cuthbert, to which Roland Græme now bent his way, situated considerably to the north-west of the great Abbey of Kennaquhair, on which it was dependent. In the neighbourhood were some of those recommendations which weighed with the experienced priesthood of Rome, in chusing their sites for places of religion.

There was a well, possessed of some medicinal qualities, which, of course, claimed the saint for its guardian and patron, and occasionally produced some advantage to the recluse who inhabited his cell, since none could reasonably be expected to be benefited by the fountain who did not extend their bounty to the saint's chaplain. A few roods of fertile land afforded the monk his plot of garden ground; an eminence well clothed with trees rose behind the cell, and sheltered it from the north and the east, while the front, opening to the south-west, looked up a wild, but pleasant valley, down which wandered a lively brook, which battled with every stone that interrupted its passage.

The cell itself was rather plainly than rudely built—a low Gothic building with two small apartments, one of which served the priest for his dwelling-place, the other for his chapel. As there were few of the secular clergy who durst venture to reside so near the Border, the assistance of this monk in spiritual affairs had not been useless to the community, while the catholic religion retained the ascendancy; as he could marry, christen, and administer the other sacraments of the Roman church. Of late, however, as the protestant doctrines gained ground, he had found it convenient to live in close retirement, and to avoid, as much as possible, drawing upon himself observation or animadversion. The appearance of his habitation, however, when Roland Græme came

before it in the close of the evening, plainly showed that his caution had been finally ineffectual.

The page's first movement was to knock at the door, when he observed, to his surprise, that it was open; not from being left unlatched, but because, beat off its upper hinge, it was only fastened to the door-post by the lower, and could therefore no longer perform its functions. Somewhat alarmed at this, and receiving no answer when he knocked and called, Roland began to look more at leisure upon the exterior of the little dwelling, before he ventured to enter it. The flowers, which had been trained with care against the walls, seemed to have been recently torn down, and trailed their dishonoured garlands on the earth; the latticed window was broken and dashed in. The garden, which the monk had maintained by his constant labour in the highest order and beauty, bore marks of having been lately trod down and destroyed by the hoofs of animals and the feet of men.

The sainted spring had not escaped. It was wont to arise beneath a canopy of ribbed arches, with which the devotion of elder times had secured and protected its healing waters. These arches were now almost entirely demolished, and the stones of which they were built were tumbled into the well, as if with the purpose of choking up and destroying the fountain, which, as it had shared in other days the honour of the saint, was, in the present, doomed to partake his unpopularity. Part of the roof had been pulled down from the house itself, and an attempt had been made with crows and levers upon one of the angles, by which several large corner-stones had been forced out of their place; but the solidity of ancient mason-work had proved too great for the time or patience of the assailants, and they had relinquished their task of destruction. Such dilapidated buildings, after the lapse of years during which nature has gradually covered the effects of violence with creeping plants, and with weather stains, exhibit, amid their decay, a melancholy beauty. But when the visible effects of violence appear raw and recent, there is no feeling to mitigate the sense of devastation with which they impress the spectators; and such was now the scene on which the youthful page gazed, with the painful feelings it was qualified to excite.

When his first momentary surprise was over, Roland Græme was at no loss to conjecture the cause of these ravages. The destruction of the popish edifices did not take place at once throughout Scotland, but at different times, and according to the spirit which actuated the reformed clergy; some of whom instigated their hearers to these acts of demolition; and others, with better taste and feeling, endeavoured to protect the ancient shrines, while they desired to see them purified from the objects which had attracted idolatrous devotion. From time to time, therefore, the populace of the Scottish towns and villages, when instigated either by their own feelings of abhorrence for popish superstition, or by the zealous doctrines of the more zealous preachers, resumed the work of destruction, and exercised it upon some sequestered church, chapel, or cell, which had escaped the first burst of their indignation against the religion of Rome. In many

places, the vices of the catholic clergy, arising out of the wealth and the corruption of that tremendous hierarchy, furnished too good an apology for wreaking vengeance upon the splendid edifices which they inhabited; and of this an old Scottish historian gives a remarkable instance.

"Why mourn ye?" said an aged matron, seeing the discontent of some of the citizens, while a stately convent was burnt by the multitude, "why mourn ye for its destruction? If you knew half the flagitious wickedness which has been perpetrated within that house, you would rather bless the divine judgment, which permits not even the senseless walls, which screened such profligacy, any longer to cumber christian ground."

But although, in many instances, the destruction of the Roman catholic buildings might be, in the matron's way of judging, an act of justice, and in others an act of policy, there is no doubt that the humour of demolishing monuments of ancient piety and munificence, and that in a poor country like Scotland, where there was no chance of their being replaced, was both useless, mischievous, and barbarous.

In the present instance, the unpretending and quiet seclusion of the monk of St Cuthbert's had hitherto saved him from the general wreck; but it would seem ruin had now at length reached him. Anxious to discover if he had at least escaped personal harm, Roland Græme now entered the half-ruined cell.

The interior of the building was in a state which fully justified the opinion he had formed from its external injuries. The few rude utensils of the solitary's hut were broken down and lay scattered on the floor, where it seemed as if a fire had been made with some of the fragments to destroy the rest of his property, and to consume, in particular, the rude old image of Saint Cuthbert, in his episcopal habit, which lay on the hearth like Dagon of yore, shattered with the axe and scorched with the flames, but only partially destroyed. In the little apartment which served as a chapel, the altar was overthrown, and the four huge stones of which it had been once composed lay scattered around the floor. The large stone crucifix, which occupied the niche behind the altar, and fronted the suppliant while he paid his devotion there, had been pulled down, and dashed by its own weight into three fragments. There were marks of sledge-hammers on each of these; yet the image had been saved from utter demolition by the size and strength of the remaining fragments, which, though much injured, retained enough of the original sculpture to show what it had been intended to represent.

Roland Græme, secretly nursed in the tenets of Rome, saw with horror the profanation of the most sacred emblem, according to his creed, of our holy religion.

"It is the badge of our redemption," he said, "which the felons have dared to violate—would to God my weak strength were able to replace it—my humble strength to atone for the sacrilege!"

He stooped to the task he first meditated, and with a sudden, and, to himself, almost an incredible exertion of power, he lifted up the one extre-

mity of the lower shaft of the cross, and rested it upon the edge of the large stone which served for its pedestal. Encouraged by this success, he applied his force to the other extremity, and, to his own astonishment, succeeded so far as to erect the lower end of the limb into the socket, out of which it had been forced, and to place this fragment of the image upright.

While he was employed in this labour, or rather at the very moment when he had accomplished the elevation of the fragment, a voice, in thrilling and well-known accents, spoke behind him these words:—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thus would I again meet the child of my love—the hope of my aged eyes."

Roland turned round in astonishment, and the tall commanding form of Magdalen Græme stood beside him. She was arrayed in a sort of loose habit, in form like that worn by penitents in catholic countries, but black in colour, and approaching as near to a pilgrim's cloak as it was safe to wear in a country where the suspicion of catholic devotion in many places endangered the safety of those who were suspected of attachment to the ancient faith. Roland Græme threw himself at her feet. She raised and embraced him with affection indeed, but not unmixed with a gravity which amounted almost to sternness.

"Thou hast kept well," she said, "the bird in thy bosom. As a boy, as a youth, thou hast held fast thy faith amongst heretics—thou hast kept thy secret and mine own amongst thine enemies. I wept when I parted from you—I, who seldom weep, then shed tears, less for thy death than for thy spiritual danger—I dared not even see thee to bid thee a last farewell—my grief, my swelling grief had betrayed me to these heretics. But thou hast been faithful—down, down on thy knees before the holy sign which ill men injure and blaspheme; down, and praise saints and angels for the grace they have done thee, in preserving thee from the leprous plague which cleaves to the house in which thou wert nurtured."

"If, my mother—so I must ever call you," replied Græme,—"if I am returned such as thou wouldst wish me, thou must thank the care of the pious Father Ambrose, whose instructions confirmed your early precepts, and taught me at once to be faithful and to be silent."

"Be he blessed for it!" said she, "blessed in the cell and in the field, in the pulpit and at the altar—the saints rain blessings on him!—they are just, and employ his pious care to counteract the evils which his detested brother works against the realm and the church,—but he knew not of thy lineage?"

"I could not tell him," answered Roland, "that myself. I knew but darkly from your words, that Sir Halbert Glendinning holds mine inheritance, and that I am of blood as noble as runs in the veins of any Scottish baron—these are things not to be forgotten, but for the explanation I must now look to you."

"And when time suits thou shalt not ask for it in vain. But men say, my son, that thou art bold and sudden; and those who bear such tempers are

not lightly to be trusted with what will strongly move them."

"Say rather, my mother," returned Roland Græme, "that I am laggard and cold-blooded—what patience or endurance can you require of which *he* is not capable, who for years has heard his religion ridiculed and insulted, yet failed to plunge his dagger in the blasphemer's bosom!"

"Be contented, my child," replied Magdalen Græme; "the time, which then and even now demands patience, will soon ripen to that of effort and action—great events are on the wing, and thou—thou shalt have thy share of advancing them. Thou hast relinquished the service of the Lady of Avenel?"

"I have been dismissed from it, my mother—I have lived to be dismissed, as if I were the meanest of the train."

"It is the better, my child," replied she; "thy mind will be the more hardened to undertake that which must be performed."

"Let it be nothing, then, against the Lady of Avenel," said the page, "as thy look and words seem to imply. I have eaten her bread—I have experienced her favour—I will neither injure nor betray her."

"Of that hereafter, my son," said she; "but learn this, that it is not for thee to capitulate in thy duty, and to say, this will I do, and that will I leave undone—No, Roland! God and man will no longer abide the wickedness of this generation.—Seest thou these fragments—knowest thou what they represent?—and canst thou think it is for thee to make distinctions amongst a race so accursed by Heaven, that they renounce, violate, blaspheme, and destroy whatsoever we are commanded to believe in, whatsoever we are commanded to reverence?"

As she spoke, she bent her head towards the broken image, with a countenance in which strong resentment and zeal were mingled with an expression of ecstatic devotion; she raised her left hand aloft as in the act of making a vow, and thus proceeded: "Bear witness for me, holy saint, within whose violated temple we stand, that as it is not for vengeance of my own that my hate pursues these people, so neither for any favour or earthly affection towards any amongst them, will I withdraw my hand from the plough, when it shall pass over the devoted furrow! Bear witness, holy saint, once thyself a wanderer and fugitive as we are now—bear witness, Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven—bear witness, saints and angels!"

In this high strain of enthusiasm, she stood, raising her eyes through the fractured roof of the vault, to the stars which now began to twinkle through the pale twilight, while the long grey tresses which hung down over her shoulders waved in the night-breeze, which the chasm and fractured windows admitted freely.

Roland Græme was too much awed by early habits, as well as by the mysterious import of her words, to ask for further explanation of the purpose she obscurely hinted at. Nor did she farther press him on the subject; for, having concluded her prayer or obtestation, by clasping her hands together with solemnity, and then signing herself with

the cross, she again addressed her grandson, in a tone more adapted to the ordinary business of life."

"Thou must hence," she said, "Roland, thou must hence, but not till morning—And now, how wilt thou shift for thy night's quarters?—thou hast been more softly bred than when we were companions in the misty hills of Cumberland and Liddesdale."

"I have at least preserved, my good mother, the habits which I then learned—can lie hard, and think it no hardship. Since I have been a wanderer I have been a hunter, and fisher, and fowler; and each of these is accustomed to sleep freely in a worse shelter than sacrilege has left us here."

"Than sacrilege has left us here!" said the matron, repeating his words, and pausing on them. "Most true, my son; and God's faithful children are now worse sheltered, when they lodge in God's own house and the demesne of his blessed saints. We shall sleep cold here, under the night-wind, which whistles through the breaches which heresy has made. They shall lie warmer who made them—ay, and through a long hereafter."

Notwithstanding the wild and singular expressions of this female, she seemed to retain towards Roland Græme, in a strong degree, that affectionate and sedulous love which women bear to their nurslings and the children dependent on their care. It seemed as if she would not permit him to do aught for himself which in former days her attention had been used to do for him, and that she considered the tall stripling before her as being equally dependent on her careful attention as when he was the orphan child, who had owed all to her affectionate solicitude.

"What hast thou to eat now?" she said, as, leaving the chapel, they went into the deserted habitation of the priest; "or what means of kindling a fire, to defend thee from this raw and inclement air? Poor child! thou hast made slight provision for a long journey; nor hast thou skill to help thyself by wit, when means are scanty. But Our Lady has placed by thy side one to whom want, in all its forms, is as familiar as plenty and splendour have formerly been. And with want, Roland, come the arts of which she is the inventor."

With an active and officious diligence, which strangely contrasted with her late abstracted and high tone of catholic devotion, she set about her domestic arrangements for the evening. A pouch, which was hidden under her garment, produced a flint and steel, and from the scattered fragments around (those pertaining to the image of Saint Cuthbert scrupulously excepted) she obtained splinters sufficient to raise a sparkling and cheerful fire on the hearth of the deserted cell.

"And now," she said, "for needful food."

"Think not of it, mother," said Roland, "unless you yourself feel hunger. It is a little thing for me to endure a night's abstinence, and a small atonement for the necessary transgression of the rules of the church, upon which I was compelled during my stay in the castle."

"Hunger for myself!" answered the matron—"Know, youth, that a mother knows not hunger till that of her child is satisfied." And with affec-

tionate inconsistency, totally different from her usual manner, she added, "Roland, you must not fast; you have dispensation; you are young, and to youth food and sleep are necessities not to be dispensed with. Husband your strength, my child,—your sovereign, your religion, your country, require it. Let age macerate by fast and vigil a body which can only suffer; let youth, in these active times, nourish the limbs and the strength which action requires."

While she thus spoke, the scrip, which had produced the means of striking fire, furnished provision for a meal; of which she herself scarce partook, but anxiously watched her charge, taking a pleasure, resembling that of an epicure, in each morsel which he swallowed, with a youthful appetite which abstinence had rendered unusually sharp. Roland readily obeyed her recommendations, and ate the food which she so affectionately and earnestly placed before him. But she shook her head when invited by him in return to partake of the refreshment her own cares had furnished; and when his solicitude became more pressing, she refused him in a loftier tone of rejection.

"Young man," she said, "you know not to whom, or of what, you speak. They to whom Heaven declares its purpose must merit its communication by mortifying the senses; they have that within which requires not the superfluity of earthly nutriment, which is necessary to those who are without the sphere of the Vision. To them the watch spent in prayer is a refreshing slumber, and the sense of doing the will of Heaven is a richer banquet than the tables of monarchs can spread before them!—But do thou sleep soft, my son," she said, relapsing from the tone of fanaticism into that of maternal affection and tenderness;—"do thou sleep sound while life is but young with thee, and the cares of the day can be drowned in the slumbers of the evening. Different is thy duty and mine, and as different the means by which we must qualify and strengthen ourselves to perform it. From thee is demanded strength of body—from me, strength of soul."

While she thus spoke, she prepared with ready address a pallet-couch, composed partly of the dried leaves which had once furnished a bed to the solitary, and the guests who occasionally received his hospitality, and which, neglected by the destroyers of his humble cell, had remained little disturbed in the corner allotted for them. To these her care added some of the vestures which lay torn and scattered on the floor. With a zealous hand she selected all such as appeared to have made any part of the sacerdotal vestments, laying them aside as sacred from ordinary purposes; and with the rest she made, with dexterous promptness, such a bed as a weary man might willingly stretch himself on; and during the time she was preparing it, rejected, even with acrimony, any attempt which the youth made to assist her, or any entreaty which he urged that she would accept of the place of rest for her own use. "Sleep thou," said she, "Roland Græme, sleep thou—the persecuted, the disinherited orphan—the son of an ill-fated mother—sleep thou! I go to pray in the chapel beside thee."

The manner was too enthusiastically earnest, too obstinately firm, to permit Roland Græme to dispute her will any further. Yet he felt some shame in giving way to it. It seemed as if she had forgotten the years that had passed away since their meeting, and expected to meet in the tall, indulged, and wilful youth, whom she had recovered, the passive obedience of the child whom she had left in the Castle of Avenel. This did not fail to hurt her grandson's characteristic and constitutional pride. He obeyed indeed, awed into submission by the sudden recurrence of former subordination, and by feelings of affection and gratitude. Still, however, he felt the yoke.

"Have I relinquished the hawk and the hound," he said, "to become the pupil of her pleasure, as if I were still a child? I, whom even my envious mates allowed to be superior in those exercises which they took most pains to acquire, and which came to me naturally, as if a knowledge of them had been my birth-right? This may not, and must not be. I will be no reclaimed sparrow-hawk, who is carried hooded on a woman's wrist, and has his quarry only shown to him when his eyes are uncovered for his flight. I will know her purpose ere it is proposed to me to aid it."

These, and other thoughts, streamed through the mind of Roland Græme; and although wearied with the fatigues of the day, it was long ere he could compose himself to rest.

CHAPTER IX.

Kneel with me—swear it—'t is not in words I trust,
Save when they 're fenced with an appeal to Heaven.

Old Play.

AFTER passing the night in that sound sleep for which agitation and fatigue had prepared him, Roland was awakened by the fresh morning air, and by the beams of the rising sun. His first feeling was that of surprise; for, instead of looking forth from a turret window on the waters of the Lake of Avenel, which was the prospect his former apartment afforded, an unlatticed aperture gave him the view of the demolished garden of the banished anchorite. He sat up on his couch of leaves, and arranged in his memory, not without surprise, the singular events of the preceding day, which appeared the more surprising the more he considered them. He had lost the protectress of his youth, and, in the same day, he had recovered the guide and guardian of his childhood. The former deprivation he felt ought to be matter of unceasing regret, and it seemed as if the latter could hardly be the subject of unmixed self-congratulation. He remembered this person, who had stood to him in the relation of a mother, as equally affectionate in her attention, and absolute in her authority. A singular mixture of love and fear attended upon his early remembrances as they were connected with her; and the fear that she might desire to resume the same absolute control over his motions—a fear which her conduct of yesterday did not tend much to dissipate—weighed heavily against the joy of this second meeting.

"She cannot mean," said his rising pride, "to lead and direct me as a pupil, when I am at the age of judging of my own actions?—this she cannot mean, or, meaning it, will feel herself strangely deceived."

A sense of gratitude towards the person against whom his heart thus rebelled, checked his course of feeling. He resisted the thoughts which involuntarily arose in his mind, as he would have resisted an actual instigation of the foul fiend; and, to aid him in his struggle, he felt for his beads. But, in his hasty departure from the Castle of Avenel, he had forgotten and left them behind him.

"This is yet worse," he said; "but two things I learned of her under the most deadly charge of secrecy—to tell my beads, and to conceal that I did so; and I have kept my word till now, and when she shall ask me for the rosary, I must say I have forgotten it. Do I deserve she should believe me, when I say I have kept the secret of my faith, when I set so light by its symbol?"

He paced the floor in anxious agitation. In fact, his attachment to his faith was of a nature very different from that which animated the enthusiastic matron, but which, notwithstanding, it would have been his last thought to relinquish.

The early charges impressed on him by his grandmother, had been instilled into a mind and memory of a character peculiarly tenacious. Child as he was, he was proud of the confidence reposed in his discretion, and resolved to show that it had not been rashly entrusted to him. At the same time, his resolution was no more than that of a child, and must, necessarily, have gradually faded away under the operation both of precept and example, during his residence at the Castle of Avenel, but for the exhortations of Father Ambrose, who, in his lay state, had been called Edward Glendinning. This zealous monk had been apprised, by an unsigned letter, placed in his hand by a pilgrim, that a child educated in the catholic faith was now in the Castle of Avenel, perilously situated (so was the scroll expressed), as ever the three children who were cast into the fiery furnace of persecution. The letter threw upon Father Ambrose the fault, should this solitary lamb, unwillingly left within the demesnes of the prowling wolf, become his final prey. There needed no farther exhortation to the monk than the idea that a soul might be endangered, and that a catholic might become an apostate; and he made his visits more frequent than usual to the Castle of Avenel, lest, through want of the private encouragement and instruction which he always found some opportunity of dispensing, the church should lose a proselyte, and, according to the Romish creed, the devil acquire a soul.

Still these interviews were rare; and though they encouraged the solitary boy to keep his secret and hold fast his religion, they were neither frequent nor long enough to inspire him with anything beyond a blind attachment to the observances which the priest recommended. He adhered to the forms of his religion rather because he felt it would be dishonourable to change that of his fathers, than from any rational or sincere belief of its mysterious doctrines. It was a principal part of the distinction

which, in his own opinion, singled him out from those with whom he lived, and gave him an additional, though an internal and concealed reason, for contemning those of the household who showed an undisguised dislike of him, and for hardening himself against the instructions of the chaplain Henry Warden.

"The fanatic preacher," he thought within himself, during some one of the chaplain's frequent discourses against the Church of Rome, "he little knows whose ears are receiving his profane doctrine, and with what contempt and abhorrence they hear his blasphemies against the holy religion by which kings have been crowned, and for which martyrs have died."

But in such proud feelings of defiance of heresy, as it was termed, and of its professors, which associated the catholic religion with a sense of generous independence, and that of the protestants with the subjugation of his mind and temper to the direction of Mr Warden, began and ended the faith of Roland Græme, who, independently of the pride of singularity, sought not to understand, and had no one to expound to him, the peculiarities of the tenets which he professed. His regret, therefore, at missing the rosary which had been conveyed to him through the hands of Father Ambrose, was rather the shame of a soldier who has dropped his cockade, or badge of service, than that of a religionist who had forgotten a visible symbol of his religion.

His thoughts on the subject, however, were mortifying, and the more so from apprehension that his negligence must reach the ears of his relative. He felt it could be no one but her who had secretly transmitted these beads to Father Ambrose for his use, and that his carelessness was but an indifferent requital of her kindness.

Nor will she omit to ask me about them, said he to himself; for hers is a zeal which age cannot quell; and if she has not quitted her wont, my answer will not fail to incense her.

While he thus communed with himself, Magdalen Græme entered the apartment. "The blessing of the morning on your youthful head, my son," she said, with a solemnity of expression which thrilled the youth to the heart, so sad and earnest did the benediction flow from her lips, in a tone where devotion was blended with affection. "And thou hast started thus early from thy couch to catch the first breath of the dawn? But it is not well, my Roland. Enjoy slumber while thou canst; the time is not far behind when the waking eye must be thy portion as well as mine."

She uttered these words with an affectionate and anxious tone, which showed that, devotional as were the habitual exercises of her mind, the thoughts of her nursing yet bound her to earth with the cords of human affection and passion.

But she abode not long in a mood which she probably regarded as a momentary dereliction of her imaginary high calling—"Come," she said, "youth, up and be doing—It is time that we leave this place."

"And whither do we go?" said the young man; "or what is the object of our journey?"

The matron stepped back, and gazed on him with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure.

"To what purpose such a question?" she said; "is it not enough that I lead the way? Hast thou lived with heretics till thou hast learned to instal the vanity of thine own private judgment in place of due honour and obedience?"

The time, thought Roland Græme within himself, is already come, when I must establish my freedom, or be a willing thrall for ever—I feel that I must speedily look to it.

She instantly fulfilled his foreboding, by recurring to the theme by which her thoughts seemed most constantly engrossed, although, when she pleased, no one could so perfectly disguise her religion.

"Thy beads, my son—hast thou told thy beads?"

Roland Græme coloured high; he felt the storm was approaching, but scorned to avert it by a falsehood.

"I have forgot my rosary at the Castle of Avenel."

"Forgot thy rosary!" exclaimed she; "false both to religion and to natural duty, hast thou lost what was sent so far, and at such risk, a token of the truest affection, that should have been, every bead of it, as dear to thee as thine eye-balls?"

"I am grieved it should have so chanced, mother," said the youth, "and much did I value the token, as coming from you—for what remains, I trust to win gold enough, when I push my way in the world; and till then, beads of black oak, or a rosary of nuts, must serve the turn."

"Hear him!" said his grandmother; "young as he is, he hath learned already the lessons of the devil's school. The rosary, consecrated by the holy father himself, and sanctified by his blessings, is but a few knobs of gold, whose value may be replaced by the wages of his profane labour, and whose virtue may be supplied by a string of hazel nuts!—This is heresy—So Henry Warden, the wolf who ravages the flock of the Shepherd, hath taught thee to speak and to think."

"Mother," said Roland Græme, "I am no heretic; I believe and I pray according to the rules of our church.—This misfortune I regret, but I cannot amend it."

"Thou canst repent it though," replied his spiritual directress, "repent it in dust and ashes; atone for it by fasting, prayer, and penance, instead of looking on me with a countenance as light as if thou hadst lost but a button from thy cap."

"Mother," said Roland, "be appeased; I will remember my fault in the next confession which I have space and opportunity to make, and will do whatsoever the priest requires of me in atonement. For the heaviest fault I can do no more.—But, mother," he added, after a moment's pause, "let me not incur your farther displeasure, if I ask whither our journey is bound, and what is its object? I am no longer a child, but a man, and at my own disposal, with down upon my chin, and a sword by my side—I will go to the end of the world with you to do your pleasure; but I owe it to myself to inquire the purpose and direction of our travels."

"You owe it to yourself, ungrateful boy?" replied his relative, passion rapidly supplying the colour which age had long chased from her features,— "to yourself you owe nothing—you can owe nothing—to

me you owe everything—your life when an infant—your support while a child—the means of instruction, and the hopes of honour—and, sooner than thou shouldst abandon the noble cause to which I have devoted thee, would I see thee lie a corpse at my feet.”

Roland was alarmed at the vehement agitation with which she spoke, and which threatened to overpower her aged frame; and he hastened to reply,—“I forget nothing of what I owe to you, my dearest mother—show me how my blood can testify my gratitude, and you shall judge if I spare it. But blindfold obedience has in it as little merit as reason.”

“Saints and angels!” replied Magdalen, “and do I hear these words from the child of my hopes, the nursling by whose bed I have kneeled, and for whose weal I have wearied every saint in heaven with prayers? Roland, by obedience only canst thou show thy affection and thy gratitude. What avails it that you might perchance adopt the course I propose to thee, were it to be fully explained? Thou wouldst not then follow my command, but thine own judgment; thou wouldst not do the will of Heaven, communicated through thy best friend, to whom thou owest thine all; but thou wouldst observe the blinded dictates of thine own imperfect reason. Hear me, Roland! a lot calls thee—solicits thee—demands thee—the proudest to which man can be destined, and it uses the voice of thine earliest, thy best, thy only friend—Wilt thou resist it? Then go thy way—leave me here—my hopes on earth are gone and withered—I will kneel me down before yonder profaned altar, and when the raging heretics return, they shall dye it with the blood of a martyr.”

“But, my dearest mother,” said Roland Græme, whose early recollections of her violence were formidably renewed by these wild expressions of reckless passion, “I will not forsake you—I will abide with you—worlds shall not force me from your side—I will protect—I will defend you—I will live with you, and die for you.”

“One word, my son, were worth all these—say only I will obey you.”

“Doubt it not, mother,” replied the youth; “I will, and that with all my heart; only——”

“Nay, I receive no qualifications of thy promise,” said Magdalen Græme, catching at the word, “the obedience which I require is absolute; and blessing on thee, thou darling memory of my beloved child, that thou hast power to make a promise so hard to human pride. Trust me well, that in the design in which thou doest embark, thou hast for thy partners the mighty and the valiant, the power of the church, and the pride of the noble. Succeed or fail, live or die, thy name shall be among those with whom success or failure is alike glorious—death or life alike desirous. Forward, then, forward! life is short, and our plan is laborious.—Angels, saints, and the whole blessed host of heaven, have their eyes even now on this barren and blighted land of Scotland—What say I? on Scotland?—their eye is on *us*, Roland—on the frail woman, on the inexperienced youth, who, amidst the ruins which sacrilege hath made in the holy place, devote themselves to God’s cause, and

that of their lawful sovereign. Amen, so be it. The blessed eyes of saints and martyrs, which see our resolve, shall witness the execution; or their ears, which hear our vow, shall hear our death-groan drawn in the sacred cause.”

While thus speaking, she held Roland Græme firmly with one hand, while she pointed upward with the other, to leave him, as it were, no means of protest against the obtestation to which he was thus made a party. When she had finished her appeal to Heaven, she left him no leisure for farther hesitation, or for asking any explanation of her purpose; but passing with the same ready transition as formerly, to the solicitous attentions of an anxious parent, overwhelmed him with questions concerning his residence in the Castle of Avenel, and the qualities and accomplishments he had acquired.

“It is well,” she said, when she had exhausted her inquiries, “my gay goss-hawk hath been well trained, and will soar high; but those who bred him will have cause to fear as well as to wonder at his flight. Let us now,” she said, “to our morning meal, and care not though it be a scanty one. A few hours’ walk will bring us to more friendly quarters.”

They broke their fast, accordingly, on such fragments as remained of their yesterday’s provision, and immediately set out on their further journey. Magdalen Græme led the way, with a firm and active step much beyond her years; and Roland Græme followed, pensive and anxious, and far from satisfied with the state of dependence to which he seemed again to be reduced.

“Am I for ever,” he said to himself, “to be devoured with the desire of independence and free agency, and yet to be for ever led on, by circumstances, to follow the will of others?”

CHAPTER X.

The dwelt unnoticed and alone,
Beside the springs of Dove;
A maid whom there was none to praise,
And very few to love.

WORDSWORTH.

IN the course of their journey the travellers spoke little to each other. Magdalen Græme chaunted, from time to time, in a low voice, a part of some one of those beautiful old Latin hymns which belong to the catholic service, muttered an ave or a credo, and so passed on, lost in devotional contemplation. The meditations of her grandson were more bent on mundane matters; and many a time, as a moor-fowl arose from the heath, and shot along the moor, uttering his bold crow of defiance, he thought of the jolly Adam Woodcock, and his trusty goss-hawk; or, as they passed a thicket where the low trees and bushes were intermingled with tall fern, furze, and broom, so as to form a thick and intricate cover, his dreams were of a roe-buck and a brace of gaze-hounds. But frequently his mind returned to the benevolent and kind mistress whom he had left behind him, offended justly, and unreconciled by any effort of his.

My step would be lighter, he thought, and so

would my heart, could I but have returned to see her for one instant, and to say, lady, the orphan-boy was wild, but not ungrateful.

Travelling in these divers moods, about the hour of noon they reached a small straggling village, in which, as usual, were seen one or two of those predominating towers, or peel-houses, which, for reasons of defence elsewhere detailed, were at that time to be found in every Border hamlet. A brook flowed beside the village, and watered the valley in which it stood. There was also a mansion at the end of the village, and a little way separated from it, much dilapidated, and in very bad order, but appearing to have been the abode of persons of some consideration. The situation was agreeable, being an angle formed by the stream, bearing three or four large sycamore-trees, which, being in full leaf, served to relieve the dark appearance of the mansion, which was built of a deep red stone. The house itself had been a large one, but was now obviously too big for the inmates; several windows were built up, especially those which opened from the lower storey; others were blockaded in a less substantial manner. The court before the door, which had once been defended with a species of low outer-wall, now ruinous, was paved, but the stones were completely covered with long grey nettles, thistles, and other weeds, which, shooting up betwixt the flags, had displaced many of them from their level. Even matters demanding more peremptory attention had been left neglected, in a manner which argued sloth or poverty in the extreme. The stream, undermining a part of the bank near an angle of the ruinous wall, had brought it down, with a corner turret, the ruins of which lay in the bed of the river. The current, interrupted by the ruins which it had overthrown, and turned yet nearer to the site of the tower, had greatly enlarged the breach it had made, and was in the process of undermining the ground on which the house itself stood, unless it were speedily protected by sufficient bulwarks.

All this attracted Roland Græme's observation as they approached the dwelling by a winding path, which gave them, at intervals, a view of it from different points.

"If we go to yonder house," he said to his mother, "I trust it is but for a short visit. It looks as if two rainy days from the north-west would send the whole into the brook."

"You see but with the eyes of the body," said the old woman; "God will defend his own, though it be forsaken and despised of men. Better to dwell on the sand, under his law, than fly to the rock of human trust."

As she thus spoke, they entered the court before the old mansion, and Roland could observe that the front of it had formerly been considerably ornamented with carved work, in the same dark-coloured freestone of which it was built. But all these ornaments had been broken down and destroyed, and only the shattered vestiges of niches and entablatures now strewed the place which they had once occupied. The larger entrance in front was walled up, but a little foot-path, which, from its appearance, seemed to be rarely trodden, led to a small wicket,

defended by a door well clenched with iron-headed nails, at which Magdalen Græme knocked three times, pausing betwixt each knock until she heard an answering tap from within. At the last knock, the wicket was opened by a pale thin female, who said, "*Benedicite qui venient in nomine Domini.*" They entered, and the portress hastily shut behind them the wicket, and made fast the massive fastenings by which it was secured.

The female led the way through a narrow entrance, into a vestibule of some extent, paved with stone, and having benches of the same solid material ranged around. At the upper end was an oriel window, but part of the intervals formed by the stone shafts and mullions was blocked up, so that the apartment was very gloomy.

Here they stopped, and the mistress of the mansion, for such she was, embraced Magdalen Græme, and greeting her by the title of sister, kissed her, with much solemnity, on either side of the face.

"The blessing of Our Lady be upon you, my sister," were her next words; and they left no doubt upon Roland's mind respecting the religion of their hostess, even if he could have suspected his venerable and zealous guide of resting elsewhere than in the habitation of an orthodox catholic. They spoke together a few words in private, during which he had leisure to remark more particularly the appearance of his grandmother's friend.

Her age might be betwixt fifty and sixty; her looks had a mixture of melancholy and unhappiness, that bordered on discontent, and obscured the remains of beauty which age had still left on her features. Her dress was of the plainest and most ordinary sort, of a dark colour, and, like Magdalen Græme's, something approaching to a religious habit. Strict neatness, and cleanliness of person, seemed to intimate, that, if poor, she was not reduced to squalid or heart-broken distress, and that she was still sufficiently attached to life to retain a taste for its decencies, if not its elegancies. Her manner, as well as her features and appearance, argued an original condition and education far above the meanness of her present appearance. In short, the whole figure was such as to excite the idea, "That female must have had a history worth knowing." While Roland Græme was making this very reflection, the whispers of the two females ceased, and the mistress of the mansion approaching him, looked on his face and person with much attention, and, as it seemed, some interest.

"This, then," she said, addressing his relative, "is the child of thine unhappy daughter, Magdalen; and him, the only shoot from your ancient tree, you are willing to devote to the good cause."

"Yes, by the rood," answered Magdalen Græme, in her usual tone of resolved determination, "to the good cause I devote him, flesh and fell, sinew and limb, body and soul."

"Thou art a happy woman, sister Magdalen," answered her companion "that, lifted so high above human affection and human feeling, thou canst bind such a victim to the horns of the altar. Had I been called to make such sacrifice—to plunge a youth so young and fair into the plots and blood-thirsty dealings of the time, not the patriarch Abra-

ham, when he led Isaac up the mountain, would have rendered more melancholy obedience."

She then continued to look at Roland with a mournful aspect of compassion, until the intentness of her gaze occasioned his colour to rise, and he was about to move out of its influence, when he was stopped by his grandmother with one hand, while with the other she divided the hair upon his forehead, which was now crimson with bashfulness, while she added, with a mixture of proud affection and firm resolution,—“Ay, look at him well, my sister, for on a fairer face thine eye never rested. I too, when first I saw him, felt as the worldly feel, and was half shaken in my purpose. But no wind can tear a leaf from the withered tree which has long been stripped of its foliage, and no mere human casualty can awaken the mortal feelings which have long slept in the calm of devotion.”

While the old woman thus spoke, her manner gave the lie to her assertions, for the tears rose to her eyes while she added, “But the fairer and the more spotless the victim, is it not, my sister, the more worthy of acceptance?” She seemed glad to escape from the sensations which agitated her, and instantly added, “He will escape, my sister—there will be a ram caught in the thicket, and the hand of our revolted brethren shall not be on the youthful Joseph. Heaven can defend its own rights, even by means of babes and sucklings, of women and beardless boys.”

“Heaven hath left us,” said the other female; “for our sins and our fathers’, the succours of the blessed saints have abandoned this accursed land. We may win the crown of martyrdom, but not that of earthly triumph. One, too, whose prudence was at this deep crisis so indispensable, has been called to a better world. The Abbot Eustatius is no more.”

“May his soul have mercy,” said Magdalen Græme, “and may Heaven, too, have mercy upon us, who linger behind in this bloody land! His loss is indeed a perilous blow to our enterprise; for who remains behind possessing his far-fetched experience, his self-devoted zeal, his consummate wisdom, and his undaunted courage! He hath fallen with the church’s standard in his hand, but God will raise up another to lift the blessed banner. Whom have the chapter elected in his room?”

“It is rumoured no one of the few remaining brethren dare accept the office. The heretics have sworn that they will permit no future election, and will heavily punish any attempt to create a new Abbot of Saint Mary’s. *Conjuraverunt inter se principes, dicentes, Projiciamus laqueos ejus.*”

“*Quousque, Domine—*” answered Magdalen; “this, my sister, were indeed a perilous and fatal breach in our band; but I am firm in my belief, that another will arise in the place of him so untimely removed. Where is thy daughter Catherine?”

“In the parlour,” answered the matron, “but —” She looked at Roland Græme, and muttered something in the ear of her friend.

“Fear it not,” answered Magdalen Græme, “it is both lawful and necessary—fear nothing from him—I would he were as well grounded in the faith by which alone comes safety, as he is free from thought,

deed, or speech of villany—therein is the heretic’s discipline to be commended, my sister, that they train up their youth in strong morality, and choak up every inlet to youthful folly.”

“It is but a cleansing of the outside of the cup,” answered her friend, “a whitening of the sepulchre; but he shall see Catherine, since you, sister, judge it safe and meet.—Follow us, youth,” she added, and led the way from the apartment with her friend. These were the only words which the matron had addressed to Roland Græme, who obeyed them in silence. As they paced through several winding passages and waste apartments with a very slow step, the young page had leisure to make some reflections on his situation,—reflections of a nature which his ardent temper considered as specially disagreeable. It seemed he had now got two mistresses, or tutoresses, instead of one, both elderly women, and both, it would seem, in league to direct his motions according to their own pleasure, and for the accomplishment of plans to which he was no party. This, he thought, was too much; arguing reasonably enough, that whatever right his grandmother and benefactress had to guide his motions, she was neither entitled to transfer her authority, or to divide it with another, who seemed to assume, without ceremony, the same tone of absolute command over him.

But it shall not long continue thus, thought Roland; I will not be all my life the slave of a woman’s whistle, to live upon her exhibition, go when she bids, and come when she calls. No, by Saint Andrew! the hand that can hold the lance is above the control of the distaff. I will leave them the slip’d collar in their hands on the first opportunity, and let them execute their own devices by their own proper force. It may save them both from a peril, for I guess what they meditate is not like to prove either safe or easy—the Earl of Murray and his heresy are too well rooted to be grubbed up by two old women.

As he spoke thus, they entered a low room, in which a third female was seated. This apartment was the first he had observed in the mansion, which was furnished with moveable seats, and with a wooden table, over which was laid a piece of tapestry. A carpet was spread on the floor, there was a fire-grate in the chimney, and, in brief, the apartment had the air of being habitable and inhabited.

But Roland’s eyes found better employment than to make observations on the accommodations of the chamber; for this second female inhabitant of the mansion seemed something very different from anything he had yet seen there. At his first entry, she had greeted with a silent and low obeisance the two aged matrons; then glancing her eyes towards Roland, she adjusted a veil which hung back over her shoulders, so as to bring it over her face; an operation which she performed with much modesty, but without either affected haste or embarrassed timidity.

During this manœuvre Roland had time to observe, that the face was that of a girl not much past sixteen apparently, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favourable observations was added the certainty, that the fair object-

to whom they referred possessed an excellent shape, bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a Sylph, but beautifully formed, and shown to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat, which she wore after a foreign fashion; the last not quite long enough absolutely to conceal a very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sat; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert seamstress.

It is to be remarked, that it was by stolen glances that Roland Græme contrived to ascertain these interesting particulars; and he thought he could once or twice, notwithstanding the texture of the veil, detect the damsel in the act of taking similar cognizance of his own person. The matrons in the meanwhile continued their separate conversation, eyeing from time to time the young people, in a manner which left Roland in no doubt that they were the subject of their conversation. At length he distinctly heard Magdalen Græme say these words; "Nay, my sister, we must give them opportunity to speak together, and to become acquainted; they must be personally known to each other, or how shall they be able to execute what they are entrusted with?"

It seemed as if the matron, not fully satisfied with her friend's reasoning, continued to offer some objections; but they were borne down by her more dictatorial friend.

"It must be so," she said, "my dear sister; let us therefore go forth on the balcony, to finish our conversation.—And do you," she said, addressing Roland and the girl, "become acquainted with each other."

With this she stepped up to the young woman, and, raising her veil, discovered features which, whatever might be their ordinary complexion, were now covered with a universal blush.

"*Licetum sit*," said Magdalen, looking at the other matron.

"*Vix licetum*," replied the other, with reluctant and hesitating acquiescence; and again adjusting the veil of the blushing girl, she dropped it so as to shade, though not to conceal her countenance, and whispered to her, in a tone loud enough for the page to hear, "Remember, Catherine, who thou art, and for what destined."

The matron then retreated with Magdalen Græme through one of the casements of the apartment, that opened on a large broad balcony, which, with its ponderous balustrade, had once run along the whole south front of the building which faced to the brook, and formed a pleasant and commodious walk in the open air. It was now in some places deprived of the balustrade, in others broken and narrowed; but, ruinous as it was, could still be used as a pleasant promenade. Here then walked the two ancient dames, busied in their private conversation; yet not so much so, but what Roland could observe the matrons, as their thin forms darkened the casement in passing or repassing before it, dart a glance into the apartment, to see how matters were going on there.

CHAPTER XI.

Life hath its May, and all is mirthful then:

The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odour;

Its very blast has mirth in 't,—and the maidens,

The while they don their cloaks to screen their kirtles
Laugh at the rain that wets them.

Old Play.

CATHERINE was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit, when, after the first moment of embarrassment was over, a situation of awkwardness like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth, not even known to her by name, struck her, in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sat out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony; but then glancing her deep blue eye a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he laboured, now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation, she could keep her composure no longer, but, after a vain struggle, broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment. A court page would not have left her long alone in her mirth; but Roland was country-bred, and, besides, having some conceit, as well as bashfulness, he took it into his head that he was himself the object of her inextinguishable laughter. His endeavours to sympathize with Catherine, therefore, could carry him no further than into a forced giggle, which had more of displeasure than of mirth in it, and which so much enhanced that of the girl, that it seemed to render it impossible for her ever to bring her laughter to an end, with whatever anxious pains she laboured to do so. For every one has felt that when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him, at a misbecoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it, nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it, tends only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse.

It was undoubtedly lucky for Catherine, as well as for Roland, that the latter did not share in the excessive mirth of the former. For, seated as she was, with her back to the casement, Catherine could easily escape the observation of the two matrons during the course of their promenade; whereas Græme was so placed, with his side to the window, that his mirth, had he shared that of his companion, would have been instantly visible, and could not have failed to give offence to the personages in question. He sat, however, with some impatience, until Catherine had exhausted either her power or her desire of laughing, and was returning with good grace to the exercise of her needle, and then he observed with some dryness, that "there seemed no great occasion to recommend to them to improve

their acquaintance; it seemed that they were already tolerably familiar."

Catherine had an extreme desire to set off upon a fresh score, but she repressed it strongly, and fixing her eyes on her work, replied by asking his pardon, and promising to avoid future offence.

Roland had sense enough to feel, that an air of offended dignity was very much misplaced, and that it was with a very different bearing he ought to meet the deep blue eyes which had borne such a hearty *burthen* in the laughing scene. He tried, therefore, to extricate himself as well as he could from his blunder, by assuming a tone of correspondent gaiety, and requesting to know of the nymph, "how it was her pleasure that they should proceed in improving the acquaintance which had commenced so merrily."

"That," she said, "you must yourself discover; perhaps I have gone a step too far in opening our interview."

"Suppose," said Roland Græme, "we should begin as in a tale-book, by asking each others' names and histories."

"It is right well imagined," said Catherine, "and shows an argute judgment. Do you begin, and I will listen, and only put in a question or two at the dark parts of the story. Come, unfold then your name and history, my new acquaintance."

"I am called Roland Græme, and that tall old woman is my grandmother."

"And your tutoress—good—who are your parents?"

"They are both dead," replied Roland.

"Ay, but who were they? you *had* parents, I presume?"

"I suppose so," said Roland, "but I have never been able to learn much of their history. My father was a Scottish knight, who died gallantly in his stirrups—my mother was a Græme of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land—most of her family were killed when the debateable country was burned by the Lord Maxwell and Herries of Caerlaverock."

"Is it long ago?" said the damsel

"Before I was born," answered the page.

"That must be a terrible while since," said she, shaking her head gravely; "look you, I cannot weep for them."

"It needs not," said the youth, "they fell with honour."

"So much for your lineage, fair sir," replied his companion, "of whom I like the living specimen (a glance at the casement) far more than those that are dead. Your much honoured grandmother looks as if she could make one weep in sad earnest. And now, fair sir, for your own person—if you tell not the tale faster, it will be cut short in the middle; Mother Bridget pauses longer and longer every time she passes the window, and with her there is as little mirth as in the grave of your ancestors."

"My tale is soon told—I was introduced into the Castle of Avenel to be page to the lady of the mansion."

"She is a strict Huguenot, is she not?" said the little maiden.

"As strict as Calvin himself. But my grandmother can play the puritan when it suits her pur-

pose, and she had some plan of her own for quartering me in the castle—it would have failed, however, after we had remained several weeks at the hamlet, but for an unexpected master of ceremonies——"

"And who was that?" said the girl.

"A large black dog, Wolf by name, who brought me into the castle one day in his mouth, like a hurt wild-duck, and presented me to the lady."

"A most respectable introduction truly," said Catherine, "and what might you learn at this same castle? I love dearly to know what my acquaintances can do at need."

"To fly a hawk, hollow to a hound, back a horse, and wield lance, bow, and brand."

"And to boast of all this when you have learned it," said Catherine, "which, in France at least, is the surest accomplishment of a page. But proceed, fair sir; how came your Huguenot lord, and your no less Huguenot lady, to receive and keep in the family so perilous a person as a catholic page?"

"Because they knew not that part of my history, which from a child I had been taught to keep secret—and because my grandame's former zealous attendance on their heretic chaplain, had laid all this suspicion to sleep, most fair Callipolis," said the page; and in so saying edged his chair towards the seat of the fair querist.

"Nay, but keep your distance, most gallant sir," answered the blue-eyed maiden, "for, unless I greatly mistake, these reverend ladies will soon interrupt our amicable conference, if the acquaintance they recommend shall seem to proceed beyond a certain point—so, fair sir, be pleased to abide by your station, and reply to my questions. By what achievements did you prove the qualities of a page, which you had thus happily acquired?"

Roland, who began to enter into the tone and spirit of the damsel's conversation, replied to her with becoming spirit.

"In no feat, fair gentlewoman, was I found inept, wherein there was mischief implied. I shot swans, hunted cats, frightened serving-women, chased the deer, and robbed the orchard. I say nothing of tormenting the chaplain in various ways, for that was my duty as a good catholic."

"Now, as I am a gentlewoman," said Catherine, "I think these heretics have done catholic penance in entertaining so all-accomplished a serving-man. And what, fair sir, might have been the unhappy event which deprived them of an inmate so altogether estimable?"

"Truly, fair gentlewoman," answered the youth, "your real proverb says that the longest lane will have a turning, and mine was more—it was, in fine, a turning off."

"Good!" said the merry young maiden, "it is an apt play on the word—and what occasion was taken for so important a catastrophe? Nay, start not for my learning, I do know the schools—in plain phrase, why were you sent from service?"

The page shrugged his shoulders while he replied, "A short tale is soon told—and a short horse soon curried—I made the falconer's boy taste of my switch—the falconer threatened to make me brook his cudgel—he is a kindly clown as well as a stout, and I

would rather have been cudged by him than any man in Christendom to chose—but I knew not his qualities as then—so I threatened to make him brook the stab, and my lady bade me brook the 'Begone ;' so adieu to the page's office and the fair Castle of Avenel—I had not travelled far before I met my venerable parent—And so tell your tale, fair gentlewoman, for mine is done."

"A happy grandmother," said the maiden, "who had the luck to find the stray page just when his mistress had slipped his leash, and a most lucky page that has jumped at once from a page to a gentleman-usher."

"All this is nothing of your history," answered Roland Græme, who began to be much interested in the congenial vivacity of this facetious young gentlewoman,—“tale for tale is fellow-traveller's justice."

"Wait till we are fellow-travellers then," replied Catherine.

"Nay, you escape me not so," said the page; "if you deal not justly by me, I will call out to Dame Bridget, or whatever your dame be called, and proclaim you for a cheat."

"You shall not need," answered the maiden,—“my history is the counterpart of your own; the same words might almost serve, change but dress and name. I am called Catherine Seyton, and I am an orphan."

"Have your parents been long dead?"

"That is the only question," said she, throwing down her fine eyes with a sudden expression of sorrow, "that is the only question I cannot laugh at."

"And Dame Bridget is your grandmother."

The sudden cloud passed away like that which crosses for an instant the summer sun, and she answered, with her usual lively expression, "Worse by twenty degrees—Dame Bridget is my maiden aunt."

"Over gods forebode!" said Roland—"Alas! that you have such a tale to tell! and what horror comes next?"

"Your own history exactly. I was taken upon trial for service—"

"And turned off for pinching the duenna, or affronting my lady's waiting-woman."

"Nay, our history varies there," said the damsel—"Our mistress broke up house, or had her house broke up, which is the same thing, and I am a free woman of the forest."

"And I am as glad of it as if any one had lined my doublet with cloth of gold," said the youth.

"I thank you for your mirth," said she, "but the matter is not like to concern you."

"Nay, but say on," said the page, "for you will be presently interrupted; the two good dames have been soaring yonder on the balcony, like two old hooded crows, and their croak grows hoarser as night comes on; they will wing to roost presently.—This mistress of yours, fair gentlewoman, who was she, in God's name?"

"O, she has a fair name in the world," replied Catherine Seyton. "Few ladies kept a fairer house, or held more gentlewomen in her household; my aunt Bridget was one of her housekeepers. We never saw her blessed face to be sure, but we heard

enough of her; were up early and down late, and were kept to long prayers and light food."

"Out upon the penurious beldame!" said the page.

"For Heaven's sake, blaspheme not," said the girl, with an expression of fear.—“God pardon us both! I meant no harm. I speak of our blessed Saint Catherine of Sienna!—May God forgive me that I spoke so lightly, and made you do a great sin and a great blasphemy. This was her nunnery, in which there were twelve nuns and an abbess. My aunt was the abbess till the heretics turned all adrift."

"And where are your companions?" asked the youth.

"With the last year's snow," answered the maiden; "east, north, south, and west—some to France, some to Flanders—some, I fear, into the world and its pleasures. We have got permission to remain, or rather our remaining has been connived at, for my aunt has great relations among the Kerrs, and they have threatened a death-feud if any one touches us; and bow and spear are the best warrant in these times."

"Nay, then, you sit under a sure shadow," said the youth; "and I suppose you wept yourself blind when Saint Catherine broke up housekeeping, before you had taken arles in her service?"

"Hush! for Heaven's sake," said the damsel, crossing herself, "no more of that; but I have not quite cried my eyes out," said she, turning them upon him, and instantly again bending them upon her work. It was one of those glances which would require the threefold plate of brass around the heart, more than it is needed by the mariners, to whom Horace recommends it. Our youthful page had no defence whatever to offer.

"What say you, Catherine," he said, "if we two, thus strangely turned out of service at the same time, should give our two most venerable duennas the torch to hold, while we walk a merry measure with each other over the floor of this weary world?"

"A goodly proposal, truly," said Catherine, "and worthy the mad-cap brain of a discarded page!—And what shifts does your worship propose we should live by?—by singing ballads, cutting purses, or swaggering on the highway? for there, I think, you would find your most productive exchequer."

"Chuse, you proud peat," said the page, drawing off in huge disdain at the calm and unembarrassed ridicule with which his wild proposal was received. And as he spoke the words, the casement was again darkened by the forms of the matrons—it opened, and admitted Magdalen Græme and the mother abbess, so we must now style her, into the apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

Nay, hear me, brother—I am elder, wiser,
And holier than thou—And age, and wisdom,
And holiness, have peremptory claims,
And will be listened to.—

Old Play.

WHEN the matrons re-entered, and put an end to the conversation which we have detailed in the last

chapter, Dame Magdalen Græme thus addressed her grandson and his pretty companion: "Have you spoke together, my children?—Have you become known to each other as fellow-travellers on the same dark and dubious road, whom chance hath brought together, and who study to learn the tempers and dispositions of those by whom their perils are to be shared?"

It was seldom the light-hearted Catherine could suppress a jest, so that she often spoke when she would have acted more wisely in holding her peace.

"Your grandson admires the journey which you propose so very greatly, that he was even now preparing for setting out upon it instantly."

"This is to be too forward, Roland," said the dame, addressing him, "as yesterday you were over slack—the just mean lies in obedience, which both waits for the signal to start, and obeys it when given.—But once again, my children, have you so perused each other's countenances, that when you meet, in whatever disguise the times may impose upon you, you may recognize each in the other the secret agent of the mighty work in which you are to be leagued?—Look at each other, know each line and lineament of each other's countenance. Learn to distinguish by the step, by the sound of the voice, by the motion of the hand, by the glance of the eye, the partner whom Heaven hath sent to aid in working its will.—Wilt thou know that maiden, whensoever or wheresoever you shall again meet her, my Roland Græme?"

As readily as truly did Roland answer in the affirmative. "And thou, my daughter, wilt thou again remember the features of this youth?"

"Truly, mother," replied Catherine Seyton, "I have not seen so many men of late, that I should immediately forget your grandson, though I mark not much about him that is deserving of special remembrance."

"Join hands then, my children," said Magdalen Græme; but, in saying so, was interrupted by her companion, whose conventual prejudices had been gradually giving her more and more uneasiness, and who could remain acquiescent no longer.

"Nay, my good sister, you forget," said she to Magdalen, "Catherine is the betrothed bride of Heaven—these intimacies cannot be."

"It is in the cause of Heaven that I command them to embrace," said Magdalen, with the full force of her powerful voice; "the end, sister, sanctifies the means we must use."

"They call me lady abbess, or mother at the least, who address me," said Dame Bridget, drawing herself up, as if offended at her friend's authoritative manner—"the Lady of Heathergill forgets that she speaks to the Abbess of Saint Catherine."

"When I was what you call me," said Magdalen, "you indeed were the Abbess of Saint Catherine, but both names are now gone, with all the rank that the world and that the church gave to them; and we are now, to the eye of human judgment, two poor, despised, oppressed women, dragging our dishonoured old age to a humble grave. But what are we in the eye of Heaven?—Ministers, sent forth to work His will,—in whose weakness the strength of the church shall be manifested—before whom shall

be humbled the wisdom of Murray, and the dark strength of Morton.—And to such wouldst thou apply the narrow rules of thy cloistered seclusion?—or, hast thou forgotten the order which I showed thee from thy superior, subjecting thee to me in these matters?"

"On thy head, then, be the scandal and the sin," said the abbess, sullenly.

"On mine be they both," said Magdalen. "I say, embrace each other, my children."

But Catherine, aware, perhaps, how the dispute was likely to terminate, had escaped from the apartment, and so disappointed the grandson, at least as much as the old matron.

"She is gone," said the abbess, "to provide some little refreshment. But it will have little savour to those who dwell in the world; for I, at least, cannot dispense with the rules to which I am vowed, because it is the will of wicked men to break down the sanctuary in which they wont to be observed."

"It is well, my sister," replied Magdalen, "to pay each even the smallest tithes of mint and cummin which the church demands, and I blame not thy scrupulous observance of the rules of thine order. But they were established by the church, and for the church's benefit; and reason it is that they should give way when the salvation of the church herself is at stake."

The abbess made no reply.

One more acquainted with human nature than the inexperienced page, might have found amusement in comparing the different kinds of fanaticism which these two females exhibited. The abbess—timid, narrow-minded, and discontented, clung to ancient usages and pretensions which were ended by the Reformation; and was in adversity, as she had been in prosperity, scrupulous, weak-spirited, and bigoted. While the fiery and more lofty spirit of her companion suggested a wider field of effort, and would not be limited by ordinary rules in the extraordinary schemes which were suggested by her bold and irregular imagination. But Roland Græme, instead of tracing these peculiarities of character in the two old dames, only waited with great anxiety for the return of Catherine, expecting, probably, that the proposal of the fraternal embrace would be renewed, as his grandmother seemed disposed to carry matters with a high hand.

His expectations, or hopes, if we may call them so, were, however, disappointed; for, when Catherine re-entered on the summons of the abbess, and placed on the table an earthen pitcher of water, and four wooden platters, with cups of the same materials, the Dame of Heathergill, satisfied with the arbitrary mode in which she had borne down the opposition of the abbess, pursued her victory no farther—a moderation for which her grandson, in his heart, returned her but slender thanks.

In the meanwhile, Catherine continued to place upon the table the slender preparations for the meal of a recluse, which consisted almost entirely of colewort, boiled and served up in an earthen platter, having no better seasoning than a little salt, and no better accompaniment than some coarse barley-bread, in very moderate quantity. The water-pitcher, already mentioned, furnished the

only beverage. After a Latin grace, delivered by the abbess, the guests sat down to their spare entertainment. The simplicity of the fare appeared to produce no distaste in the females, who ate of it moderately, but with the usual appearance of appetite. But Roland Græme had been used to better cheer. Sir Halbert Glendinning, who affected even an unusual degree of nobleness in his house-keeping, maintained it in a style of genial hospitality, which rivaled that of the northern barons of England. He might think, perhaps, that by doing so, he acted yet more completely the part for which he was born—that of a great baron and a leader. Two bullocks, and six sheep, weekly, were the allowance when the baron was at home, and did not greatly diminish during his absence. A boll of malt was weekly brewed into ale, which was used by the household at discretion. Bread was baked in proportion for the consumption of his domestics and retainers, and in this scene of plenty had Roland Græme now lived for several years. It formed a bad introduction to lukewarm greens and spring water; and probably his countenance indicated some sense of the difference, for the abbess observed, “It would seem, my son, that the tables of the heretic baron, whom you have so long followed, are more daintily furnished than those of the suffering daughters of the church; and yet, not upon the most solemn nights of festival, when the nuns were permitted to eat their portion at mine own table, did I consider the cates, which were then served up, as half so delicious as these vegetables and this water, on which I prefer to feed, rather than do aught which may derogate from the strictness of my vow. It shall never be said that the mistress of this house made it a house of feasting, when days of darkness and of affliction were hanging over the holy church, of which I am an unworthy member.”

“Well hast thou said, my sister,” replied Magdalen Græme; “but now it is not only time to suffer in the good cause, but to act in it. And since our pilgrim’s meal is finished, let us go apart to prepare for our journey of to-morrow, and to advise on the manner in which these children shall be employed, and what measures we can adopt to supply their thoughtlessness and lack of discretion.”

Notwithstanding his indifferent cheer, the heart of Roland Græme bounded high at this proposal, which he doubted not would lead to another *tête-à-tête* betwixt him and the pretty novice. But he was mistaken. Catherine, it would seem, had no mind so far to indulge him; for, moved either by delicacy or caprice, or some of those indescribable shades betwixt the one and the other, with which women love to tease, and at the same time to captivate the ruder sex, she reminded the abbess that it was necessary she should retire for an hour before vespers; and, receiving the ready and approving nod of her superior, she arose to withdraw. But, before leaving the apartment, she made obeisance to the matrons, bending herself till her hands touched her knees, and then made a slighter reverence to Roland, which consisted in a slight bend of the body, and gentle depression of the head. This

she performed very demurely; but the party on whom the salutation was conferred, thought he could discern in her manner an arch and mischievous exultation over his secret disappointment.—The devil take the saucy girl, he thought in his heart, though the presence of the abbess should have repressed all such profane imaginations,—she is as hard-hearted as the laughing hyæna that the story-books tell of—she has a mind that I shall not forget her this night at least.

The matrons now retired also, giving the page to understand that he was on no account to stir from the convent, or to show himself at the windows; the abbess expressing as a reason, the readiness with which the rude heretics caught at every occasion of scandalizing the religious orders.

This is worse than the rigour of Mr Henry Warden himself, said the page, when he was left alone; for, to do him justice, however strict in requiring the most rigid attention during the time of his homilies, he left us to the freedom of our own wills afterwards—ay, and would take a share in our pastimes too, if he thought them entirely innocent. But these old women are utterly wrapt up in gloom, mystery, and self-denial.—Well then—if I must neither stir out of the gate nor look out at window, I will at least see what the inside of the house contains that may help to pass away one’s time—peradventure, I may light on that blue-eyed laughter in some corner or other.

Going, therefore, out of the chamber by the entrance opposite to that through which the two matrons had departed, for it may be readily supposed that he had no desire to intrude on *their* privacy, he wandered from one chamber to another, through the deserted edifice, seeking, with boyish eagerness, some source of interest or amusement. Here he passed through a long gallery, opening on either hand into the little cells of the nuns, all deserted, and deprived of the few trifling articles of furniture which the rules of the order admitted.

The birds are flown, thought the page; but whether they will find themselves worse off in the open air than in these damp, narrow cages, I leave my lady abbess and my venerable relative to settle betwixt them. I think the lark which they have left behind them, would like best to sing under God’s free sky.

A winding stair, strait and narrow, as if to remind the nuns of their duties of fast and maceration, led down to a lower suite of apartments, which occupied the ground story of the house. These rooms were even more ruinous than those which he had left; for, having encountered the first fury of the assailants by whom the nunnery had been wasted, the windows had been dashed in, the doors broken down, and even the partitions betwixt the apartments, in some places, destroyed. As he thus stalked from desolation to desolation, and began to think of returning from so uninteresting a research to the chamber which he had left, he was surprised to hear the low of a cow very close to him. The sound was so unexpected at the time and place, that Roland Græme started as if it had been the voice of a lion, and laid his hand on his dagger, while at the same moment the light and lovely form of Catherine Seyton pre-

sented itself at the door of the apartment from which the sound had issued.

"Good even to you, valiant champion!" said she; "since the days of Guy of Warwick, never was one more worthy to encounter a dun cow."

"Cow?" said Roland Græme, "by my faith, I thought it had been the devil that roared so near me—who ever heard of a convent containing a cow-house?"

"Cow and calf may come hither now," answered Catherine, "for we have no means to keep out either. But I advise you, kind sir, to return to the place from whence you came."

"Not till I see your charge, fair sister," answered Roland, and made his way into the apartment in spite of the half serious half laughing remonstrances of the girl.

The poor solitary cow, now the only severe recluse within the nunnery, was quartered in a spacious chamber, which had once been the refectory of the convent. The roof was graced with groined arches, and the wall with niches, from which the images had been pulled down. These remnants of architectural ornaments were strangely contrasted with the rude crib and manger constructed for the cow in one corner of the apartment, and the stack of fodder which was piled beside it for her food.

"By my faith," said the page, "Crombie is more lordly lodged than any one here!"

"You had best remain with her," said Catherine, "and supply by your filial attentions the offspring she has had the ill luck to lose."

"I will remain, at least, to help you to prepare her night's lair, pretty Catherine," said Roland, seizing upon a pitch-fork.

"By no means," said Catherine; "for, besides that you know not in the least to do her that service, you will bring a chiding my way, and I get enough of that in the regular course of things."

"What! for accepting my assistance?" said the page,—"for accepting *my* assistance, who am to be your confederate in some deep matter of import? That were altogether unreasonable—and, now I think on it, tell me, if you can, what is this mighty emprise to which I am destined?"

"Robbing a bird's nest, I should suppose," said Catherine, "considering the champion whom they have selected."

"By my faith," said the youth, "and he that has taken a falcon's nest in the Scaurs of Polmoodie, has done something to brag of, my fair sister.—But that is all over now—a murrain on the nest, and the eyasses and their food, washed or unwashed, for it was all anon of cramming these worthless kites that I was sent upon my present travels. Save that I have met with you, pretty sister, I could eat my dagger-hilt for vexation at my own folly. But, as we are to be fellow-travellers——"

"Fellow-labourers! not fellow-travellers!" answered the girl; "for to your comfort be it known, that the lady abbess and I set out earlier than you and your respected relative to-morrow, and that I partly endure your company at present, because it may be long ere we meet again."

"By Saint Andrew, but it shall not though," answered Roland; "I will not hunt at all unless we are to hunt in couples."

"I suspect, in that and in other points, we must do as we are bid.—But hark! I hear my aunt's voice."

The old lady entered in good earnest, and darted a severe glance at her niece, while Roland had the ready wit to busy himself about the halter of the cow.

"The young gentleman," said Catherine, gravely, "is helping me to tie the cow up faster to her stake; for I find that last night when she put her head out of window and lowed, she alarmed the whole village; and we will be suspected of sorcery among the heretics if they do not discover the cause of the apparition, or lose our cow if they do."

"Relieve yourself of that fear," said the abbess, somewhat ironically; "the person to whom she is now sold, comes for the animal presently."

"Good night then, my poor companion," said Catherine, patting the animal's shoulders; "I hope thou hast fallen into kind hands, for my happiest hours of late have been spent in tending thee—I would I had been born to no better task."

"Now, out upon thee, mean-spirited wench!" said the abbess; "is that a speech worthy of the name of Seyton, or of the mouth of a sister of this house, treading the path of election—and to be spoken before a stranger youth too!—Go to my oratory, minion—there read your hours till I come thither, when I will read you such a lecture as shall make you prize the blessings which you possess."

Catherine was about to withdraw in silence, casting a half sorrowful half comic glance at Roland Græme, which seemed to say—"You see to what your untimely visit has exposed me," when, suddenly changing her mind, she came forward to the page, and extended her hand as she bid him good evening. Their palms had pressed each other ere the astonished matron could interfere, and Catherine had time to say—"Forgive me, mother; it is long since we have seen a face that looked with kindness on us. Since these disorders have broken up our peaceful retreat, all has been gloom and malignity; I bid this youth kindly farewell, because he has come hither in kindness, and because the odds are great, that we may never again meet in this world. I guess better than he, that the schemes on which you are rushing are too mighty for your management, and that you are now setting the stone a-rolling which must surely crush you in its descent. I bid farewell," she added, "to my fellow-victim!"

This was spoken with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity of Catherine's manner, and plainly showed, that beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and total inexperience, there lurked in her bosom a deeper power of sense and feeling, than her conduct had hitherto expressed.

The abbess remained a moment silent after she had left the room. The proposed rebuke died on her tongue, and she appeared struck with the deep and foreboding tone in which her niece had spoken her good even. She led the way in silence to the apartment which they had formerly occupied, and where there was prepared a small refectory, as the abbess termed it, consisting of milk and barley-bread. Magdalen Græme, summoned to take share

in this collation, appeared from an adjoining apartment, but Catherine was seen no more. There was little said during the hasty meal, and after it was finished, Roland Græme was dismissed to the nearest cell, where some preparations had been made for his repose.

The strange circumstances in which he found himself, had their usual effect in preventing slumber from hastily descending on him; and he could distinctly hear, by a low but earnest murmuring, in the apartment which he had left, that the matrons continued in deep consultation to a late hour. As they separated, he heard the abbess distinctly express herself thus:—"In a word, my sister, I venerate your character and the authority with which my superiors have invested you; yet it seems to me, that, ere entering on this perilous course, we should consult some of the fathers of the church."

"And how and where are we to find a faithful bishop or abbot at whom to ask counsel? The faithful Eustatius is no more—he is withdrawn from a world of evil, and from the tyranny of heretics. May Heaven and Our Lady assoilzie him of his sins, and abridge the penance of his mortal infirmities!—Where shall we find another, with whom to take counsel?"

"Heaven will provide for the church," said the abbess; "and the faithful fathers who yet are suffered to remain in the house of Kennaquhair, will proceed to elect an abbot. They will not suffer the staff to fall down, or the mitre to be unfilled, for the threats of heresy."

"That will I learn to-morrow," said Magdalen Græme; "yet who now takes the office of an hour, save to partake with the spoilers in their work of plunder—to-morrow will tell us if one of the thousand saints who are sprung from the house of Saint Mary's continues to look down on it in its misery.—Farewell, my sister, we meet at Edinburgh."

"Benedicite!" answered the abbess, and they parted.

To Kennaquhair and to Edinburgh we bend our way, thought Roland Græme. That information have I purchased by a sleepless hour—it suits well with my purpose. At Kennaquhair I shall see Father Ambrose;—at Edinburgh I will find the means of shaping my own course through this bustling world, without burthening my affectionate relation—at Edinburgh, too, I shall see again the witching novice, with her blue eyes and her provoking smile.—He fell asleep, and it was to dream of Catherine Seyton.

CHAPTER XIII.

What, Dagon up again!—I thought we had hurl'd him
Down on the threshold, never more to rise.

Bring wedge and axe; and, neighbours, lend your hands,
And rive the idol into winter fagots.

Athelstane, or the Converted Dane.

ROLAND GRÆME slept long and sound, and the sun was high over the horizon, when the voice of his companion summoned him to resume their pilgrimage; and when, hastily arranging his dress, he went to attend her call, the enthusiastic matron stood

already at the threshold, prepared for her journey. There was in all the deportment of this remarkable woman a promptitude of execution, and a sternness of perseverance, founded on the fanaticism which she nursed so deeply, and which seemed to absorb all the ordinary purposes and feelings of mortality. One human affection only gleamed through her enthusiastic energies, like the broken glimpses of the sun through the rising clouds of a storm. It was her maternal fondness for her grandson—a fondness carried almost to the verge of dotage, in circumstances where the catholic religion was not concerned, but which gave way instantly when it chanced either to thwart or come in contact with the more settled purpose of her soul, and the more devoted duty of her life. Her life she would willingly have laid down to save the earthly object of her affection; but that object itself she was ready to hazard, and would have been willing to sacrifice, could the restoration of the Church of Rome have been purchased with his blood. Her discourse by the way, excepting the few occasions in which her extreme love of her grandson found opportunity to display itself in anxiety for his health and accommodation, turned entirely on the duty of raising up the fallen honours of the church, and replacing a catholic sovereign on the throne. There were times at which she hinted, though very obscurely and distinctly, that she herself was foredoomed by Heaven to perform a part in this important task; and that she had more than mere human warranty for the zeal with which she engaged in it. But on this subject she expressed herself in such general language, that it was not easy to decide whether she made any actual pretensions to a direct and supernatural call, like the celebrated Elizabeth Barton, commonly called the Nun of Kent; or whether she only dwelt upon the general duty which was incumbent on all catholics of the time, and the pressure of which she chanced to feel in an extraordinary degree.

Yet, though Magdalen Græme gave no direct intimation of her pretensions to be considered as something beyond the ordinary class of mortals, the demeanour of one or two persons amongst the travellers whom they occasionally met, as they entered the more fertile and populous part of the valley, seemed to indicate their belief in her superior attributes. It is true, that two clowns, who drove before them a herd of cattle—one or two village wenches, who seemed bound for some merry-making—a strolling soldier, and a wandering student, as his threadbare black cloak and his satchel of books proclaimed him—passed our travellers without observation, or with a look of contempt; and, moreover, that two or three children, attracted by the appearance of a dress so nearly resembling that of a pilgrim, joined in hooting and calling "Out upon the old mass-monger!" But one or two, who nourished in their bosoms respect for the downfallen hierarchy—casting first a timorous glance around, to see that no one observed them—hastily crossed themselves—bent their knee to Sister Magdalen, by which name they saluted her—kissed her hand, or even the hem of her dalmatique—received with humility the benediction with which she repaid their obeisance; and then starting up, and again looking timidly round to

see that they had been unobserved, hastily resumed their journey. Even while within sight of persons of the prevailing faith, there were individuals bold enough, by folding their arms and bending their head, to give distant and silent intimation that they recognised Sister Magdalen, and honoured alike her person and her purpose.

She failed not to notice to her grandson these marks of honour and respect which from time to time she received. "You see," she said, "my son, that the enemies have been unable altogether to suppress the good spirit, or to root out the true seed. Amid heretics and schismatics—spoilers of the church's lands, and scoffers at saints and sacraments, there remains a remnant."

"It is true, my mother," said Roland Græme; "but methinks they are of a quality which can help us but little. See you not all those who wear steel at their side, and bear marks of better quality, ruffle past us as they would past the meanest beggars; for those who give us any marks of sympathy, are the poorest of the poor, and most outcast of the needy, who have neither bread to share with us, nor swords to defend us, nor skill to use them if they had. That poor wretch that last kneeled to you with such deep devotion, and who seemed emaciated by the touch of some wasting disease within, and the grasp of poverty without—that pale shivering, miserable caitiff, how can he aid the great schemes you meditate?"

"Much, my son," said the matron, with more mildness than the page perhaps expected. "When that pious son of the church returns from the shrine of Saint Ringan, whither he now travels by my counsel, and by the aid of good catholics,—when he returns, healed of his wasting malady, high in health and strong in limb, will not the glory of his faithfulness, and its miraculous reward, speak louder in the ears of this besotted people of Scotland, than the din which is weekly made in a thousand heretical pulpits?"

"Ay, but, mother, I fear the saint's hand is out. It is long since we have heard of a miracle performed at Saint Ringan's."

The matron made a dead pause, and, with a voice tremulous with emotion, asked, "Art thou so unhappy as to doubt the power of the blessed saint?"

"Nay, mother," the youth hastened to reply, "I believe as the holy church commands, and doubt not Saint Ringan's power of healing; but, be it said with reverence, he hath not of late showed the inclination."

"And has this land deserved it?" said the catholic matron, advancing hastily while she spoke, until she attained the summit of a rising ground, over which the path led, and then standing again still. "Here," she said, "stood the cross, the limits of the Halidome of Saint Mary's—here—on this eminence—from which the eye of the holy pilgrim might first catch a view of that ancient monastery, the light of the land, the abode of saints, and the grave of monarchs—Where is now that emblem of our faith? It lies low on the earth—a shapeless block, from which the broken fragments have been carried off, for the meanest uses, till now no semblance of its original form remains. Look towards the east, my

son, where the sun was wont to glitter on stately spires—from which crosses and bells have now been hurled, as if the land had been invaded once more by barbarous heathens—Look at yonder battlements, of which we can, even at this distance, descry the partial demolition; and ask if this land can expect from the blessed saints, whose shrines and whose images have been profaned, any other miracles but those of vengeance? How long," she exclaimed, looking upward, "how long shall it be delayed?" She paused, and then resumed with enthusiastic rapidity, "Yes, my son, all on earth is but for a period—joy and grief, triumph and desolation, succeed each other like cloud and sunshine;—the vineyard shall not be for ever trodden down, the gaps shall be amended, and the fruitful branches once more dressed and trimmed. Even this day—ay, even this hour, I trust to hear news of importance. Dally not—let us on—time is brief, and judgment is certain."

She resumed the path which led to the abbey—a path which, in ancient times, was carefully marked out by posts and rails, to assist the pilgrim in his journey—these were now torn up and destroyed. An half hour's walk placed them in front of the splendid monastery, which, although the church was as yet entire, had not escaped the fury of the times. The long range of cells and of apartments for the use of the brethren, which occupied two sides of the great square, were almost entirely ruinous, the interior having been consumed by fire, which only the massive architecture of the outward walls had enabled them to resist. The abbot's house, which formed the third side of the square, was, though injured, still inhabited, and afforded refuge to the few brethren who yet, rather by connivance than by actual authority, were permitted to remain at Kennaquhair. Their stately offices—their pleasant gardens—the magnificent cloisters constructed for their recreation, were all dilapidated and ruinous; and some of the building materials had apparently been put into requisition by persons in the village and in the vicinity, who, formerly vassals of the monastery, had not hesitated to appropriate to themselves a part of the spoils. Roland saw fragments of Gothic pillars richly carved, occupying the place of door-posts to the meanest huts; and here and there a mutilated statue, inverted or laid on its side, made the door-post or threshold of a wretched cow-house. The church itself was less injured than the other buildings of the monastery. But the images which had been placed in the numerous niches of its columns and buttresses, having all fallen under the charge of idolatry, to which the superstitious devotion of the papists had justly exposed them, had been broken and thrown down, without much regard to the preservation of the rich and airy canopies and pedestals on which they were placed; nor, if the devastation had stopped short at this point, could we have considered the preservation of these monuments of antiquity as an object to be put in the balance with the introduction of the reformed worship.

Our pilgrims saw the demolition of these sacred and venerable representations of saints and angels—for as sacred and venerable they had been taught to

consider them,—with very different feelings. The antiquary may be permitted to regret the necessity of the action, but to Magdalen Græme it seemed a deed of impiety, deserving the instant vengeance of Heaven—a sentiment in which her relative joined for the moment as cordially as herself. Neither, however, gave vent to their feelings in words, and uplifted hands and eyes formed their only mode of expressing them. The page was about to approach the great eastern gate of the church, but was prevented by his guide. “That gate,” she said, “has long been blockaded, that the heretical rabble may not know there still exist among the brethren of Saint Mary’s, men who dare worship where their predecessors prayed while alive, and were interred when dead—follow me this way, my son.”

Roland Græme followed accordingly; and Magdalen, casting a hasty glance to see whether they were observed, for she had learned caution from the danger of the times, commanded her grandson to knock at a little wicket which she pointed out to him. “But knock gently,” she added, with a motion expressive of caution. After a little space, during which no answer was returned, she signed to Roland to repeat his summons for admission; and the door at length partially opening, discovered a glimpse of the thin and timid porter, by whom the duty was performed, skulking from the observation of those who stood without, but endeavouring at the same time to gain a sight of them without being himself seen. How different from the proud and dignified consciousness with which the porter of ancient days offered his important brow, and his goodly person, to the pilgrims who repaired to Kennaquhair! His solemn “*Intrate, mei filii*,” was exchanged for a tremulous “You cannot enter now—the brethren are in their chambers.” But, when Magdalen Græme asked, in an under tone of voice, “Hast thou forgotten me, my father?” he changed his apologetic refusal to “Enter, my honoured sister—enter speedily, for evil eyes are upon us.”

They entered accordingly; and having waited until the porter had, with jealous haste, barred and bolted the wicket, were conducted by him through several dark and winding passages. As they walked slowly on, he spoke to the matron in a subdued voice, as if he feared to trust the very walls with the avowal which he communicated.

“Our fathers are assembled in the chapter-house, worthy sister—yes, in the chapter-house—for the election of an abbot. Ah, benedicite! there must be no ringing of bells—no high mass—no opening of the great gates now, that the people might see and venerate their spiritual father. Our fathers must hide themselves rather like robbers who chuse a leader, than godly priests who elect a mitred abbot.”

“Regard not that, my brother,” answered Magdalen Græme; “the first successors of Saint Peter himself were elected not in sunshine, but in tempests—not in the halls of the Vatican, but in the subterranean vaults and dungeons of heathen Rome—they were not gratulated with shouts and salvos of cannon-shot and of musquetry, and the display of artificial fire—no, my brother—but by the hoarse summons of lictors and prætors, who came to drag the fathers of the church to martyrdom. From such

adversity was the church once raised, and by such will it now be purified. And mark me, brother! not in the proudest days of the mitred abbey, was a superior ever chosen, whom his office shall so much honour, as *he* shall be honoured, who now takes it upon him in these days of tribulation. On whom, my brother, will the choice fall?”

“On whom can it fall—or, alas! who would dare to reply to the call, save the worthy pupil of the sainted Eustatius—the good and valiant Father Ambrose?”

“I know it,” said Magdalen; “my heart told me, long ere your lips had uttered his name. Stand forth, courageous champion, and man the fatal breach!—Rise, bold and experienced pilot, and seize the helm while the tempest rages!—Turn back the battle, brave raiser of the fallen standard!—Wield crook and sling, noble shepherd of a scattered flock!”

“I pray you hush, my sister!” said the porter, opening a door which led into the great church, “the brethren will be presently here to celebrate their election with a solemn mass—I must marshal them the way to the high altar—all the offices of this venerable house have now devolved on one poor decrepit old man.”

He left the church, and Magdalen and Roland remained alone in that great vaulted space, whose style of rich, yet chaste architecture, referred its origin to the early part of the fourteenth century, the best period of Gothic building. But the niches were stripped of their images in the inside as well as the outside of the church; and in the pell-mell havoc, the tombs of warriors and of princes had been included in the demolition of the idolatrous shrines. Lances and swords of antique size, which had hung over the tombs of mighty warriors of former days, lay now strewed among relics with which the devotion of pilgrims had graced those of their peculiar saints; and the fragments of the knights and dames, which had once lain recumbent, or kneeled in an attitude of devotion where their mortal relics were reposed, were mingled with those of the saints and angels of the Gothic chisel, which the hand of violence had sent headlong from their stations.

The most fatal symptom of the whole appeared to be, that, though this violence had now been committed for many months, the fathers had lost so totally all heart and resolution, that they had not adventured even upon clearing away the rubbish, or restoring the church to some decent degree of order. This might have been done without much labour. But terror had overpowered the scanty remains of a body once so powerful; and, sensible they were only suffered to remain in this ancient seat by connivance and from compassion, they did not venture upon taking any step which might be construed into an assertion of their ancient rights; contenting themselves with the secret and obscure exercise of their religious ceremonial, in as unostentatious a manner as was possible.

Two or three of the more aged brethren had sunk under the pressure of the times, and the ruins had been partly cleared away to permit their interment. One stone had been laid over Father Nicholas, which recorded of him in special, that he had taken the vows during the incumbency of Abbot Ingel-

ram, the period to which his memory so frequently recurred. Another flag-stone, yet more recently deposited, covered the body of Peter the Sacristan, eminent for his aquatic excursion with the phantom of Avenel; and a third, the most recent of all, bore the outline of a mitre, and the words *Hic jacet Eustatius Abbas*; for no one dared to add a word of commendation in favour of his learning, and strenuous zeal for the Roman catholic faith.

Magdalen Græme looked at and perused the brief records of these monuments successively, and paused over that of Father Eustace. "In a good hour for thyself," she said; "but oh! in an evil hour for the church, wert thou called from us. Let thy spirit be with us, holy man—encourage thy successor to tread in thy footsteps—give him thy bold and inventive capacity, thy zeal and thy discretion—even *thy* piety exceeds not his." As she spoke, a side door, which closed a passage from the abbot's house into the church, was thrown open, that the fathers might enter the choir, and conduct to the high altar the superior whom they had elected.

In former times, this was one of the most splendid of the many pageants which the hierarchy of Rome had devised to attract the veneration of the faithful. The period during which the abbacy remained vacant, was a state of mourning, or, as their emblematical phrase expressed it, of widowhood; a melancholy term, which was changed into rejoicing and triumph when a new superior was chosen. When the folding doors were on such solemn occasions thrown open, and the new abbot appeared on the threshold in full-blown dignity, with ring and mitre, and dalmatique and crosier, his hoary standard-bearers and his juvenile dispensers of incense preceding him, and the venerable train of monks behind him, with all besides which could announce the supreme authority to which he was now raised, his appearance was a signal for the magnificent jubilate to rise from the organ and music-loft, and to be joined by the corresponding bursts of Alleluiah from the whole assembled congregation. Now all was changed. In the midst of rubbish and desolation, seven or eight old men, bent and shaken as much by grief and fear as by age, shrouded hastily in the proscribed dress of their order, wandered like a procession of spectres, from the door which had been thrown open, up through the encumbered passage, to the high altar, there to instal their elected superior a chief of ruins. It was like a band of bewildered travellers chusing a chief in the wilderness of Arabia; or a shipwrecked crew electing a captain upon the barren island on which fate has thrown them.

They who, in peaceful times, are most ambitious of authority among others, shrink from the competition at such eventful periods, when neither ease nor parade attend the possession of it, and when it gives only a painful pre-eminence both in danger and in labour, and exposes the ill-fated chieftain to the murmurs of his discontented associates, as well as to the first assault of the common enemy. But he on whom the office of the Abbot of Saint Mary's was now conferred, had a mind fitted for the situation to which he was called. Bold and enthusiastic, yet generous and forgiving—wise and skilful,

yet zealous and prompt—he wanted but a better cause than the support of a decaying superstition, to have raised him to the rank of a truly great man. But as the end crowns the work, it also forms the rule by which it must be ultimately judged; and those who, with sincerity and generosity, fight and fall in an evil cause, posterity can only compassionate as victims of a generous but fatal error. Amongst these, we must rank Ambrosius, the last Abbot of Kennaquhair, whose designs must be condemned, as their success would have riveted on Scotland the chains of antiquated superstition and spiritual tyranny; but whose talents in themselves commanded respect, and whose virtues, even from the enemies of his faith, extorted esteem.

The bearing of the new abbot served of itself to dignify a ceremonial which was deprived of all other attributes of grandeur. Conscious of the peril in which they stood, and recalling, doubtless, the better days they had seen, there hung over his brethren an appearance of mingled terror, and grief, and shame, which induced them to hurry over the office in which they were engaged, as something at once degrading and dangerous.

But not so Father Ambrose. His features, indeed, expressed a deep melancholy, as he walked up the centre aisle, amid the ruins of things which he considered as holy; but his brow was undejected, and his step firm and solemn. He seemed to think that the dominion which he was about to receive, depended in no sort upon the external circumstances under which it was conferred; and if a mind so firm was accessible to sorrow or fear, it was not on his own account, but on that of the church to which he had devoted himself.

At length he stood on the broken steps of the high altar, barefooted, as was the rule, and holding in his hand his pastoral staff, for the gemmed ring and jeweled mitre had become secular spoils. No obedient vassals came, man after man, to make their homage, and to offer the tribute which should provide their spiritual superior with palfrey and trappings. No bishop assisted at the solemnity, to receive into the higher ranks of the church nobility a dignitary, whose voice in the legislature was as potential as his own. With hasty and maimed rites, the few remaining brethren stepped forward alternately to give their new abbot the kiss of peace, in token of fraternal affection and spiritual homage. Mass was then hastily performed, but in such precipitation as if it had been hurried over rather to satisfy the scruples of a few youths, who were impatient to set out on a hunting party, than as if it made the most solemn part of a solemn ordination. The officiating priest faltered as he spoke the service, and often looked around, as if he expected to be interrupted in the midst of his office; and the brethren listened as to that which, short as it was, they wished yet more abridged.

These symptoms of alarm increased as the ceremony proceeded, and, as it seemed, were not caused by mere apprehension alone; for, amid the pauses of the hymn, there were heard without sounds of a very different sort, beginning faintly and at a distance, but at length approaching close to the exterior of the church, and stunning with dissonant clamour those

engaged in the service. The winding of horns, blown with no regard to harmony or concert; the jangling of bells, the thumping of drums, the squeaking of bagpipes, and the clash of cymbals—the shouts of a multitude, now as in laughter, now as in anger—the shrill tones of female voices, and of those of children, mingling with the deeper clamours of men, formed a Babel of sounds, which first drowned, and then awed into utter silence, the official hymns of the convent. The cause and result of this extraordinary interruption will be explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Not the wild billow, when it breaks its barrier—
Not the wild wind, escaping from its cavern—
Not the wild fiend, that mingles both together,
And pours their rage upon the ripening harvest,
Can match the wild freaks of this mirthful meeting—
Comic, yet fearful—droll, and yet destructive.

The Conspiracy.

THE monks ceased their song, which, like that of the choristers in the legend of the Witch of Berkley, died away in a quaver of consternation; and, like a flock of chickens disturbed by the presence of the kite, they at first made a movement to disperse and fly in different directions, and then, with despair rather than hope, huddled themselves around their new abbot; who, retaining the lofty and undismayed look which had dignified him through the whole ceremony, stood on the higher step of the altar, as if desirous to be the most conspicuous mark on which danger might discharge itself, and to save his companions by his self-devotion, since he could afford them no other protection.

Involuntarily, as it were, Magdalen Græme and the page stepped from the station which hitherto they had occupied unnoticed, and approached to the altar, as desirous of sharing the fate which approached the monks, whatsoever that might be. Both bowed reverently low to the abbot; and while Magdalen seemed about to speak, the youth, looking towards the main entrance, at which the noise now roared most loudly, and which was at the same time assailed with much knocking, laid his hand upon his dagger.

The abbot motioned to both to forbear: "Peace, my sister," he said, in a low tone, but which, being in a different key from the tumultuary sounds without, could be distinctly heard, even amidst the tumult;—"Peace," he said, "my sister; let the new superior of Saint Mary's himself receive and reply to the grateful acclamations of the vassals who come to celebrate his installation. And thou, my son, forbear, I charge thee, to touch thy earthly weapon;—if it is the pleasure of our protectress that her shrine be this day desecrated by deeds of violence, and polluted by blood-shedding, let it not, I charge you, happen through the deed of a catholic son of the church."

The noise and knocking at the outer gate became now every moment louder; and voices were heard impatiently demanding admittance. The abbot, with dignity, and with a step which even the emergency of danger rendered neither faltering nor pre-

cipitate, moved towards the portal, and demanded to know, in a tone of authority, who it was that disturbed their worship, and what they desired?

There was a moment's silence, and then a loud laugh from without. At length a voice replied, "We desire entrance into the church; and when the door is opened, you will soon see who we are."

"By whose authority do you require entrance?" said the father.

"By authority of the right reverend lord abbot," replied the voice from without; and, from the laugh which followed, it seemed as if there was something highly ludicrous couched under this reply.

"I know not, and seek not to know your meaning," replied the abbot, "since it is probably a rude one. But begone, in the name of God, and leave his servants in peace. I speak this, as having lawful authority to command here."

"Open the door," said another rude voice, "and we will try titles with you, Sir Monk, and show you a superior we must all obey."

"Break open the doors if he dallies any longer," said a third, "and down with the carrion monks who would bar us of our privilege." A general shout followed. "Ay, ay, our privilege! our privilege! down with the doors, and with the lurdane monks, if they make opposition."

The knocking was now exchanged for blows with great hammers, to which the doors, strong as they were, must soon have given way. But the abbot who saw resistance would be vain, and who did not wish to incense the assailants by an attempt at offering it, besought silence earnestly, and with difficulty obtained a hearing. "My children," said he, "I will save you from committing a great sin. The porter will presently undo the gate—he is gone to fetch the keys—meantime, I pray you to consider if you are in a state of mind to cross the holy threshold."

"Tillyvalley for your papistry," was answered from without; "we are in the mood of the monks when they are merriest, and that is when they sup beef-brewis for lanten-kale. So, if your porter hath not the gout, let him come speedily, or we heave away readily.—Said I well, comrades?"

"Bravely said, and it shall be as bravely done," said the multitude; and had not the keys arrived at that moment, and the porter, in hasty terror, performed his office, and thrown open the great door, the populace without would have saved him the trouble. The instant he had done so, the affrighted janitor fled like one who has drawn the bolts of a flood-gate, and expects to be overwhelmed by the rushing inundation. The monks, with one consent, had withdrawn themselves behind the abbot, who alone kept his station about three yards from the entrance, showing no signs of fear or perturbation. His brethren—partly encouraged by his devotion, partly ashamed to desert him, and partly animated by a sense of duty—remained huddled close together, at the back of their superior. There was a loud laugh and huzza when the doors were opened; but, contrary to what might have been expected, no crowd of enraged assailants rushed into the church. On the contrary, there was a cry of "A halt!—a halt—to order, my masters! and let the two

reverend fathers greet each other, as beseems them."

The appearance of the crowd who were thus called to order, was grotesque in the extreme. It was composed of men, women, and children, ludicrously disguised in various habits, and presenting groups equally diversified and ludicrous. Here one fellow with a horse's head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, which was supposed to hide the body of the animal, ambled, caracoled, pranced, and plunged, as he performed the celebrated part of the hobby-horse, so often alluded to in our ancient drama; and which still flourishes on the stage in the battle that concludes Bayes's tragedy. To rival the address and agility displayed by this character, another personage advanced, in the more formidable character of a huge dragon, with gilded wings, open jaws, and a scarlet tongue, cloven at the end, which made various efforts to overtake and devour a lad, dressed as the lovely Sabæa, daughter of the King of Egypt, who fled before him; while a martial Saint George, grotesquely armed with a goblet for a helmet, and a spit for a lance, ever and anon interfered, and compelled the monster to relinquish his prey. A bear, a wolf, and one or two other wild animals, played their parts with the discretion of Snug the joiner; for the decided preference which they gave to the use of their hind legs, was sufficient, without any formal annunciation, to assure the most timorous spectators that they had to do with habitual bipeds. There was a group of outlaws, with Robin Hood and Little John at their head—the best representation exhibited at the time; and no great wonder, since most of the actors were, by profession, the banished men and thieves whom they represented. Other masqueraders there were, of a less marked description. Men were disguised as women, and women as men—children wore the dress of aged people, and tottered with crutch-sticks in their hands, furred gowns on their little backs, and caps on their round heads—while grandsires assumed the infantine tone as well as the dress of children. Besides these, many had their faces painted, and wore their shirts over the rest of their dress; while coloured pasteboard and ribbons furnished out decorations for others. Those who wanted all these properties, blacked their faces, and turned their jackets inside out; and thus the transmutation of the whole assembly into a set of mad grotesque mummings, was at once completed.

The pause which the masqueraders made, waiting apparently for some person of the highest authority amongst them, gave those within the abbey church full time to observe all these absurdities. They were at no loss to comprehend their purpose and meaning.

Few readers can be ignorant, that, at an early period, and during the plenitude of her power, the Church of Rome not only connived at, but even encouraged such saturnalian licenses as the inhabitants of Kennaquhair and the neighbourhood had now in hand, and that the vulgar, on such occasions, were not only permitted but encouraged, by a number of gambols, sometimes puerile and ludicrous, sometimes immoral and profane, to indemnify themselves for the privations and penances imposed on

them at other seasons. But, of all other topics for burlesque and ridicule, the rites and ceremonial of the church itself were most frequently resorted to; and, strange to say, with the approbation of the clergy themselves.

While the hierarchy flourished in full glory, they do not appear to have dreaded the consequences of suffering the people to become so irreverently familiar with things sacred; they then imagined the laity to be much in the condition of a labourer's horse, which does not submit to the bridle and the whip with greater reluctance, because, at rare intervals, he is allowed to frolic at large in his pasture, and fling out his heels in clumsy gambols at the master who usually drives him. But, when times changed—when doubt of the Roman catholic doctrine, and hatred of their priesthood, had possessed the reformed party, the clergy discovered, too late, that no small inconvenience arose from the established practice of games and merry-makings, in which they themselves, and all they held most sacred, were made the subject of ridicule. It then became obvious to duller politicians than the Romish churchmen, that the same actions have a very different tendency when done in the spirit of sarcastic insolence and hatred, than when acted merely in exuberance of rude and incontrollable spirits. They, therefore, though of the latest, endeavoured, where they had any remaining influence, to discourage the renewal of these indecorous festivities. In this particular, the catholic clergy were joined by most of the reformed preachers, who were more shocked at the profanity and immorality of many of these exhibitions, than disposed to profit by the ridiculous light in which they placed the Church of Rome and her observances. But it was long ere these scandalous and immoral sports could be abrogated;—the rude multitude continued attached to their favourite pastimes; and, both in England and Scotland, the mitre of the catholic—the rocket of the reformed bishop—and the cloak and band of the calvinistic divine—were, in turn, compelled to give place to these jocular personages, the Pope of Fools, the Boy-Bishop, and the Abbot of Unreason.*

It was the latter personage who now, in full costume, made his approach to the great door of the Church of St Mary's, accoutred in such a manner as to form a caricature, or practical parody, on the costume and attendants of the real superior, whom he came to beard on the very day of his installation, in the presence of his clergy, and in the chancel of his church. The mock dignitary was a stout-made under-sized fellow, whose thick squab form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch, well stuffed. He wore a mitre of leather, with the front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage, the nose of which was the most prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cope of canvas, curiously painted, and cut into open work. On one shoulder was fixed the

* From the interesting novel, entitled *Anastasius*, it seems the same burlesque ceremonies were practised in the Greek Church.

painted figure of an owl; and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left a small mirror having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures, translated into English, were whilom extremely popular, and which may still be procured in black letter, for about one pound per leaf.

The attendants of this mock dignitary had their proper dresses and equipage, bearing the same burlesque resemblance to the officers of the convent which their leader did to the superior. They followed their leader in regular procession; and the motley characters, which had waited his arrival, now crowded into the church in his train, shouting as they came—"A hall, a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned Monk of Misrule, and the right reverend Abbot of Unreason!"

The discordant minstrelsy of every kind renewed its din; the boys shrieked and howled, and the men laughed and hallooed, and the women giggled and screamed, and the beasts roared, and the dragon wallop'd and hissed, and the hobby-horse neighed, pranced, and capered, and the rest frisked and frolicked, clashing their hob-nailed shoes against the pavement, till it sparkled with the marks of their energetic caprioles.

It was, in fine, a scene of ridiculous confusion, that deafened the ear, made the eyes giddy, and must have altogether stunned any indifferent spectator; whilst personal apprehension, and a consciousness that much of the popular enjoyment arose from the ridicule being addressed against them, dismayed the monks, who were, moreover, little comforted by the reflection, that, bold in their disguise, the mummers who whooped and capered around them, might, on slight provocation, turn their jest into earnest, or at least proceed to those practical pleasantries, which at all times arise so naturally out of the frolicsome and mischievous disposition of the metropolis.—They looked to their abbot amid the tumult, with such looks as landsmen cast upon the pilot when the storm is at the highest—looks which express that they are devoid of all hope arising from their own exertions, and not very confident in any success likely to attend those of their Palinurus.

The abbot himself seemed at a stand; he felt no fear, but he was sensible of the danger of expressing his rising indignation, which he was scarcely able to suppress. He made a gesture with his hand as if commanding silence, which was at first only replied to by redoubled shouts, and peals of wild laughter. When, however, the same motion, and as nearly in the same manner, had been made by Howleglas, it was immediately obeyed by the riotous companions, who expected fresh food for mirth in the conversation betwixt the real and mock abbot, having no small confidence in the vulgar wit and impudence of their leader. Accordingly they began to shout, "To it, fathers—to it!"—"Fight monk, fight mad-cap—abbot against abbot is fair play, and so is reason against unreason, and malice against monkery!"

"Silence, my mates!" said Howleglas; "Cannot two learned fathers of the church hold communing together, but you must come here with your bear-garden whoop and hollow, as if you were hounding forth a mastiff upon a mad bull? I say

silence! and let this learned father and I confer, touching matters affecting our mutual state and authority."

"My children"—said Father Ambrose.

"My children too,—and happy children they are!" said his burlesque counterpart; "many a wise child knows not its own father, and it is well they have two to chuse betwixt."

"If thou hast aught in thee, save scoffing and ribaldry," said the real abbot, "permit me, for thine own soul's sake, to speak a few words to these misguided men."

"Aught in me but scoffing, sayest thou?" retorted the Abbot of Unreason; "Why, reverend brother, I have all that becomes mine office at this time a-day—I have beef, ale, and brandy-wine, with other condiments not worth mentioning; and for speaking, man—why, speak away, and we will have turn about, like honest fellows."

During this discussion the wrath of Magdalen Græme had risen to the uttermost; she approached the abbot, and placing herself by his side, said in a low and yet distinct tone—"Wake and arouse thee, father—the sword of Saint Peter is in thy hand—strike and avenge Saint Peter's patrimony! Bind them in the chains which, being riveted by the church on earth, are riveted in heaven—"

"Peace, sister!" said the abbot; "let not their madness destroy our discretion—I pray thee, peace, and let me do mine office. It is the first, peradventure it may be the last time I shall be called on to discharge it."

"Nay, my holy brother!" said Howleglas, "I read you, take the holy sister's advice—never throve convent without woman's counsel."

"Peace, vain man!" said the abbot; "and you, my brethren! —"

"Nay, nay!" said the Abbot of Unreason, "no speaking to the lay people, until you have conferred with your brother of the cowl.—I swear by bell, book, and candle, that not one of my congregation shall listen to one word you have to say, so you had as well address yourself to me who will."

To escape a conference so ludicrous, the abbot again attempted an appeal to what respectful feelings might yet remain amongst the inhabitants of the halidome, once so devoted to their spiritual superiors. Alas! the Abbot of Unreason had only to flourish his mock crosier, and the whooping, the hallooing, and the dancing, were renewed with a vehemence which would have defied the lungs of Stentor.

"And now, my mates," said the Abbot of Unreason, "once again dight your gabs and be hushed—let us see if the Cock of Kennaquhair will fight or flee the pit."

There was again a dead silence of expectation, of which Father Ambrose availed himself to address his antagonist, seeing plainly that he could gain an audience on no other terms. "Wretched man!" said he, "hast thou no better employment for thy carnal wit, than to employ it in leading these blind and helpless creatures into the pit of utter darkness?"

"Truly, my brother," replied Howleglas, "I can see little difference betwixt your employment

and mine, save that you make a sermon of a jest, and I make a jest of a sermon."

"Unhappy being," said the abbot, "who hast no better subject of pleasantry than that which should make thee tremble—no sounder jest than thine own sins, and no better objects for laughter than those who can absolve thee from the guilt of them!"

"Verily, my reverend brother," said the mock abbot, "what you say might be true, if, in laughing at hypocrites, I meant to laugh at religion.—Oh, it is a precious thing to wear a long dress, with a girdle and a cowl—we become a holy pillar of mother church, and a boy must not play at ball against the walls for fear of breaking a painted window."

"And will you, my friends," said the abbot, looking round, and speaking with a vehemence which secured him a tranquil audience for some time,— "will you suffer a profane buffoon, within the very church of God, to insult his ministers? Many of you—all of you, perhaps, have lived under my holy predecessors, who were called upon to rule in this church where I am called upon to suffer. If you have worldly goods, they are their gift; and, when you scorned not to accept better gifts—the mercy and forgiveness of the church—were they not ever at your command?—did we not pray while you were jovial—wake while you slept?"

"Some of the good wives of the halidome were wont to say so," said the Abbot of Unreason; but his jest met in this instance but slight applause, and Father Ambrose, having gained a moment's attention, hastened to improve it.

"What!" said he; "and is this grateful—is it seemly—is it honest—to assail with scorn a few old men, from whose predecessors you hold all, and whose only wish is to die in peace among these fragments of what was once the light of the land, and whose daily prayer is, that they may be removed ere that hour comes when the last spark shall be extinguished, and the land left in the darkness which it has chosen, rather than light? We have not turned against you the edge of the spiritual sword, to revenge our temporal persecution; the tempest of your wrath has despoiled us of land, and deprived us almost of our daily food, but we have not repaid it with the thunders of excommunication—we only pray your leave to live and die within the church which is our own, invoking God, Our Lady, and the holy saints, to pardon your sins, and our own, undisturbed by scurril buffoonery and blasphemy."

This speech, so different in tone and termination from that which the crowd had expected, produced an effect upon their feelings unfavourable to the prosecution of their frolic. The morrice-dancers stood still—the hobby-horse surceased his capering—pipe and tabor were mute, and "silence, like a heavy cloud," seemed to descend on the once noisy rabble. Several of the beasts were obviously moved to compunction; the bear could not restrain his sobs, and a huge fox was observed to wipe his eyes with his tail. But in especial the dragon, lately so formidably rampant, now relaxed the terror of his claws, uncoiled his tremendous rings, and grumbled out of his fiery throat in a repentant tone, "By the mass, I thought no harm in exercising our old pastime; but

an I had thought the good father would have taken it so to heart, I would as soon have played your devil as your dragon."

In this momentary pause, the abbot stood amongst the miscellaneous and grotesque forms by which he was surrounded, triumphant as Saint Anthony, in Callot's Temptations; but Howleglas would not so resign his purpose.

"And how now, my masters!" said he; "is this fair play or no? Have you not chosen me Abbot of Unreason, and is it lawful for any of you to listen to common sense to-day? Was I not formally elected by you in solemn chapter, held in Luckie Martin's change-house, and will you now desert me, and give up your old pastime and privilege?—Play out the play—and he that speaks the next word of sense or reason, or bids us think or consider, or the like of that, which befits not the day, I will have him solemnly ducked in the mill-dam!"

The rabble, mutable as usual, huzzaed, the pipe and tabor struck up, the hobby-horse pranced, the beasts roared, and even the repentant dragon began again to coil up his spires and prepare himself for fresh gambols. But the abbot might have still overcome, by his eloquence and his entreaties, the malicious designs of the revelers, had not Dame Magdalen Græme given loose to the indignation which she had long suppressed.

"Scoffers," she said, "and men of Belial—Blasphemous heretics, and truculent tyrants——"

"Your patience, my sister, I entreat and I command you?" said the abbot; "let me do my duty—disturb me not in mine own office!"

But Dame Magdalen continued to thunder forth her threats in the name of popes and councils, and in the name of every saint, from Saint Michael downward.

"My comrades!" said the Abbot of Unreason, "this good dame hath not spoke a single word of reason, and therein may esteem herself free from the law. But what she spoke was meant for reason, and, therefore, unless she confesses and avouches all which she has said to be nonsense, it shall pass for such, so far as to incur the penalty of our statutes.—Wherefore, holy dame, pilgrim, or abbess, or whatever thou art, be mute with thy mummery, or beware the mill-dam. We will have neither spiritual nor temporal scolds in our Diocese of Unreason!"

As he spoke thus, he extended his hand towards the old woman, while his followers shouted "A doom—a doom!" and prepared to second his purpose, when lo! it was suddenly frustrated. Roland Græme had witnessed with indignation the insults offered to his old spiritual preceptor, but yet had wit enough to reflect he could render him no assistance, but might well, by ineffective interference, make matters worse. But when he saw his aged relative in danger of personal violence he gave way to the natural impetuosity of his temper, and, stepping forward, struck his poniard into the body of the Abbot of Unreason, whom the blow instantly prostrated on the pavement.

CHAPTER XV.

As when in tumults rise the ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud,
And stones and brands in rattling volleys fly,
And all the rustic arms which fury can supply—
Then if some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a listening ear.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

A DREADFUL shout of vengeance was raised by the revelers, whose sport was thus so fearfully interrupted; but, for an instant, the want of weapons amongst the multitude, as well as the inflamed features and brandished poniard of Roland Græme, kept them at bay; while the abbot, horror-struck at the violence, implored, with uplifted hands, pardon for bloodshed committed within the holy sanctuary. Magdalen Græme alone expressed triumph in the blow her descendant had dealt to the scoffer, mixed, however, with a wild and anxious expression of terror for her grandson's safety. "Let him perish," she said, "in his blasphemy—let him die on the holy pavement which he has insulted."

But the rage of the multitude, the grief of the abbot, the exultation of the enthusiastic Magdalen, were all mistimed and unnecessary. The mortally wounded Howleglas, as he was supposed, sprung alertly up from the floor, calling aloud, "A miracle, a miracle, my masters! as brave a miracle as ever was wrought in the Kirk of Kennaquhair.—And I charge you, my masters, as your lawfully chosen abbot, that you touch no one without my command—You, wolf and bear, will guard this pragmatic youth, but without hurting him—And you, reverend brother, will, with your comrades, withdraw to your cells; for our conference has ended like all conferences, leaving each of his own mind, as before; and if we fight, both you, and your brethren, and the kirk, will have the worst on't—Wherefore, pack up your pipes and begone."

The hubbub was beginning again to awaken, but still Father Ambrose hesitated, as uncertain to what path his duty called him, whether to face out the present storm, or to reserve himself for a better moment. His brother of Unreason observed his difficulty, and said, in a tone more natural and less affected than that with which he had hitherto sustained his character, "We came hither, my good sir, more in mirth than in mischief—our bark is worse than our bite—and, especially, we mean you no personal harm—wherefore, draw off while the play is good; for it is ill whistling for a hawk when she is once on the soar, and worse to snatch the quarry from the ban-dog.—Let these fellows once begin their brawl, and it will be too much for madness itself, let alone the Abbot of Unreason, to bring them back to the lure."

The brethren crowded around Father Ambrosius, and joined in urging him to give place to the torrent. The present revel was, they said, an ancient custom which his predecessors had permitted, and old Father Nicholas himself had played the dragon in the days of the Abbot Ingelram.

"And we now reap the fruit of the seed which

they have so unadvisedly sown," said Ambrosius; "they taught men to make a mock of what is holy, what wonder that the descendants of scoffers become robbers and plunderers? But be it as you list, my brethren—move towards the dortour—And you, dame, I command you, by the authority which I have over you, and by your respect for that youth's safety, that you go with us without farther speech—Yet, stay—what are your intentions towards that youth whom you detain prisoner?—Wot ye," he continued, addressing Howleglas in a stern tone of voice, "that he bears the livery of the House of Avenel? They who fear not the anger of Heaven, may at least dread the wrath of man."

"Cumber not yourself concerning him," answered Howleglas, "we know right well who and what he is."

"Let me pray," said the abbot, in a tone of entreaty, "that you do him no wrong for the rash deed which he attempted in his imprudent zeal."

"I say, cumber not yourself about it, father," answered Howleglas, "but move off with your train, male and female, or I will not undertake to save yonder she-saint from the ducking-stool—And as for bearing of malice, my stomach has no room for it; it is," he added, clapping his hand on his portly belly, "too well bumbasted out with straw and buckram—gramercy to them both—they kept out that madcap's dagger as well as a Milan corslet could have done."

In fact, the home-driven poniard of Roland Græme had lighted upon the stuffing of the fictitious paunch, which the Abbot of Unreason wore as a part of his characteristic dress, and it was only the force of the blow which had prostrated that reverend person on the ground for a moment.

Satisfied in some degree by this man's assurances, and compelled to give way to superior force, the abbot Ambrosius retired from the church at the head of the monks, and left the court free for the revelers to work their will. But, wild and wilful as these rioters were, they accompanied the retreat of the religioners with none of those shouts of contempt and derision with which they had at first hailed them. The abbot's discourse had affected some of them with remorse, others with shame, and all with a transient degree of respect. They remained silent until the last monk had disappeared through the sidedoor which communicated with their dwelling-place; and even then it cost some exhortations on the part of Howleglas, some caprioles of the hobby-horse, and some wallops of the dragon, to rouse once more the rebuked spirit of revelry.

"And how now, my masters?" said the Abbot of Unreason; "and wherefore look on me with such blank Jack-a-Lent visages? Will you lose your old pastime for an old wife's tale of saints and purgatory? Why, I thought you would have made all split long since—Come, strike up, tabor and harp, strike up, fiddle and rebeck—dance and be merry to-day, and let care come to-morrow. Bear and wolf, look to your prisoner—prance, hobby—hiss dragon, and halloo, boys—we grow older every moment we stand idle, and life is too short to be spent in playing mumchance."

This pithy exhortation was attended with the effect desired. They fumigated the church with burnt wool and feathers instead of incense, put foul water into the holy-water basins, and celebrated a parody on the church service, the mock abbot officiating at the altar; they sung ludicrous and indecent parodies, to the tune of church hymns; they violated whatever vestments or vessels belonging to the abbey they could lay their hands upon; and, playing every freak which the whim of the moment could suggest to their wild caprice, at length they fell to more lasting deeds of demolition, pulled down and destroyed some carved wood-work, dashed out the painted windows which had escaped former violence, and in their rigorous search after sculpture dedicated to idolatry, began to destroy what ornaments yet remained entire upon the tombs, and around the cornices of the pillars.

The spirit of demolition, like other tastes, increases by indulgence; from these lighter attempts at mischief, the more tumultuous part of the meeting began to meditate destruction on a more extended scale—

"Let us heave it down altogether, the old crow's nest!" became a general cry among them; "it has served the pope and his rooks too long;" and up they struck a ballad which was then popular among the lower classes.

"The paip, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us ower lang,
For where the blind the blind doth lead,
No marvel baith gae wrang.
Like prince and king,
He led the ring
Of all iniquity.
Sing hey trix, trim go trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

"The bishop rich, he could not preach
For sporting with the lasses,
The silly friar behoved to fleech
For awmous as he passes.
The curate his creed
He could not read,
Shame fa' the company.
Sing hey trix, trim go trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

Thundering out this chorus of a notable hunting song, which had been pressed into the service of some polemical poet, the followers of the Abbot of Unreason were turning every moment more tumultuous, and getting beyond the management even of that reverend prelate himself, when a knight in full armour followed by two or three men-at-arms, entered the church, and in a stern voice commanded them to forbear their riotous mummary.

His visor was up, but if it had been lowered, the cognizance of the holly branch sufficiently distinguished Sir Halbert Glendinning, who, on his homeward road, was passing through the village of Ken-naquhair; and moved, perhaps, by anxiety for his brother's safety, had come directly to the church on hearing of the uproar.

"What is the meaning of this," he said, "my masters? are ye christian men, and the king's subjects, and yet waste and destroy church and chancel, like so many heathens?"

All stood silent, though doubtless there were several disappointed and surprised at receiving chid-

VOL. III.

ing instead of thanks from so zealous a protestant.

The dragon, indeed, did at length take upon him to be spokesman, and growled from the depth of his painted maw, that they did but sweep popery out of the church with the besom of destruction.

"What! my friends," replied Sir Halbert Glendinning, "think you this mumming and masking has not more of popery in it than have these stone walls? Take the leprosy out of your flesh, before you speak of purifying stone walls—abate your insolent license, which leads but to idle vanity and sinful excess; and know, that what you now practise, is one of the profane and unseemly sports introduced by the priests of Rome themselves, to mislead and to brutify the souls which fell into their net."

"Marry come up—are you there with your bears?" muttered the dragon, with a draconic sullenness, which was in good keeping with his character, "we had as good have been Romans still, if we are to have no freedom in our pastimes!"

"Dost thou reply to me so?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning; "or is there any pastime in grovelling on the ground there like a gigantic kale-worm?—Get out of thy painted case, or, by my knighthood, I will treat you like the beast and reptile you have made yourself!"

"Beast and reptile?" retorted the offended dragon, "setting aside your knighthood, I hold myself as well born a man as thyself."

The knight made no answer in words, but bestowed two such blows with the butt of his lance on the petulant dragon, that had not the hoops which constituted the ribs of the machine been pretty strong, they would hardly have saved those of the actor from being broken. In all haste the masquer crept out of his disguise, unwilling to abide a third buffet from the lance of the enraged knight. And when the ex-dragon stood on the floor of the church, he presented to Halbert Glendinning the well-known countenance of Dan of the Howlet-hirst, an ancient comrade of his own, ere fate had raised him so high above the rank to which he was born. The clown looked sulkily upon the knight, as if to upbraid him for his violence towards an old acquaintance, and Glendinning's own good nature reproached him for the violence he had acted upon him.

"I did wrong to strike thee," he said, "Dan; but in truth, I knew thee not—thou wert ever a mad fellow—come to Avenel Castle, and we will see how my hawks fly."

"And if we show him not falcons that will mount as merrily as rockets," said the Abbot of Unreason, "I would your honour laid as hard on my bones as you did on his even now."

"How now, Sir Knave," said the knight, "and what has brought you hither?"

The abbot, hastily ridding himself of the false nose which mystified his physiognomy, and the supplementary belly which made up his disguise, stood before his master in his real character, of Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel.

"How, varlet!" said the knight, "hast thou dared to come here and disturb the very house my brother was dwelling in?"

"And it was even for that reason, craving your honour's pardon, that I came hither—for I heard the

country was to be up to chuse an Abbot of Unreason, and sure, thought I, I that can sing, dance, leap backwards over a broad-sword, and am as good a fool as ever sought promotion, have all chance of carrying the office; and if I gain my election, I may stand his honour's brother in some stead, supposing things fall roughly out at the Kirk of Saint Mary's."

"Thou art but a cogging knave," said Sir Halbert, "and well I wot, that love of ale and brandy, besides the humour of riot and frolic, would draw thee a mile, when love of my house would not bring thee a yard. But go to—carry thy roisterers elsewhere—to the alehouse if they list, and there are crowns to pay your charges—make out the day's madness, without doing more mischief, and be wise men to-morrow—and hereafter learn to serve a good cause better than by acting like ruffians."

Obedient to his master's mandate, the falconer was collecting his discouraged followers, and whispering into their ears—"Away, away—*tace* is Latin for a candle—never mind the good knight's puritanism—we will play the frolic out over a stand of double ale in Dame Martin the Brewster's barnyard—draw off, harp and tabor—bagpipe and drum—mum till you are out of the church-yard, then let the welkin ring again—move on, wolf and bear—keep the hind legs till you cross the kirk-style, and then show yourselves beasts of mettle—what devil sent him here to spoil our holiday?—but anger him not, my hearts, his lance is no goose-feather, as Dan's ribs can tell."

"By my soul," said Dan, "had it been another than my ancient comrade, I would have made my father's old fox fly about his ears."

"Hush! hush! man," replied Adam Woodcock, "not a word that way, as you value the safety of your bones—what, man! we must take a clink as it passes, so it is not bestowed in downright ill-will."

"But I will take no such thing," said Dan of the Howlet-hirst, sullenly resisting the efforts of Woodcock, who was dragging him out of the church; when, the quick military eye of Sir Halbert Glendinning detecting Roland Græme betwixt his two guards, the knight exclaimed, "So ho! falconer,—Woodcock,—knave, hast thou brought my lady's page in mine own livery, to assist at this hopeful revel of thine, with your wolves and bears? Since you were at such mummings, you might, if you would, have at least saved the credit of my household, by dressing him up as a jack-an-apes—bring him hither, fellows!"

Adam Woodcock was too honest and downright to permit blame to light upon the youth, when it was undeserved. "I swear," he said, "by Saint Martin of Bullions—"

"And what hast thou to do with Saint Martin?"

"Nay, little enough, sir, unless when he sends such rainy days that we cannot fly a hawk—but I say to your worshipful knighthood, that as I am a true man—"

"As you are a false varlet, had been the better obtestation."

"Nay, if your knighthood allows me not to speak, I can hold my tongue—but the boy came not hither by my bidding for all that."

"But to gratify his own malapert pleasure, I warrant me," said Sir Halbert Glendinning.—"Come hither, young springald, and tell me whether you have your mistress's license to be so far absent from the castle, or to dishonour my livery by mingling in such a May-game?"

"Sir Halbert Glendinning," answered Roland Græme, with steadiness, "I have obtained the permission, or rather the commands, of your lady, to dispose of my time hereafter according to my own pleasure. I have been a most unwilling spectator of this May-game, since it is your pleasure so to call it; and I only wear your livery until I can obtain clothes which bear no such badge of servitude."

"How am I to understand this, young man?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning; "speak plainly, for I am no reader of riddles.—That my lady favoured thee I know. What hast thou done to disoblige her, and occasion thy dismissal?"

"Nothing to speak of," said Adam Woodcock, answering for the boy—"a foolish quarrel with me, which was more foolishly told over again to my honoured lady, cost the poor boy his place. For my part, I will say freely, that I was wrong from beginning to end, except about the washing of the eyass's meat. There I stand to it that I was right."

With that, the good-natured falconer repeated to his master the whole history of the squabble which had brought Roland Græme into disgrace with his mistress, but in a manner so favourable for the page, that Sir Halbert could not but suspect his generous motive.

"Thou art a good-natured fellow," he said, "Adam Woodcock."

"As ever had falcon upon fist," said Adam; "and, for that matter, so is Master Roland; but, being half a gentleman by his office, his blood is soon up, and so is mine."

"Well," said Sir Halbert, "be it as it will, my lady has acted hastily, for this was no great matter of offence to discard the lad whom she had trained up for years; but he, I doubt not, made it worse by his prating—it jumps well with a purpose, however, which I had in my mind. Draw off these people, Woodcock; and you, Roland Græme, attend me."

The page followed him in silence into the abbot's house, where, stepping into the first apartment which he found open, he commanded one of his attendants to let his brother, Master Edward Glendinning, know that he desired to speak with him. The men-at-arms went gladly off to join their comrade, Adam Woodcock, and the jolly crew whom he had assembled at Dame Martin's, the hostler's wife, and the page and knight were left alone in the apartment. Sir Halbert Glendinning paced the floor for a moment in silence, and then thus addressed his attendant—

"Thou mayest have remarked, stripling, that I have but seldom distinguished thee by much notice;—I see thy colour rises, but do not speak till thou hearest me out. I say, I have never much distinguished thee; not because I did not see that in thee which I might well have praised, but because I saw something blameable, which such praises might have made worse. Thy mistress dealing according to

her pleasure in her own household, as no one hath better reason or title, had picked thee from the rest, and treated thee more like a relation than a domestic; and if thou didst show some vanity and petulance under such distinction, it were injustice not to say that thou hast profited both in thy exercises and in thy breeding, and hast shown many sparkles of a gentle and manly spirit. Moreover, it were ungenerous, having bred thee up freakish and fiery, to dismiss thee to want or wandering, for showing that very peevishness and impatience of discipline which arose from thy too delicate nurture. Therefore, and for the credit of my own household, I am determined to retain thee in my train, until I can honourably dispose of thee elsewhere, with a fair prospect of thy going through the world with credit to the house that brought thee up."

If there was something in Sir Halbert Glendinning's speech which flattered Roland's pride, there was also much that, according to his mode of thinking, was an alloy to the compliment. And yet his conscience instantly told him that he ought to accept, with grateful deference, the offer which was made him by the husband of his kind protectress; and his prudence, however slender, could not but admit, he would enter the world under very different auspices as a retainer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, so famed for wisdom, courage, and influence, from those under which he might partake the wanderings, and become an agent in the visionary schemes, for such they appeared to him, of Magdalen, his relative. Still, a strong reluctance to re-enter a service from which he had been dismissed with contempt, almost counterbalanced these considerations.

Sir Halbert looked on the youth with surprise, and resumed—"You seem to hesitate, young man. Are your own prospects so inviting, that you should pause ere you accept those which I offer to you? or, must I remind you that, although you have offended your benefactress, even to the point of her dismissing you, yet I am convinced, the knowledge that you have gone unguided on your own wild way, into a world so disturbed as ours of Scotland, cannot, in the upshot, but give her sorrow and pain; from which it is, in gratitude, your duty to preserve her, no less than it is in common wisdom your duty to accept my offered protection, for your own sake, where body and soul are alike endangered, should you refuse it."

Roland Græme replied in a respectful tone, but at the same time with some spirit, "I am not ungrateful for such countenance as has been afforded me by the Lord of Avenel, and I am glad to learn, for the first time, that I have not had the misfortune to be utterly beneath his observation, as I had thought—And it is only needful to show me how I can testify my duty and my gratitude towards my early and constant benefactress with my life's hazard, and I will gladly peril it." He stopped.

"These are but words, young man," answered Glendinning; "large protestations are often used to supply the place of effectual service. I know nothing in which the peril of your life can serve the Lady of Avenel; I can only say, she will be pleased to learn you have adopted some course which may

ensure the safety of your person, and the weal of your soul—What ails you, that you accept not that safety when it is offered you?"

"My only relative who is alive," answered Roland, "at least the only relative whom I have ever seen, has rejoined me since I was dismissed from the Castle of Avenel, and I must consult with her whether I can adopt the line to which you now call me, or whether her increasing infirmities, or the authority which she is entitled to exercise over me, may not require me to abide with her."

"Where is this relation?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"In this house," answered the page.

"Go, then, and seek her out," said the Knight of Avenel; "more than meet it is that thou shouldst have her approbation, yet worse than foolish would she show herself in denying it."

Roland left the apartment to seek for his grandmother; and, as he retreated, the abbot entered.

The two brothers met as brothers who love each other fondly, yet meet rarely together. Such indeed was the case. Their mutual affection attached them to each other; but in every pursuit, habit, or sentiment connected with the discords of the times, the friend and counsellor of Murray stood opposed to the Roman catholic priest; nor, indeed, could they have held very much society together, without giving cause of offence and suspicion to their confederates on each side. After a close embrace on the part of both, and a welcome on that of the abbot, Sir Halbert Glendinning expressed his satisfaction that he had come in time to appease the riot raised by Howleglas and his tumultuous followers.

"And yet," he said, "when I look on your garments, brother Edward, I cannot help thinking there still remains an Abbot of Unreason within the bounds of the monastery."

"And wherefore carp at my garments, brother Halbert?" said the abbot; "it is the spiritual armour of my calling, and, as such, beseems me as well as breast-plate and baldric become your own bosom."

"Ay, but there were small wisdom, methinks, in putting on armour where we have no power to fight; it is but a dangerous temerity to defy the foe whom we cannot resist."

"For that, my brother, no one can answer," said the abbot, "until the battle be fought; and, were it even as you say, methinks, a brave man, though desperate of victory, would rather desire to fight and fall, than to resign sword and shield on some mean and dishonourable composition with his insulting antagonist. But let not you and I make discord of a theme on which we cannot agree, but rather stay and partake, though a heretic, of my admission feast. You need not fear, my brother, that your zeal for restoring the primitive discipline of the church will, on this occasion, be offended with the rich profusion of a conventual banquet. The days of our old friend Abbot Boniface are over; and the Superior of Saint Mary's has neither forests nor fishings, woods, nor pastures, nor corn-fields;—neither flocks nor herds, bucks nor wild-fowl—granaries of wheat, nor store-houses of oil and of wine, of ale and of mead. The refectory's office

is ended; and such a meal as a hermit in romance can offer to a wandering knight, is all we have to set before you. But, if you will share it with us, we will eat it with a cheerful heart, and thank you, my brother, for your timely protection against these rude scoffers."

"My dearest brother," said the knight, "it grieves me deeply I cannot abide with you; but it would sound ill for us both were one of the reformed congregation to sit down at your admission feast; and, if I can ever have the satisfaction of affording you effectual protection, it will be much owing to my remaining unsuspected of countenancing or approving your religious rites and ceremonies. It will demand whatever consideration I can acquire among my own friends, to shelter the bold man, who, contrary to law and the edicts of parliament, has dared to take up the office of Abbot of Saint Mary's."

"Trouble not yourself with the task, my brother," replied Father Ambrosius. "I would lay down my dearest blood to know that you defended the church for the church's sake; but, while you remain unhappily her enemy, I would not that you endangered your own safety, or diminished your own comforts, for the sake of my individual protection.—But who comes hither to disturb the few minutes of fraternal communication which our evil fate allows us?"

The door of the apartment opened as the abbot spoke, and Dame Magdalen Græme entered.

"Who is this woman?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning, somewhat sternly, "and what does she want?"

"That you know me not," said the matron, "signifies little; I come by your own order, to give my free consent that the stripling, Roland Græme, return to your service; and, having said so, I cumber you no longer with my presence. Peace be with you." She turned to go away, but was stopped by the inquiries of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"Who are you?—what are you?—and why do you not await to make me answer?"

"I was," she replied, "while yet I belonged to the world, a matron of no vulgar name; now I am Magdalen, a poor pilgrimer, for the sake of holy kirk."

"Yea," said Sir Halbert, "art thou a catholic? I thought my dame said that Roland Græme came of reformed kin."

"His father," said the matron, "was a heretic, or rather one who regarded neither orthodoxy nor heresy—neither the temple of the church or of anti-christ. I too, for the sins of the times make sinners, have seemed to conform to your unhallowed rites—but I had my dispensation and my absolution."

"You see, brother," said Sir Halbert, with a smile of meaning towards his brother, "that we accuse you not altogether without grounds of mental equivocation."

"My brother, you do us injustice," replied the abbot; "this woman, as her bearing may of itself warrant you, is not in her perfect mind. Thanks, I must needs say, to the persecution of your marauding barons, and of your latitudinarian clergy."

"I will not dispute the point," said Sir Halbert; "the evils of the time are unhappily so numerous,

that both churches may divide them, and have enow to spare." So saying, he leaned from the window of the apartment, and winded his bugle.

"Why do you sound your horn, my brother?" said the abbot; "we have spent but few minutes together."

"Alas!" said the elder brother, "and even these few have been sullied by disagreement. I sound to horse, my brother—the rather that, to avert the consequences of this day's rashness on your part, requires hasty efforts on mine.—Dame, you will oblige me by letting your young relative know that we mount instantly. I intend not that he shall return to Avenel with me—it would lead to new quarrels betwixt him and my household; at least to taunts, which his proud heart could ill brook, and my wish is to do him kindness. He shall, therefore, go forward to Edinburgh with one of my retinue, whom I shall send back to say what has chanced here. You seem rejoiced at this?" he added, fixing his eyes keenly on Magdalen Græme, who returned his gaze with calm indifference.

"I would rather," she said, "that Roland, a poor and friendless orphan, were the jest of the world at large, than of the menials at Avenel."

"Fear not, dame—he shall be scorned by neither," answered the knight.

"It may be," she replied—"it may well be—but I will trust more to his own bearing than to your countenance." She left the room as she spoke.

The knight looked after her as she departed, but turned instantly to his brother, and expressing, in the most affectionate terms, his wishes for his welfare and happiness, craved his leave to depart. "My knaves," he said, "are too busy at the ale-stand, to leave their revelry for the empty breath of a bugle horn."

"You have freed them from higher restraint, Halbert," answered the abbot, "and therein taught them to rebel against your own."

"Fear not that, Edward," exclaimed Halbert, who never gave his brother his monastic name of Ambrosius; "none obey the command of real duty so well as those who are free from the observance of slavish bondage."

He was turning to depart, when the abbot said,— "Let us not yet part, brother—here comes some light refreshment. Leave not the house which I must now call mine, till force expel me from it, until you have at least broken bread with me."

The poor lay brother, the same who acted as porter, now entered the apartment, bearing some simple refreshment, and a flask of wine. "He had found it," he said, with officious humility, "by rummaging through every nook of the cellar."

The knight filled a small silver cup, and, quaffing it off, asked his brother to pledge him, observing, the wine was Bacharac, of the first vintage, and great age.

"Ay," said the poor lay brother, "it came out of the nook which old Brother Nicholas (may his soul be happy!) was wont to call Abbot Ingelram's corner; and Abbot Ingelram was bred at the convent of Wurtzburg, which I understand to be near where that choice wine grows."

"True, my reverend sir," said Sir Halbert; "and

therefore I entreat my brother and you to pledge me in a cup of this orthodox vintage."

The thin old porter looked with a wishful glance towards the abbot. "*Do Veniam*," said his superior; and the old man seized, with a trembling hand, a beverage to which he had been long unaccustomed, drained the cup with protracted delight, as if dwelling on the flavour and perfume, and set it down with a melancholy smile and shake of the head, as if bidding adieu in future to such delicious potations. The brothers smiled. But when Sir Halbert motioned to the abbot to take up his cup and do him reason, the abbot, in turn, shook his head, and replied—"This is no day for the Abbot of Saint Mary's to eat the fat and drink the sweet. In water from our Lady's well," he added, filling a cup with the limpid element, "I wish you, my brother, all happiness, and, above all, a true sight of your spiritual errors."

"And to you, my beloved Edward," replied Glendinning, "I wish the free exercise of your own free reason, and the discharge of more important duties than are connected with the idle name which you have so rashly assumed."

The brothers parted with deep regret; and yet, each, confident in his own opinion, felt somewhat relieved by the absence of one whom he respected so much, and with whom he could agree so little.

Soon afterwards the sound of the Knight of Avenel's trumpets was heard, and the abbot went to the top of a tower, from whose dismantled battlements he could soon see the horsemen ascending the rising ground in the direction of the draw-bridge. As he gazed, Magdalen Græme came to his side.

"Thou art come," he said, "to catch the last glimpse of thy grandson, my sister. Yonder he wends, under the charge of the best knight in Scotland, his faith ever excepted."

"Thou canst bear witness, my father, that it was no wish either of mine or of Roland's," replied the matron, "which induced the Knight of Avenel, as he is called, again to entertain my grandson in his household—Heaven, which confounds the wise with their own wisdom, and the wicked with their own policy, hath placed him where, for the service of the church, I would most wish him to be."

"I know not what you mean, my sister," said the abbot.

"Reverend father," replied Magdalen, "hast thou never heard that there are spirits powerful to rend the walls of a castle asunder when once admitted, which yet cannot enter the house unless they are invited, nay, dragged over the threshold? Twice hath Roland Græme been thus drawn into the household of Avenel by those who now hold the title. Let them look to the issue."

So saying, she left the turret; and the abbot, after pausing a moment on her words, which he imputed to the unsettled state of her mind, followed down the winding stair to celebrate his admission to his high office by fast and prayer, instead of reveling and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XVI.

Youth! thou wear'st to manhood now;
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien,
In thy face and gait are seen:
Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches;
For the gambol and the jest,
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

Life, a Poem.

YOUNG Roland Græme now trotted gaily forward in the train of Sir Halbert Glendinning. He was relieved from his most galling apprehension,—the encounter of the scorn and taunt which might possibly hail his immediate return to the Castle of Avenel. "There will be a change ere they see me again," he thought to himself; "I shall wear the coat of plate instead of the buff jerkin, and the steel morion for the bonnet and feather. They will be bold that may venture to break a gibe on the man-at-arms for the follies of the page; and I trust, that, ere we return, I shall have done something more worthy of note, than hallooing a hound after a deer, or scrambling a crag for a kite's nest." He could not, indeed, help marveling that his grandmother, with all her religious prejudices, leaning, it would seem, to the other side, had consented so readily to his re-entering the service of the House of Avenel; and yet more, at the mysterious joy with which she took leave of him at the abbey.

"Heaven," said the dame, as she kissed her young relation, and bade him farewell, "works its own work, even by the hands of those of our enemies who think themselves the strongest and the wisest. Thou, my child, be ready to act upon the call of thy religion and country; and remember, each earthly bond which thou canst form is, compared to the ties which bind thee to them, like the loose flax to the twisted cable. Thou hast not forgot the face or form of the damsel, Catherine Seyton?"

Roland would have replied in the negative, but the word seemed to stick in his throat, and Magdalen continued her exhortations.

"Thou must not forget her, my son; and here I entrust thee with a token, which I trust thou wilt speedily find an opportunity of delivering with care and secrecy into her own hand."

She put here into Roland's hand a very small packet, of which she again enjoined him to take the strictest care, and to suffer it to be seen by no one save Catherine Seyton, who, she again (unnecessarily) reminded him, was the young maiden he had met on the preceding day. She then bestowed on him her solemn benediction, and bade God speed him.

There was something in her manner and her conduct which implied mystery; but Roland Græme was not of an age or temper to waste much time in endeavouring to decypher her meaning. All that was obvious to his perception in the present journey, promised pleasure and novelty. He rejoiced that he was travelling towards Edinburgh, in order to

assume the character of a man, and lay aside that of a boy. He was delighted to think that he would have an opportunity of rejoining Catherine Seyton, whose bright eyes and lively manners had made so favourable an impression on his imagination; and, as an inexperienced, yet high-spirited youth, entering for the first time upon active life, his heart bounded at the thought, that he was about to see all those scenes of courtly splendour and warlike adventures, of which the followers of Sir Halbert used to boast on their occasional visits to Avenel, to the wonderment and envy of those who, like Roland, knew courts and camps only by hearsay, and were condemned to the solitary sports and almost monastic seclusion of Avenel, surrounded by its lonely lake, and embosomed among its pathless mountains. They shall mention my name, he said to himself, if the risk of my life can purchase me opportunities of distinction, and Catherine Seyton's saucy eye shall rest with more respect on the distinguished soldier, than that with which she laughed to scorn the raw and inexperienced page.—There was wanting but one accessory to complete the sense of rapturous excitation, and he possessed it by being once more mounted on the back of a fiery and active horse, instead of plodding along on foot, as had been the case during the preceding days.

Impelled by the liveliness of his own spirits, which so many circumstances tended naturally to exalt, Roland Græme's voice and his laughter were soon distinguished amid the trampling of the horses of the retinue, and more than once attracted the attention of their leader, who remarked with satisfaction, that the youth replied with good-humoured raillery to such of the train as jested with him on his dismissal and return to the service of the House of Avenel.

"I thought the holly branch in your bonnet had been blighted, Master Roland?" said one of the men-at-arms.

"Only pinched with half an hour's frost; you see it flourishes as green as ever."

"It is too grave a plant to flourish on so hot a soil as that head-piece of thine, Master Roland Græme," retorted the other, who was an old equerry of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"If it will not flourish alone," said Roland, "I will mix it with the laurel and the myrtle—and I will carry them so near the sky, that it shall make amends for their stunted growth."

Thus speaking, he dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, checking him at the same time, compelled him to execute a lofty caracole. Sir Halbert Glendinning looked at the demeanour of his new attendant with that sort of melancholy pleasure with which those who have long followed the pursuits of life, and are sensible of their vanity, regard the gay, young, and buoyant spirits, to whom life, as yet, is only hope and promise.

In the meanwhile, Adam Woodcock, the falconer, stripped of his masquing habit, and attired, according to his rank and calling, in a green jerkin, with a bag on the one side, and a short hanger on the other, a glove on his left hand which reached half way up his arm, and a bonnet and feather upon his head, came after the party as fast as his active

little galloway-nag could trot, and immediately entered into parley with Roland Græme.

"So, my youngster, you are once more under shadow of the holly branch?"

"And in case to repay you, my good friend," answered Roland, "your ten groats of silver."

"Which, but an hour since," said the falconer, "you had nearly paid me with ten inches of steel. On my faith, it is written in the book of our destiny, that I must brook your dagger, after all."

"Nay, speak not of that, my good friend," said the youth, "I would rather have broached my own bosom than yours; but who could have known you in the mumming dress you wore?"

"Yes," the falconer resumed,—for both as a poet and actor he had his own professional share of self-conceit,—“I think I was as good an Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason. I defy the old enemy to unmask me when I chuse to keep my vizard on. What the devil brought the knight on us before we had the game out? You would have heard me hollo my own new ballad with a voice should have reached to Berwick. But, I pray you, Master Roland, be less free of cold steel on slight occasions; for, but for the stuffing of my reverend doublet, I had only left the kirk to take my place in the kirk-yard."

"Nay, spare me that feud!" said Roland Græme, "we shall have no time to fight it out; for, by our lord's command, I am bound for Edinburgh."

"I know it," said Adam Woodcock, "and even therefore we shall have time to solder up this rent by the way, for Sir Halbert has appointed me your companion and guide."

"Ay; and with what purpose?" said the page.

"That," said the falconer, "is a question I cannot answer; but I know, that be the food of the eyases washed or unwashed, and, indeed, whatsoever becomes of perch and mew, I am to go with you to Edinburgh, and see you safely delivered to the regent at Holyrood."

"How, to the regent?" said Roland, in surprise.

"Ay, by my faith, to the regent," replied Woodcock; "I promise you, that if you are not to enter his service, at least you are to wait upon him in the character of a retainer of our Knight of Avenel."

"I know no right," said the youth, "which the Knight of Avenel hath to transfer my service, supposing that I owe it to himself."

"Hush, hush!" said the falconer; "that is a question I advise no one to stir in until he has the mountain or the lake, or the march of another kingdom, which is better than either, betwixt him and his feudal superior."

"But Sir Halbert Glendinning," said the youth, "is not my feudal superior; nor has he aught of authority——"

"I pray you, my son, to rein your tongue," answered Adam Woodcock; "my lord's displeasure, if you provoke it, will be worse to appease than my lady's. The touch of his least finger were heavier than her hardest blow. And, by my faith, he is a man of steel, as true and as pure, but as hard and as pitiless. You remember the Cock of Capperlawe,

whom he hanged over his gate for a mere mistake—a poor yoke of oxen taken in Scotland, when he thought he was taking them in English land. I loved the Cock of Capperlawe; the Kerrs had not an honest man in their clan, and they have had men that might have been a pattern to the Border—men that would not have lifted under twenty cows at once, and would have held themselves dishonoured if they had taken a drift of sheep, or the like, but always managed their raids in full credit and honour.—But see, his worship halts, and we are close by the bridge. Ride up—ride up—we must have his last instructions.”

It was as Adam Woodcock said. In the hollow way descending towards the bridge, which was still in the guardianship of Peter Bridgeward, as he was called, though he was now very old, Sir Halbert Glendinning halted his retinue, and beckoned to Woodcock and Græme to advance to the head of the train.

“Woodcock,” said he, “thou knowest to whom thou art to conduct this youth. And thou, young man, obey discreetly, and with diligence, the orders that shall be given thee. Curb thy vain and peevish temper. Be just, true, and faithful, and there is in thee that which may raise thee many a degree above thy present station. Neither shalt thou—always supposing thine efforts to be fair and honest—want the protection and countenance of Avenel.”

Leaving them in front of the bridge, whose centre tower now began to cast a prolonged shade upon the river, the Knight of Avenel turned to the left, without crossing the river, and pursued his way towards the chain of hills within whose recesses are situated the Lake and Castle of Avenel. There remained behind, the falconer, Roland Græme, and a domestic of the knight, of inferior rank, who was left with them to look after their horses while on the road, to carry their baggage, and to attend to their convenience.

So soon as the more numerous body of riders had turned off to pursue their journey westward, those whose route lay across the river, and was directed towards the north, summoned the bridgeward, and demanded a free passage.

“I will not lower the bridge,” answered Peter, in a voice querulous with age and ill-humour. “Come papist—come protestant, ye are all the same. The papist threatened us with purgatory, and fleeced us with pardons;—the protestant mints at us with the sword, and cuittles us with the liberty of conscience; but the never a one of either says, ‘Peter, there is your penny.’ I am well tired of all this, and for no man shall the bridge fall that pays me not ready money; and I would have you know I care as little for Geneva as for Rome—as little for homilies as for pardons; and the silver pennies are the only passports I will hear of.”

“Here is a proper old chuff,” said Woodcock to his companion; then raising his voice, he exclaimed, “Hark thee, dog—Bridgeward, villain, dost thou think we have refused Peter’s pence to Rome, to pay thine at the Bridge of Kennaquhair? Let thy bridge down instantly to the followers of the House of Avenel, or, by the hand of my father, and that handled many a bridle rein, for he was a bluff

Yorkshireman—I say, by my father’s hand, our knight will blow thee out of thy solan-goose’s nest there in the middle of the water, with the light falconet which we are bringing southward from Edinburgh to-morrow.”

The bridgeward heard, and muttered, “A plague on falcon and falconet, on cannon and demi-cannon, and all the barking bull-dogs whom they halloo against stone and lime in these our days! It was a merry time when there was little besides handy blows, and it may be a flight of arrows that harmed an ashler wall as little as so many hail-stones. But we must jowk, and let the jaw gang by.” Comforting himself in his state of diminished consequence with this pithy old proverb, Peter Bridgeward lowered the draw-bridge, and permitted them to pass over. At the sight of his white hair, albeit it discovered a visage equally peevish through age and misfortune, Roland was inclined to give him an alms, but Adam Woodcock withheld him. “E’en let him pay the penalty of his former churlishness and greed,” he said; “the wolf, when he has lost his teeth, should be treated no better than a cur.”

Leaving the bridgeward to lament the alteration of times, which sent domineering soldiers and feudal retainers to his place of passage, instead of peaceful pilgrims, and reduced him to become the oppressed, instead of playing the extortioner, the travellers turned them northward; and Adam Woodcock, well acquainted with that part of the country, proposed to cut short a considerable portion of the road, by traversing the little vale of Glendearg, so famous for the adventures which befel therein during the earlier part of the benedictine’s manuscript. With these, and with the thousand commentaries, representations, and misrepresentations, to which they had given rise, Roland Græme was, of course, well acquainted; for in the Castle of Avenel, as well as in other great establishments, the inmates talked of nothing so often, or with such pleasure, as of the private affairs of their lord and lady. But while Roland was viewing with interest these haunted scenes, in which things were said to have passed beyond the ordinary laws of nature, Adam Woodcock was still regretting in his secret soul the unfinished revel and the unsung ballad, and kept every now and then breaking out with some such verses as these:—

“The friars of Fail drank berry-brown ale,
The best that ere was tasted;
The monks of Melrose made gude kale
On Fridays, when they fasted.
Saint Monance’ sister,
The grey priest kist her—
Fiend save the company!
Sing hey trix,
Trim go trix,
Under the greenwood tree.”

“By my hand, friend Woodcock,” said the page, “though I know you for a hardy gospeler, that fear neither saint nor devil, yet, if I were you, I would not sing your profane songs in this valley of Glendearg, considering what has happened here before our time.”

“A straw for your wandering spirits,” said Adam

Woodcock; "I mind them no more than an earn cares for a string of wild-geese—they have all fled since the pulpits were filled with honest men, and the people's ears with sound doctrine. Nay, I have a touch at them in my ballad, an I had but the good luck to have it sung to end;" and again he set off in the same key—

"From haunted spring and grassy ring,
Troop goblin, elf, and fairy;
And the kelpie must flit from the black bog-pit,
And the brownie must not tarry;
To Limbo-lake,
Their way they take,
With scarce the pith to flee.
Sing hey trix,
Trim go trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

"I think," he added, "that could Sir Halbert's patience have stretched till we came that length, he would have had a hearty laugh, and that is what he seldom enjoys."

"If it be all true that men tell of his early life," said Roland "he has less right to laugh at goblins than most men."

"Ay, if it be all true," answered Adam Woodcock; "but who can ensure us of that? Moreover, these were but tales the monks used to gull us simple laymen withal; they knew that fairies and hobgoblins brought aves and pater-nosters into repute; but, now we have given up worship of images in wood and stone, methinks it were no time to be afraid of bubbles in the water, or shadows in the air."

"But," said Roland Græme, "as the catholics say they do not worship wood or stone, but only as emblems of the holy saints, and not as things holy in themselves——"

"Pshaw! pshaw!" answered the falconer; "a rush for their prating. They told us another story when these baptized idols of theirs brought pike-staves and sandaled shoon from all the four winds, and whillied the old women out of their corn and their candle-ends, and their butter, bacon, wool, and cheese, and when not so much as a grey groat escaped tithing."

Roland Græme had been long taught, by necessity, to consider his form of religion as a profound secret, and to say nothing whatsoever in its defence when assailed, lest he should draw on himself the suspicion of belonging to the unpopular and exploded church. He therefore suffered Adam Woodcock to triumph without farther opposition, marveling in his own mind whether any of the goblins, formerly such active agents, would avenge his rude raillery before they left the valley of Glendearg. But no such consequences followed. They passed the night quietly in a cottage in the glen, and the next day resumed their route to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XVII.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and bowers,
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
Sate legislation's sovereign powers.

BURNS.

"THIS, then, is Edinburgh?" said the youth, as the fellow-travellers arrived at one of the heights to the southward, which commanded a view of the great northern capital—"This is that Edinburgh of which we have heard so much?"

"Even so," said the falconer; "yonder stands Auld Reekie—you may see the smoke hover over her at twenty miles distance, as the goss-hawk hangs over a plump of young wild-ducks—ay, yonder is the heart of Scotland, and each throb that she gives is felt from the edge of Solway to Duncan's-bay-head. See, yonder is the old castle; and see to the right, on yon rising ground, that is the Castle of Craigmillar, which I have known a merry place in my time."

"Was it not there," said the page, in a low voice, "that the queen held her court?"

"Ay, ay," replied the falconer, "queen she was then, though you must not call her so now—well, they may say what they will—many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stuart, e'en if all be true men say of her; for look you, Master Roland—she was the loveliest creature to look upon that I ever saw with eye, and no lady in the land liked better the fair flight of a falcon. I was at the great match on Roslin-moor betwixt Bothwell—he was a black sight to her that Bothwell—and the Baron of Roslin, who could judge a hawk's flight as well as any man in Scotland—a butt of Rhenish and a ring of gold was the wager, and it was flown as fairly for as ever was red gold and bright wine. And to see her there on her white palfrey, that flew as if it scorned to touch more than the heather blossom; and to hear her voice, as clear and sweet as the mavis's whistle, mix among our jolly whooping and whistling, and to mark all the nobles dashing round her; happiest he who got a word or a look—tearing through moss and hagg, and venturing neck and limb to gain the praise of a bold rider, and the blink of a bonnie queen's bright eye—she will see little hawking where she lies now—ay, ay, pomp and pleasure pass away as speedily as the wap of a falcon's wing."

"And where is this poor queen now confined?" said Roland Græme, interested in the fate of a woman whose beauty and grace had made so strong an impression even on the blunt and careless character of Adam Woodcock.

"Where is she now imprisoned?" said Adam Woodcock; "why, in some castle in the north, they say—I know not where, for my part, nor is it worth while to vex one's self anent what cannot be mended—An she had guided her power well whilst she had it, she had not come to so evil a pass. Men say she must resign her crown to this little baby of a prince, for that they will trust her with it no longer. Our master has been as busy as his

neighbours in all this work. If the queen should come to her own again, Avenel Castle is like to smoke for it, unless he makes his bargain all the better."

"In a castle in the north Queen Mary is confined!" said the page.

"Why, ay—they say so at least—In a castle beyond that great river which comes down yonder, and looks like a river, but it is a branch of the sea, and as bitter as brine."

"And amongst all her subjects," said the page, with some emotion, "is there none that will adventure anything for her relief?"

"That is a kittle question," said the falconer; "and if you ask it often, Master Roland, I am fain to tell you that you will be mewed up yourself in some of those castles, if they do not prefer twisting your head off, to save farther trouble with you—Adventure anything? Lord, why, Murray has the wind in his poop now, man, and flies so high and strong, that the devil a wing of them can match him.—No, no, there she is, and there she must lie, till Heaven send her deliverance, or till her son has the management of all—But Murray will never let her loose again, he knows her too well.—And hark thee, we are now bound for Holyrood, where thou wilt find plenty of news and of courtiers to tell it—But, take my counsel, and keep a calm sough, as the Scots say—hear every man's counsel, and keep your own. And if you hap to learn any news you like, leap not up as if you were to put on armour direct in the cause—Our old Mr Wingate says—and he knows court-cattle well—that if you are told old King Coul is come alive again, you should turn it off with 'And is he, in truth?—I heard not of it,' and should seem no more moved, than if one told you, by way of novelty, that old King Coul was dead and buried. Wherefore, look well to your bearing, Master Roland, for, I promise you, you come among a generation that are keen as a hungry hawk—And never be dagger out of sheath at every wry word you hear spoken; for you will find as hot blades as yourself, and then will be letting of blood without advice either of leech or almanack."

"You shall see how staid I will be, and how cautious, my good friend," said Græme; "but, blessed Lady, what goodly house is that which is lying all in ruins so close to the city? Have they been playing at the Abbot of Unreason here, and ended the gambol by burning the church?"

"There again now," replied his companion, "you go down the wind like a wild haggard, that minds neither lure nor beck—that is a question you should have asked in as low a tone as I shall answer it."

"If I stay here long," said Roland Græme, "it is like I shall lose the natural use of my voice—but what are the ruins then?"

"The Kirk of Field," said the falconer, in a low and impressive whisper, laying at the same time his finger on his lip, "ask no more about it—somebody got foul play, and somebody got the blame of it; and the game began there which perhaps may not be played out in our time.—Poor Henry Darnley! to be an ass, he understood somewhat of a hawk; but they sent him on the wing through the air himself one bright moon-light night."

VOL. III.

The memory of this catastrophe was so recent, that the page averted his eyes with horror from the scathed ruins in which it had taken place; and the accusations against the queen, to which it had given rise, came over his mind with such strength as to balance the compassion he had begun to entertain for her present forlorn situation.

It was, indeed, with that agitating state of mind which arises partly from horror, but more from eager interest and curiosity, that young Græme found himself actually traversing the scene of those tremendous events, the report of which had disturbed the most distant solitudes in Scotland, like the echoes of distant thunder rolling among the mountains.

Now, he thought, now or never shall I become a man, and bear my part in those deeds which the simple inhabitants of our hamlets repeat to each other as if they were wrought by beings of a superior race to their own. I will know now wherefore the Knight of Avenel carries his crest so much above those of the neighbouring baronage, and how it is that men, by valour and wisdom, work their way from the hoddin-grey coat to the cloak of scarlet and gold. Men say I have not much wisdom to recommend me; and if that be true, courage must do it, for I will be a man amongst living men, or a dead corpse amongst the dead.

From these plans of ambition he turned his thoughts to those of pleasure, and began to form many conjectures when and where he should see Catherine Seyton, and in what manner their acquaintance was to be renewed. With such conjectures he was amusing himself, when he found that they had entered the city, and all other feelings were suspended in the sensation of giddy astonishment with which the inhabitant of a solitary country is affected, when, for the first time, he finds himself in the streets of a large and populous city, a unit in the midst of thousands.

The principal street of Edinburgh was then, as now, one of the most spacious in Europe. The extreme height of the houses, and the variety of Gothic gables and battlements, and balconies, by which the sky-line on each side was crowned and terminated, together with the width of the street itself, might have struck with surprise a more practised eye than that of young Græme. The population, close packed within the walls of the city, and at this time increased by the number of the lords of the king's party who had thronged to Edinburgh to wait upon the Regent Murray, absolutely swarmed like bees on the wide and stately street. Instead of the shop-windows, which are now calculated for the display of goods, the traders had their open booths projecting on the street, in which, as in the fashion of the modern bazaars, all was exposed which they had upon sale. And though the commodities were not of the richest kinds, yet Græme seemed to see the wealth of the whole world in the various bales of Flanders cloths, and the specimens of tapestry; and, at other places, the display of domestic utensils, and pieces of silver-plate, struck him with wonder. The sight of cutlers' booths, furnished with swords and poniards, which were manufactured in Scotland, and with pieces of defensive armour, imported from Flanders, added to his surprise; and, at every step, he found so much

to admire and to gaze upon, that Adam Woodcock had no little difficulty in prevailing on him to advance through such a scene of enchantment.

The sight of the crowds which filled the streets was equally a subject of wonder. Here a gay lady, in her muffler, or silken veil, traced her way delicately, a gentleman usher making way for her, a page bearing up her train, and a waiting gentlewoman carrying her bible, and intimating that her purpose was towards the church—There he might see a group of citizens bending the same way, with their short Flemish cloaks, wide trowsers, and high-caped doublets, a fashion to which, as well as to their bonnet and feather, the Scots were long faithful. Then, again, came the clergyman himself, in his black Geneva cloak and band, lending a grave and attentive ear to the discourse of several persons who accompanied him, and who were doubtless holding serious converse on the religious subject he was about to treat of. Nor did there lack passengers of a different class and appearance.

At every turn Roland Græme might see a gallant ruffe along in the newer or French mode, his doublet slashed, and his points of the same colours with the lining, his long sword on one side, and his poniard on the other; behind him a body of stout serving-men, proportioned to his estate and quality, all of whom walked with the air of military retainers, and were armed with sword and buckler, the latter being a small round shield, not unlike the Highland target, having a steel spike in the centre. Two of these parties, each headed by a person of importance, chanced to meet in the very centre of the street, or, as it was called, "the crown of the causeway," a post of honour as tenaciously asserted in Scotland, as that of giving or taking the wall used to be in the more southern part of the island. The two leaders being of equal rank, and, most probably, either animated by political dislike, or by recollection of some feudal enmity, marched close up to each other, without yielding an inch to the right or the left; and neither showing the least purpose of giving way, they stopped for an instant, and then drew their swords. Their followers imitated their example; about a score of weapons at once flashed in the sun, and there was an immediate clatter of swords and bucklers, while the followers on either side cried their master's name; the one shouting "Help, a Leslie! a Leslie!" While the others answered with shouts of "Seyton! Seyton!" with the additional punning slogan, "Set on, set on—bear the knaves to the ground."

If the falconer found difficulty in getting the page to go forward before, it was now perfectly impossible. He reined up his horse, clapped his hands, and, delighted with the fray, cried and shouted as fast as any of those that were actually engaged in it.

The noise and cries thus arising on the High Gait, as it was called, drew into the quarrel two or three other parties of gentlemen and their servants, besides some single passengers, who, hearing a fray betwixt these two distinguished names, took part in it, either for love or hatred.

The combat became now very sharp; and although the sword-and-buckler-men made more clatter and noise than they did real damage, yet several good cuts were dealt among them; and those who

wore rapiers, a more formidable weapon than the ordinary Scottish sword, gave and received dangerous wounds. Two men were already stretched on the causeway, and the party of Seyton began to give ground, being much inferior in number to the other, with which several of the citizens had united themselves, when young Roland Græme, beholding their leader, a noble gentleman, fighting bravely, and hard pressed with numbers, could withhold no longer. "Adam Woodcock," he said, "an you be a man, draw, and let us take part with the Seyton." And, without waiting a reply, or listening to the falconer's earnest entreaty, that he would leave alone a strife in which he had no concern, the fiery youth sprung from his horse, drew his short sword, and shouting like the rest, "A Seyton! a Seyton! set on! set on!" thrust forward into the throng, and struck down one of those who was pressing hardest upon the gentleman whose cause he espoused. This sudden reinforcement gave spirit to the weaker party, who began to renew the combat with much spirit, when four of the magistrates of the city, distinguished by their velvet cloaks and gold chains, came up with a guard of halberdiers and citizens, armed with long weapons, who, well accustomed to such service, thrust boldly forward, and compelled the swordsmen to separate, who immediately retreated in different directions, leaving such of the wounded on both sides as had been disabled in the fray, lying on the street.

The falconer, who had been tearing his beard for anger at his comrade's rashness, now rode up to him with the horse which he had caught by the bridle, and accosted him with "Master Roland—master goose—master madcap—will it please you to get on horse and budge? or will you remain here to be carried to prison, and made to answer for this pretty day's work?"

The page, who had begun his retreat along with the Seytons, just as if he had been one of their natural allies, was by this unceremonious application made sensible that he was acting a foolish part; and, obeying Adam Woodcock, with some sense of shame, he sprung actively on horseback, and upsetting with the shoulder of the animal a city officer, who was making towards him, he began to ride smartly down the street, along with his companion, and was quickly out of the reach of the hue and cry. In fact, rencounters of the kind were so common in Edinburgh at this period, that the disturbance seldom excited much attention after the affray was over, unless some person of consequence chanced to have fallen, an accident which imposed on his friends the duty of avenging his death upon the first convenient opportunity. So feeble, indeed, was the arm of the police, that it was not unusual for such skirmishes to last for hours, where the parties were numerous and well matched. But at this time the regent, a man of great strength of character, aware of the mischief which usually arose from such acts of violence, had prevailed with the magistrates to keep a constant guard on foot, for preventing or separating such affrays as had happened in the present case.

The falconer and his young companion were now riding down the Canongate, and had slackened their

pace to avoid attracting attention, the rather that there seemed to be no appearance of pursuit. Roland hung his head as one who was conscious his conduct had been none of the wisest, while his companion thus addressed him.

"Will you be pleased to tell me one thing, Master Roland Græme, and that is, whether there be a devil incarnate in you or no?"

"Truly, Master Adam Woodcock," answered the page, "I would fain hope there is not."

"Then," said Adam, "I would fain know by what other influence or instigation you are perpetually at one end or the other of some bloody brawl? What, I pray, had you to do with these Seytons and Leslies, that you never heard the names of in your life before?"

"You are out there, my friend," said Roland Græme; "I have my own reasons for being a friend to the Seytons."

"They must have been very secret reasons then," answered Adam Woodcock, "for I think I could have wagered, you had never known one of the name; and I am apt to believe still, that it was rather your unhallowed passion for that clashing of cold iron, which has as much charm for you as the clatter of a brass pan hath for a hive of bees, more than any care either for Seyton or for Leslie, that persuaded you to thrust your fool's head into a quarrel that no ways concerned you. But take this for a warning, my young master, that if you are to draw sword with every man who draws sword on the High Gait here, it will be scarce worth your while to sheathe bilbo again for the rest of your life, since, if I guess rightly, it will scarce endure on such terms for many hours—all which I leave to your serious consideration."

"By my word, Adam, I honour your advice; and I promise you, that I will practise by it as faithfully as if I were sworn apprentice to you, to the trade and mystery of bearing myself with all wisdom and safety through the new paths of life that I am about to be engaged in."

"And therein you will do well," said the falconer; "and I do not quarrel with you, Master Roland, for having a grain over much spirit, because I know one may bring to the hand a wild hawk, which one never can a dunghill hen—and so betwixt two faults you have the best side on't. But besides your peculiar genius for quarreling and lugging out your side companion, my dear Master Roland, you have also the gift of peering under every woman's muffler and screen, as if you expected to find an old acquaintance. Though, were you to spy one, I should be as much surprised at it, well wotting how few you have seen of these same wild-fowl, as I was at your taking so deep an interest even now in the Seyton."

"Tush, man! nonsense and folly," answered Roland Græme, "I but sought to see what eyes these gentle hawks have got under their hood."

"Ay, but it's a dangerous subject of inquiry," said the falconer; "you had better hold out your bare wrist for an eagle to perch upon.—Look you, Master Roland, these pretty wild-geese cannot be hawked at without risk—they have as many divings, boltings, and volleyings, as the most gamesome quarry that falcon ever flew at.—And besides, every woman of

them is manned with her husband, or her kind friend, or her brother, or her cousin, or her sworn servant at the least.—But you heed me not, Master Roland, though I know the game so well,—your eye is all on that pretty damsel who trips down the gait before us—by my certes, I will warrant her a blithe dancer either in reel or revel—a pair of silver morisco bells would become these pretty ancles as well as the jesses would suit the fairest Norway hawk."

"Thou art a fool, Adam," said the page, "and I care not a button about the girl or her ancles.—But what, the foul fiend, one must look at something!"

"Very true, Master Roland Græme," said his guide, "but let me pray you to chuse your objects better. Look you, there is scarce a woman walks this High Gait with a silk screen or a pearlin muffler, but, as I said before, she has either gentleman usher before her, or kinsman, or lover, or husband at her elbow, or it may be a brace of stout fellows with sword and buckler, not so far behind but what they can follow close.—But you heed me no more than a goss-hawk minds a yellow yoldring."

"O yes, I do—I do mind you indeed," said Roland Græme; "but hold my nag a bit—I will be with you in the exchange of a whistle." So saying, and ere Adam Woodcock could finish the sermon which was dying on his tongue, Roland Græme, to the falconer's utter astonishment, threw him the bridle of his jennet, jumped off horseback, and pursued down one of the closes or narrow lanes, which, opening under a vault, terminate upon the main street, the very maiden to whom his friend had accused him of showing so much attention, and who had turned down the pass in question.

"Saint Mary, Saint Magdalen, Saint Benedict, Saint Barnabas!" said the poor falconer, when he found himself thus suddenly brought to a pause in the midst of the Canongate, and saw his young charge start off like a madman in quest of a damsel whom he had never, as Adam supposed, seen in his life before,—*"Saint Satan and Saint Beelzebub—*for this would make one swear saint and devil—what can have come over the lad, with a wanion!—And what shall I do the whilst—he will have his throat cut, the poor lad, as sure as I was born at the foot of Roseberry-Topping—Could I find some one to hold the horses! but they are as sharp here north-away as in canny Yorkshire herself, and quit bridle, quit titt, as we say. An' I could but see one of our folks now, a holly sprig were worth a gold tassel; or could I but see one of the regent's men—but to leave the horses to a stranger, that I cannot—and to leave the place while the lad is in jeopardy, that I wonot."

We must leave the falconer, however, in the midst of his distress, and follow the hot-headed youth who was the cause of his perplexity.

The latter part of Adam Woodcock's sage remonstrance had been in a great measure lost upon Roland, for whose benefit it was intended; because, in one of the female forms which tripped along the street, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which closely resembled the exquisite shape and spirited bearing of Catherine

Seyton. During all the grave advice which the falconer was dinning into his ear, his eye continued intent upon so interesting an object of observation; and, at length, as the damsel, just about to dive under one of the arched passages which afforded an outlet to the Canongate from the houses beneath (a passage graced by a projecting shield of arms, supported by two huge foxes of stone), had lifted her veil for the purpose perhaps of descrying who the horseman was who for some time had eyed her so closely, young Roland saw, under the shade of the silken plaid, enough of the bright azure eyes, fair locks, and blithe features, to induce him, like an inexperienced and rash madcap, whose wilful ways had never been traversed by contradiction, nor much subjected to consideration, to throw the bridle of his horse into Adam Woodcock's hand, and leave him to play the waiting gentleman, while he dashed down the paved court after Catherine Seyton—all as aforesaid.

Women's wits are proverbially quick; but apparently those of Catherine suggested no better expedient than fairly to betake herself to speed of foot, in hopes of baffling the page's vivacity, by getting safely lodged before he could discover where. But a youth of eighteen, in pursuit of a mistress, is not so easily outstripped. Catherine fled across a paved court, decorated with large formal vases of stone, in which yews, cypresses, and other evergreens, vegetated in sombre sullenness, and gave a correspondent degree of solemnity to the high and heavy building in front of which they were placed as ornaments, aspiring towards a square portion of the blue hemisphere, corresponding exactly in extent to the quadrangle in which they were stationed, and all around which rose huge black walls, exhibiting windows in rows of five stories, with heavy architraves over each, bearing armorial and religious devices.

Through this court Catherine Seyton flashed like a hunted doe, making the best use of those pretty legs which had attracted the commendation even of the reflective and cautious Adam Woodcock. She hastened towards a large door in the centre of the lower front of the court, pulled the bobbin till the latch flew up, and ensconced herself in the ancient mansion. But if she fled like a doe, Roland Græme followed with the speed and ardour of a youthful stag-hound, loosed for the first time on his prey. He kept her in view, in spite of her efforts; for it is remarkable, what an advantage in such a race the gallant who desires to see, possesses over the maiden who wishes not to be seen—an advantage which I have known counterbalance a great start in point of distance. In short, he saw the waving of her screen, or veil, at one corner, heard the tap of her foot, light as that was, as it crossed the court, and caught a glimpse of her figure just as she entered the door of the mansion.

Roland Græme, inconsiderate and headlong as we have described him, having no knowledge of real life, but from the romances which he had read, and not an idea of checking himself in the midst of any eager impulse, possessed, besides, of much courage and readiness, never hesitated for a moment to approach the door through which the object of his search had disappeared. He, too, pulled the bob-

bin, and the latch, though heavy and massive, answered to the summons, and arose. The page entered with the same precipitation which had marked his whole proceeding, and found himself in a large gloomy hall, or vestibule, dimly enlightened by latticed casements of painted glass, and rendered yet dimmer through the exclusion of the sunbeams, owing to the height of the walls of those buildings by which the court-yard was enclosed. The walls of the hall were surrounded with suits of ancient and rusted armour, interchanged with huge and massive stone scutcheons, bearing double tressures fleured and counter-fleured, wheat-sheaves, coronets, and so forth, things to which Roland Græme gave not a moment's attention.

In fact, he only deigned to observe the figure of Catherine Seyton, who, deeming herself safe in the hall, had stopped to take breath after her course, and was reposing herself for a moment on a large oaken settle which stood at the upper end of the hall. The noise of Roland's entrance at once disturbed her; she started up with a faint scream of surprise, and escaped through one of the several folding doors which opened into this apartment as a common centre. This door, which Roland Græme instantly approached, opened on a large and well lighted gallery, at the upper end of which he could hear several voices, and the noise of hasty steps approaching towards the hall or vestibule. A little recalled to sober thought by an appearance of serious danger, he was deliberating whether he should stand fast or retire, when Catherine Seyton re-entered from a side door, running towards him with as much speed as a few minutes since she had fled from him.

"O, what mischief brought you hither?" she said; "fly—fly, or you are a dead man,—or, stay—they come—flight is impossible—say you came to ask after Lord Seyton."

She sprung from him, and disappeared through the door by which she had made her second appearance; and, at the same instant, a pair of large folding doors at the upper end of the gallery flew open with vehemence, and six or seven young gentlemen, richly dressed, pressed forward into the apartment, having, for the greater part, their swords drawn.

"Who is it," said one, "dare intrude on us in our own mansion?"

"Cut him to pieces," said another; "let him pay for this day's insolence and violence—he is some follower of the Rothes."

"No, by Saint Mary," said another, "he is a follower of the arch-fiend and ennobled clown Halbert Glendinning, who takes the style of Avenel, once a church vassal, now a pillager of the church."

"It is so," said a fourth; "I know him by the holly sprig, which is their cognizance. Secure the door, he must answer for this insolence."

Two of the gallants, hastily drawing their weapons, passed on to the door by which Roland had entered the hall, and stationed themselves there, as if to prevent his escape. The others advanced on Græme, who had just sense enough to perceive that any attempt at resistance would be alike fruitless and imprudent. At once, and by various voices, none of which sounded amicably, the page was required to say who he was, whence he came,

his name, his errand, and who sent him hither. The number of the questions demanded of him at once, afforded a momentary apology for his remaining silent; and ere that brief truce had elapsed, a personage entered the hall, at whose appearance those who had gathered fiercely around Roland, fell back with respect.

This was a tall man, whose dark hair was already grizzled, though his eye and haughty features retained all the animation of youth. The upper part of his person was undressed to his Holland shirt, whose ample folds were stained with blood. But he wore a mantle of crimson, lined with rich fur, cast around him, which supplied the deficiency of his dress. On his head he had a crimson velvet bonnet, looped up on one side with a small golden chain of many links, which, going thrice round the hat, was fastened by a medal, agreeable to the fashion amongst the grandees of the time.

"Whom have you here, sons and kinsmen," said he, "around whom you crowd thus roughly?—Know you not that the shelter of this roof should secure every one fair treatment, who shall come hither either in fair peace, or in open and manly hostility?"

"But here, my lord," answered one of the youths, "is a knave who comes on treacherous espial!"

"I deny the charge!" said Roland Græme, boldly, "I came to inquire after my Lord Seyton."

"A likely tale," answered his accusers, "in the mouth of a follower of Glendinning."

"Stay, young men," said the Lord Seyton, for it was that nobleman himself, "let me look at this youth—by Heaven, it is the very same who came so boldly to my side, not very many minutes since, when some of my own knaves bore themselves with more respect to their own worshipful safety than to mine! Stand back from him, for he well deserves honour and a friendly welcome at your hands, instead of this rough treatment."

They fell back on all sides, obedient to Lord Seyton's commands, who, taking Roland Græme by the hand, thanked him for his prompt and gallant assistance, adding, that he nothing doubted, "the same interest which he had taken in his cause in the affray, brought him hither to inquire after his hurt."

Roland bowed low in acquiescence.

"Or is there any thing in which I can serve you, to show my sense of your ready gallantry?"

But the page, thinking it best to abide by the apology for his visit which the Lord Seyton had so aptly himself suggested, replied, "that to be assured of his lordship's safety, had been the only cause of his intrusion. He judged," he added, "he had seen him receive some hurt in the affray."

"A trifle," said Lord Seyton; "I had but stripped my doublet, that the chirurgeon might put some dressing on the paltry scratch, when these rash boys interrupted us with their clamour."

Roland Græme, making a low obeisance, was now about to depart, for, relieved from the danger of being treated as a spy, he began next to fear, that his companion Adam Woodcock, whom he had so unceremoniously quitted, would either bring him into some farther dilemma, by venturing into the hotel

in quest of him, or ride off and leave him behind altogether. But Lord Seyton did not permit him to escape so easily.—"Tarry," he said, "young man, and let me know thy rank and name. The Seyton has of late been more wont to see friends and followers shrink from his side, than to receive aid from strangers—but a new world may come round, in which he may have the chance of rewarding his well-wishers."

"My name is Roland Græme, my lord," answered the youth, "a page, who, for the present, is in the service of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"I said so from the first," said one of the young men; "my life I will wager, that this is a shaft out of the heretic's quiver—a stratagem from first to last, to injeer into your confidence some espial of his own. They know how to teach both boys and women to play the intelligencers."

"That is false, if it be spoken of me," said Roland; "no man in Scotland should teach me such a foul part!"

"I believe thee, boy," said Seyton; "for thy strokes were too fair to be dealt upon an understanding with those that were to receive them. Credit me, however, I little expected to have help at need from one of your master's household; and I would know what moved thee in my quarrel, to thine own endangering?"

"So please you, my lord," said Roland, "I think my master himself would not have stood by, and seen an honourable man borne to earth by odds, if his single arm could help him. Such, at least, is the lesson we were taught in chivalry at the Castle of Avenel."

"The good seed hath fallen into good ground, young man," said Seyton; "but, alas! if thou practise such honourable war in these dishonourable days, when right is everywhere borne down by mastery, thy life, my poor boy, will be but a short one."

"Let it be short, so it be honourable," said Roland Græme; "and permit me now, my lord, to commend me to your grace, and to take my leave. A comrade waits with my horse in the street."

"Take this, however, young man," said Lord Seyton, undoing from his bonnet the golden chain and medal, "and wear it for my sake."

With no little pride Roland Græme accepted the gift, which he hastily fastened around his bonnet, as he had seen gallants wear such an ornament, and renewing his obeisance to the baron, left the hall, traversed the court, and appeared in the street, just as Adam Woodcock, vexed and anxious at his delay, had determined to leave the horses to their fate, and go in quest of his youthful comrade. "Whose barn hast thou broken next?" he exclaimed, greatly relieved by his appearance, although his countenance indicated that he had passed through an agitating scene.

"Ask me no questions," said Roland, leaping gaily on his horse; "but see how short time it takes to win a chain of gold," pointing to that which he now wore.

"Now, God forbid that thou hast either stolen it, or reft it by violence," said the falconer; "for, otherwise, I wot not how the devil thou couldst compass it. I have been often here, ay, for months

at an end, and no one gave me either chain or medal."

"Thou seest I have got one on shorter acquaintance with the city," answered the page, "and set thine honest heart at rest; that which is fairly won and freely given, is neither reft nor stolen."

"Marry, hang thee, with thy fanfaron^{*} about thy neck!" said the falconer; "I think water will not drown, nor hemp strangle thee. Thou hast been discarded as my lady's page, to come in again as my lord's squire; and for following a noble young damsel into some great household, thou get'st a chain and medal, where another would have had the baton across his shoulders, if he missed having the dirk in his body.—But here we come in front of the old abbey. Bear thy good luck with you when you cross these paved stones, and, by Our Lady, you may brag Scotland."

As he spoke, they checked their horses, where the huge old vaulted entrance to the Abbey or Palace of Holyrood, crossed the termination of the street down which they had proceeded. The courtyard of the palace opened within this gloomy porch, showing the front of an irregular pile of monastic buildings, one wing of which is still extant, forming a part of the modern palace, erected in the days of Charles I.

At the gate of the porch the falconer and page resigned their horses to the serving-man in attendance; the falconer commanding him, with an air of authority, to carry them safely to the stables. "We follow," he said, "the Knight of Avenel.—We must bear ourselves for what we are here," said he, in a whisper to Roland, "for every one here is looked on as they demean themselves; and he that is too modest must to the wall, as the proverb says; therefore, cock thy bonnet, man, and let us brook the causeway bravely."

Assuming, therefore, an air of consequence, corresponding to what he supposed to be his master's importance and quality, Adam Woodcock led the way into the court-yard of the Palace of Holyrood.

CHAPTER XVIII.

—The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vex'd ocean sleeps a troubled sleep,
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine,
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

Albion, a Poem.

THE youthful page paused on the entrance of the court-yard, and implored his guide to give him a moment's breathing space. "Let me but look around me, man," said he; "you consider not I have never seen such a scene as this before.—And this is Holyrood—the resort of the gallant and gay, and the fair and the wise, and the powerful!"

"Ay, marry, is it!" said Woodcock; "but I wish I could hood thee as they do the hawks, for

^{*} A name given to the gold chains worn by the military men of the period. It is of Spanish origin; for the fashion of wearing these costly ornaments was much followed amongst the conquerors of the New World.

thou starest as wildly as if you sought another fray or another fanfaron. I would I had thee safely housed, for thou lookest wild as a goss-hawk."

It was indeed no common sight to Roland, the vestibule of a palace, traversed by its various groups,—some radiant with gaiety—some pensive, and apparently weighed down by affairs concerning the state, or concerning themselves. Here the hoary statesman, with his cautious yet commanding look, his furred cloak and sable pantoufles; there the soldier in buff and steel, his long sword jarring against the pavement, and his whiskered upper lip and frowning brow; there again passed my lord's serving-man, high of heart, and bloody of hand, humble to his master and his master's equals, insolent to all others. To these might be added the poor suitor, with his anxious look and depressed mien—the officer, full of his brief authority, elbowing his betters, and possibly his benefactors, out of the road—the proud priest, who sought a better benefice—the proud baron, who sought a grant of church lands—the robber chief, who came to solicit a pardon for the injuries he had inflicted on his neighbours—the plundered franklin, who came to seek vengeance for that which he had himself received. Besides, there were the mustering and disposition of guards and of soldiers—the dispatching of messengers, and the receiving them—the trampling and neighing of horses without the gate—the flashing of arms, and rustling of plumes, and jingling of spurs within it. In short, it was that gay and splendid confusion, in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow—hopes that will never be gratified—promises which will never be fulfilled—pride in the disguise of humility—and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.

As, tired of the eager and enraptured attention which the page gave to a scene so new to him, Adam Woodcock endeavoured to get him to move forward, before his exuberance of astonishment should attract the observation of the sharp-witted denizens of the court, the falconer himself became an object of attention to a gay menial in a dark-green bonnet and feather, with a cloak of a corresponding colour, laid down, as the phrase then went, by six broad bars of silver lace, and welted with violet and silver. The words of recognition burst from both at once: "What! Adam Woodcock at court," and "What! Michael Wing-the-wind—and how runs the hackit greyhound bitch now?"

"The waur for the wear, like ourselves, Adam—eight years this grass—no four legs will carry a dog for ever; but we keep her for the breed, and so she 'scapes Border-doom.—But why stand you gazing there? I promise you my lord has wished for you, and asked for you."

"My Lord of Murray asked for me, and he regent of the kingdom too!" said Adam. "I hunger and thirst to pay my duty to my good lord;—but I fancy his good lordship remembers the day's sport on Carnwarth-moor; and my Drummelzier falcon, that beat the hawks from the Isle of Man, and won his lordship a hundred crowns from the southern baron whom they called Stanley."

"Nay, not to flatter thee, Adam," said his court-friend, "he remembers nought of thee, or of thy falcon either. He hath flown many a higher flight since that, and struck his quarry too. But come, come hither away; I trust we are to be good comrades on the old score."

"What!" said Adam, "you would have me crash a pot with you? but I must first dispose of my eyass, where he will neither have girl to chase, or lad to draw sword upon."

"Is the youngster such a one?" said Michael.

"Ay, by my hood, he flies at all game," replied Woodcock.

"Then had he better come with us," said Michael Wing-the-wind; "for we cannot have a proper carouse just now, only I would wet my lips, and so must you. I want to hear the news from Saint Mary's before you see my lord, and I will let you know how the wind sits up yonder."

While he thus spoke, he led the way to a side door which opened into the court; and threading several dark passages with the air of one who knew the most secret recesses of the palace, conducted them to a small matted chamber, where he placed bread and cheese, and a foaming flagon of ale before the falconer, who immediately did justice to the latter in a hearty draught, which nearly emptied the measure. Having drawn his breath, and dashed the froth from his whiskers, he observed, that his anxiety for the boy had made him deadly dry.

"Mend your draught," said his hospitable friend, again supplying the flagon from a pitcher which stood beside. "I know the way to the buttery-bar. And now, mind what I say—this morning the Earl of Morton came to my lord in a mighty chafe."

"What! they keep the old friendship then?" said Woodcock.

"Ay, ay, man, what else?" said Michael; "one hand must scratch the other. But in a mighty chafe was my Lord of Morton, who, to say truth, looketh on such occasions altogether uncanny, and, as it were, fiendish; and he says to my lord, for I was in the chamber taking orders about a cast of hawks that are to be fetched from Darnoway—they match your long-winged falcons, friend Adam."

"I will believe that when I see them fly as high a pitch," replied Woodcock, this professional observation forming a sort of parenthesis.

"However," said Michael, pursuing his tale, "my Lord of Morton, in a mighty chafe, asked my lord regent whether he was well dealt with—for my brother," said he, "should have had a gift to be Commendator of Kennaquhair, and to have all the temporalities erected into a lordship of regality for his benefit; and here," said he, "the false monks have had the insolence to chuse a new abbot to put his claim in my brother's way; and moreover, the rascality of the neighbourhood have burnt and plundered all that was left in the abbey, so that my brother will not have a house to dwell in, when he hath ousted the lazy hounds of priests." And my lord seeing him chafed, said mildly to him, "These are shrewd tidings, Douglas, but I trust they be not true; for Halbert Glendinning went southward yesterday, with a band of spears, and assuredly had either of these chances happened, that the monks

had presumed to chuse an abbot, or that the abbey had been burnt, as you say, he had taken order on the spot for the punishment of such insolence, and had dispatched us a messenger." And the Earl of Morton replied—Now I pray you, Adam, to notice that I say this out of love to you and your lord, and also for old comradeship, and also because Sir Halbert hath done me good, and may again—and also because I love not the Earl of Morton, as indeed more fear than like him. So then it were a foul deed in you to betray me.—But said the earl to the regent, "Take heed, my lord, you trust not this Glendinning too far—he comes of churl's blood, which was never true to the nobles"—by Saint Andrew, these were his veyr words.—"And besides," he said, "he hath a brother a monk in Saint Mary's, and walks all by his guidance, and is making friends on the Border with Buccleuch and with Fernieherst, and will join hand with them, were there likelihood of a new world." And my lord answered, like a free noble lord as he is, "Tush! my Lord of Morton, I will be warrant for Glendinning's faith; and for his brother, he is a dreamer, that thinks of nought but book and breviary—and if such hap have chanced as you tell of, I look to receive from Glendinning the cowl of a hanged monk, and the head of a riotous churl, by way of sharp and sudden justice."—And my Lord of Morton left the place, and, as it seemed to me, somewhat malcontent. But since that time, my lord has asked me more than once whether there has arrived no messenger from the Knight of Avenel. And all this I have told you, that you may frame your discourse to the best purpose, for it seems to me that my lord will not be well pleased if aught has happened like what my Lord of Morton said, and if your lord hath not ta'en strict orders with it."

There was something in this communication which fairly blanked the bold visage of Adam Woodcock, in spite of the reinforcement which his natural hardihood had received from the berry-brown ale of Holyrood.

"What was it he said about a churl's head, that grim Lord of Morton?" said the discontented falconer to his friend.

"Nay, it was my Lord Regent, who said that he expected, if the abbey was injured, your knight would send him the head of the ringleader among the rioters."

"Nay, but is this done like a good protestant," said Adam Woodcock, "or a true lord of the congregation? We used to be their white-boys and darlings when we pulled down the convents in Fife and Perth shires."

"Ay, but that," said Michael, "was when old Mother Rome held her own, and her great folks were determined she should have no shelter for her head in Scotland. But, now that the priests are fled in all quarters, and their houses and lands are given to our grandees, they cannot see that we are working the work of reformation in destroying the palaces of zealous protestants."

"But I tell you Saint Mary's is not destroyed!" said Woodcock, in increasing agitation; "some trash of painted windows there were broken—things that no nobleman could have brooked in his house—some

stone saints were brought on their marrow-bones, like old Widdrington at Chevy-Chase; but as for fire-raising, there was not so much as a lighted lunt amongst us, save the match which the dragon had to light the burning tow withal, which he was to spit against Saint George; nay, I had caution of that."

"How! Adam Woodcock," said his comrade, "I trust thou hadst no hand in such a fair work. Look you, Adam, I were loath to terrify you, and you just come from a journey; but I promise you, Earl Morton hath brought you down a maiden from Halifax, you never saw the like of her—and she'll clasp you round the neck, and your head will remain in her arms."

"Pshaw!" answered Adam, "I am too old to have my head turned by any maiden of them all. I know my Lord of Morton will go as far for a buxom lass as any one; but what the devil took him to Halifax all the way? and if he has got a gamester there, what hath she to do with my head?"

"Much, much!" answered Michael. "Herod's daughter, who did such execution with her foot and ancle, danced not men's heads off more cleanly than this maiden of Morton. 'Tis an axe, man,—an axe which falls of itself like a sash window, and never gives the headsman the trouble to wield it."

"By my faith, a shrewd device," said Woodcock; "Heaven keep us free on't!"

The page, seeing no end to the conversation between these two old comrades, and anxious, from what he had heard, concerning the fate of the abbot, now interrupted their conference.

"Methinks," he said, "Adam Woodcock, thou hadst better deliver thy master's letter to the regent; questionless he hath therein stated what has chanced at Kennaquhair, in the way most advantageous for all concerned."

"The boy is right," said Michael Wing-the-wind, "my lord will be very impatient."

"The child hath wit enough to keep himself warm," said Adam Woodcock, producing from his hawking-bag his lord's letter, addressed to the Earl of Murray, "and for that matter so have I. So, Master Roland, you will e'en please to present this yourself to the lord regent; his presence will be better graced by a young page than by an old falconer."

"Well said, canny Yorkshire!" replied his friend; "and but now you were so earnest to see our good lord!—Why, wouldst thou put the lad into the noose that thou mayest slip tether thyself?—or doest thou think the maiden will clasp his fair young neck more willingly than thy old sun-burnt weasand?"

"Go to," answered the falconer; "thy wit towers high an it could strike the quarry. I tell thee the youth has nought to fear—he had nothing to do with the gambol—a rare gambol it was, Michael, as mad-caps ever played; and I had made as rare a ballad, if we had had the luck to get it sung to an end. But mum for that—*tace*, as I said before, is Latin for a candle. Carry the youth to the presence, and I will remain here, with bridle in hand, ready to strike the spurs up to the rowel-heads, in case the hawk flies my way.—I will soon put Soltra-edge, I trow, betwixt the regent and me, if he means me less than fair play."

"Come on then, my lad," said Michael, "since thou must needs take the spring before canny Yorkshire." So saying, he led the way through winding passages, closely followed by Roland Græme, until they arrived at a large winding stone stair, the steps of which were so long and broad, and at the same time so low, as to render the ascent uncommonly easy. When they had ascended about the height of one story, the guide stepped aside, and pushed open the door of a dark and gloomy ante-chamber; so dark indeed, that his youthful companion stumbled and nearly fell down upon a low step, which was awkwardly placed on the very threshold.

"Take heed," said Michael Wing-the-wind, in a very low tone of voice, and first glancing cautiously round to see if any one listened—"Take heed, my young friend, for those who fall on these boards seldom arise again—Seest thou that," he added, in a still lower voice, pointing to some dark crimson stains on the floor, on which a ray of light shot through a small aperture, and traversing the general gloom of the apartment, fell with mottled radiance—"Seest thou that, youth?—walk warily, for men have fallen here before you."

"What mean you?" said the page, his flesh creeping, though he scarce knew why; "is it blood?"

"Ay, ay," said the domestic, in the same whispering tone, and dragging the youth on by the arm—"Blood it is,—but this is no time to question, or even to look at it. Blood it is, foully and fearfully shed—as foully and fearfully avenged. The blood," he added, in a still more cautious tone, "of Signor David."

Roland Græme's heart throbbed when he found himself so unexpectedly in the scene of Rizzio's slaughter, a catastrophe which had chilled with horror all even in that rude age, which had been the theme of wonder and pity through every cottage and castle in Scotland, and had not escaped that of Avenel. But his guide hurried him forward, permitting no further question, and with the manner of one who has already tampered too much with a dangerous subject. A tap which he made at a low door at one end of the vestibule, was answered by a huissier or usher, who, opening it cautiously, received Michael's intimation that a page waited the regent's leisure, who brought letters from the Knight of Avenel.

"The council is breaking up," said the usher; "but give me the packet, his grace the regent will presently see the messenger."

"The packet," replied the page, "must be delivered into the regent's own hands; such were the orders of my master."

The usher looked at him from head to foot, as if surprised at his boldness, and then replied, with some asperity, "Say you so, my young master? Thou crowest loudly to be but a chicken, and from a country barn-yard too."

"Were it a time or place," said Roland, "thou shouldst see I can do more than crow; but do your duty, and let the regent know I wait his pleasure."

"Thou art but a pert knave to tell me of my duty," said the courtier in office; "but I will find a time to show you you are out of yours; meanwhile,

wait there till you are wanted." So saying, he shut the door in Roland's face.

Michael Wing-the-wind, who had shrunk from his youthful companion during this altercation, according to the established maxim of courtiers of all ranks, and in all ages, now transgressed their prudential line of conduct so far as to come up to him once more. "Thou art a hopeful young springald," said he, "and I see right well old Yorkshire had reason in his caution. Thou hast been five minutes in the court, and hast employed thy time so well, as to make a powerful and a mortal enemy out of the usher of the council-chamber. Why, man, you might almost as well have offended the deputy-butler."

"I care not what he is," said Roland Græme; "I will teach whomsoever I speak with, to speak civilly to me in return. I did not come from Avenel to be brow-beaten in Holyrood."

"Bravo, my lad!" said Michael; "it is a fine spirit if you can but hold it—but see, the door opens."

The usher appeared, and, in a more civil tone of voice and manner, said, that his grace the regent would receive the Knight of Avenel's message; and accordingly marshaled Roland Græme the way into the apartment, from which the council had been just dismissed, after finishing their consultations. There was in the room a long oaken table, surrounded by stools of the same wood, with a large elbow chair, covered with crimson velvet, at the head. Writing materials and papers were lying there in apparent disorder; and one or two of the privy councillors who had lingered behind, assuming their cloaks, bonnets, and swords, and bidding farewell to the regent, were departing slowly by a large door, on the opposite side to that through which the page entered. Apparently the Earl of Murray had made some jest, for the smiling countenances of the statesmen expressed that sort of cordial reception which is paid by courtiers to the condescending pleasantries of a prince.

The regent himself was laughing heartily as he said, "Farewell, my lords, and hold me remembered to the Cock of the North."

He then turned slowly round towards Roland Græme, and the marks of gaiety, real or assumed, disappeared from his countenance, as completely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a still profound lake into which a traveller has cast a stone: in the course of a minute his noble features had assumed their natural expression of deep and even melancholy gravity.

This distinguished statesman, for as such his worst enemies acknowledged him, possessed all the external dignity, as well as almost all the noble qualities, which could grace the power that he enjoyed; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings. But that he held his authority by the deposition and imprisonment of his sister and benefactress, was a crime which those only can excuse who think ambition an apology for ingratitude. He was dressed plainly in black velvet, after the Flemish fashion, and wore in his high-crowned hat a jeweled clasp, which looped it up on one side, and formed the only ornament of his apparel. He had his poniard by his side and his sword lay on the council table.

VOL. III.

Such was the personage before whom Roland Græme now presented himself, with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact, he was, from education and nature, forward but not impudent, and was much more easily controlled by the moral superiority, arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an earl, merely distinguished by his belt and coronet; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies. The greatest and wisest are flattered by the deference of youth—so graceful and becoming in itself; and Murray took, with much courtesy, the letter from the hands of the abashed and blushing page, and answered with complaisance to the imperfect and half-muttered greeting which he endeavoured to deliver to him on the part of Sir Halbert of Avenel. He even paused a moment ere he broke the silk with which the letter was secured, to ask the page his name—so much was he struck with his very handsome features and form.

"Roland Græme," he said, repeating the words after the hesitating page. "What! of the Grahames of the Lennox?"

"No, my lord," replied Roland; "my parents dwelt in the Debateable Land."

Murray made no farther inquiry, but proceeded to read his dispatches; during the perusal of which his brow began to assume a stern expression of displeasure, as that of one who found something which at once surprised and disturbed him. He sat down on the nearest seat, frowned till his eye-brows almost met together, read the letter twice over, and was then silent for several minutes. At length, raising his head, his eye encountered that of the usher, who in vain endeavoured to exchange the look of eager and curious observation with which he had been perusing the regent's features, for that open and unnoticing expression of countenance, which, in looking at all, seems as if it saw and marked nothing—a cast of look which may be practised with advantage by all those, of whatsoever degree, who are admitted to witness the familiar and unguarded hours of their superiors. Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them in mental dishabille and exposure.

"Leave the apartment, Hyndman," said the regent, sternly, "and carry your observation elsewhere. You are too knowing, sir, for your post, which, by special order, is destined for men of blunter capacity. So! now you look more like a fool than you did—(for Hyndman, as may easily be supposed, was not a little discouraged by this rebuke)—keep that confused stare, and it may keep you your office. Begone, sir!"

The usher departed in dismay, not forgetting to register, amongst his other causes of dislike to Roland Græme, that he had been the witness of this disgraceful chiding. When he had left the apartment, the regent again addressed the page.

"Your name you say is Armstrong?"

"No," replied Roland, "my name is Græme, so please you—Roland Græme, whose forbears were designated of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land."

"Ay, I knew it was a name from the Debateable Land. Hast thou any acquaintances here in Edinburgh?"

"My lord," replied Roland, willing rather to evade this question than to answer it directly, for the prudence of being silent with respect to Lord Seyton's adventure immediately struck him, "I have been in Edinburgh scarce an hour, and that for the first time in my life."

"What! and thou Sir Halbert Glendinning's page?" said the regent.

"I was brought up as my lady's page," said the youth, "and left Avenel Castle for the first time in my life—at least since my childhood—only three days since."

"My lady's page;" repeated the Earl of Murray, as if speaking to himself; "it was strange to send his lady's page on a matter of such deep concernment—Morton will say it is of a piece with the nomination of his brother to be abbot; and yet in some sort an inexperienced youth will best serve the turn.—What hast thou been taught, young man, in thy doughty apprenticeship?"

"To hunt, my lord, and to hawk," said Roland Græme.

"To hunt coneys, and to hawk at ouzels?" said the regent, smiling; "for such are the sports of ladies and their followers."

Græme's cheek reddened deeply as he replied, not without some emphasis, "To hunt red deer of the first head, and to strike down herons of the highest soar, my lord, which, in Lothian speech, may be termed, for aught I know, coneys and ouzels;—also, I can wield a brand and couch a lance according to our Border meaning; in inland speech these may be termed water-flags and bulrushes."

"Thy speech rings like metal," said the regent, "and I pardon the sharpness of it for the truth.—Thou knowest, then, what belongs to the duty of a man-at arms?"

"So far as exercise can teach it, without real service in the field," answered Roland Græme; "but our knight permitted none of his household to make raids, and I never had the good fortune to see a stricken field."

"The good fortune!" repeated the regent, smiling somewhat sorrowfully, "take my word, young man, war is the only game from which both parties rise losers."

"Not always, my lord!" answered the page, with his characteristic audacity, "if fame speaks truth."

"How, sir?" said the regent, colouring in his turn, and perhaps suspecting an indiscreet allusion to the height which he himself had attained by the hap of civil war.

"Because, my lord," said Roland Græme, without change of tone, "he who fights well, must have fame in life, or honour in death; and so war is a game from which no one can rise a loser."

The regent smiled and shook his head, when at that moment the door opened, and the Earl of Morton presented himself.

"I come somewhat hastily," he said, "and I enter

unannounced, because my news are of weight—It is as I said, Edward Glendinning is named abbot, and——"

"Hush, my lord!" said the regent. "I know it, but——"

"And perhaps you knew it before I did, my Lord of Murray," answered Morton, his dark red brow growing darker and redder as he spoke.

"Morton," said Murray, "suspect me not—touch not mine honour—I have to suffer enough from the calumnies of foes—let me not have to contend with the unjust suspicions of my friends.—We are not alone," said he, recollecting himself, "or I could tell you more."

He led Morton into one of the deep embrasures which the windows formed in the massive wall, and which afforded a retiring place for their conversing apart. In this recess, Roland observed them speak together with much earnestness, Murray appearing to be grave and earnest, and Morton having a jealous and offended air, which seemed gradually to give way to the assurances of the regent.

As their conversation grew more earnest, they became gradually louder in speech, having perhaps forgotten the presence of the page, the more readily as his position in the apartment placed him out of sight, so that he found himself unwillingly privy to more of their discourse than he cared to hear. For, page though he was, a mean curiosity after the secrets of others had never been numbered amongst Roland's failings; and moreover, with all his natural rashness, he could not but doubt the safety of becoming privy to the secret discourse of these powerful and dreaded men. Still he could neither stop his ears, nor with propriety leave the apartment; and while he thought of some means of signifying his presence, he had already heard so much, that, to have produced himself suddenly would have been as awkward, and perhaps as dangerous, as in quiet to abide the end of their conference. What he overheard, however, was but an imperfect part of their communication; and although a more expert politician, acquainted with the circumstances of the times, would have had little difficulty in tracing the meaning, yet Roland Græme could only form very general and vague conjectures as to the import of their discourse.

"All is prepared," said Murray, "and Lindesay is setting forward—She must hesitate no longer—thou seest I act by thy counsel, and harden myself against softer considerations."

"True, my lord," replied Morton, "in what is necessary to gain power, you do not hesitate, but go boldly to the mark. But are you as careful to defend and preserve what you have won?—Why this establishment of domestics around her?—has not your mother men and maidens enough to tend her, but you must consent to this superfluous and dangerous retinue."

"For shame, Morton!—a princess, and my sister, could I do less than allow her due tendance?"

"Ay," replied Morton, "even thus fly all your shafts—smartly enough loosened from the bow, and not unskilfully aimed—but a breath of foolish affection ever crosses in the mid volley, and sways the arrow from the mark."

"Say not so, Morton!" replied Murray, "I have both dared and done——"

"Yes, enough to gain, but not enough to keep—reckon not that she will think and act thus—you have wounded her deeply, both in pride and in power—it signifies nought, that you would tent now the wound with unavailing salves—as matters stand with you, you must forfeit the title of an affectionate brother, to hold that of a bold and determined statesman."

"Morton!" said Murray, with some impatience, "I brook not these taunts—what I have done I have done—what I must further do, I must and will—but I am not made of iron like thee, and I cannot but remember—Enough of this—my purpose holds."

"And I warrant me," said Morton, "the choice of these domestic consolations will rest with——"

Here he whispered names which escaped Roland Græme's ear. Murray replied in a similar tone, but so much raised towards the conclusion of the sentence, that the page heard these words—"And of him I hold myself secure, by Glendinning's recommendation."

"Ay, which may be as much trust-worthy as his late conduct at the Abbey of Saint Mary's—you have heard that his brother's election has taken place. Your favourite Sir Halbert, my Lord of Murray, has as much fraternal affection as yourself."

"By Heaven, Morton, that taunt demanded an unfriendly answer, but I pardon it, for your brother also is concerned; but this election shall be annulled. I tell you, Earl of Morton, while I hold the sword of state in my royal nephew's name, neither lord nor knight in Scotland shall dispute my authority; and if I bear with insults from my friends, it is only while I know them to be such, and forgive their follies for their faithfulness."

Morton muttered what seemed to be some excuse, and the regent answered him in a milder tone, and then subjoined, "Besides, I have a pledge besides Glendinning's recommendation for this youth's fidelity—his nearest relative has placed herself in my hands as his security, to be dealt withal as his doings shall deserve."

"That is something," replied Morton; "but yet, in fair love and good will, I must still pray you to keep on your guard. The foes are stirring again, as horse-flies and hornets become busy so soon as the storm-blast is over. George of Seyton was cropping the causeway this morning with a score of men at his back, and had a ruffle with my friends of the House of Leslie—they met at the Tron, and were fighting hard, when the provost, with his guard of partisans, came in thirds-men, and staved them asunder with their halberts, as men part dog and bear."

"He hath my order for such interference," said the regent—"Has any one been hurt?"

"George of Seyton himself, by Black Ralph Leslie—the devil take the rapier that ran not through from side to side! Ralph has a bloody coxcomb, by a blow from a messan-page whom nobody knew—Dick Seyton of Windygowl is run through the arm, and two gallants of the Leslies have suffered phlebotomy. This is all the gentle blood which has been spilled in the revel; but a yeoman or two on both sides have

had bones broken and ears cropped. The ostlere-wives, who are like to be the only losers by their miscarriage, have dragged the knaves off the street, and are crying a drunken coronach over them."

"You take it lightly, Douglas," said the regent; "these broils and feuds would shame the capital of the Great Turk, let alone that of a christian and reformed state. But, if I live, this gear shall be amended; and men shall say, when they read my story, that if it were my cruel hap to rise to power by the dethronement of a sister, I employed it, when gained, for the benefit of the commonweal."

"And of your friends," replied Morton; "wherefore I trust for your instant order annulling the election of this lurdane abbot, Edward Glendinning."

"You shall be presently satisfied;" and, stepping forward, he began to call, "So ho, Hyndman!" when suddenly his eye lighted on Roland Græme—"By my faith, Douglas," said he, turning to his friend, "here have been three at counsel."

"Ay, but only two can keep counsel," said Morton; "the galliard must be disposed of."

"For shame, Morton—an orphan boy!—Hearken thee, my child—Thou hast told me some of thy accomplishments—canst thou speak truth?"

"Ay, my lord, when it serves my turn," replied Græme.

"It shall serve thy turn now," said the regent; "and falsehood shall be thy destruction. How much hast thou heard or understood of what we two have spoken together?"

"But little, my lord," replied Roland Græme, boldly, "which met my apprehension, saving that it seemed to me as if in something you doubted the faith of the Knight of Avenel, under whose roof I was nurtured."

"And what hast thou to say on that point, young man?" continued the regent, bending his eyes upon him with a keen and strong expression of observation.

"That," said the page, "depends on the quality of those who speak against his honour whose bread I have long eaten.—If they be my inferiors, I say they lie, and will maintain what I say with my baton: if my equals, still I say they lie, and will do battle in the quarrel, if they list, with my sword; if my superiors"—he paused.

"Proceed boldly," said the regent—"What if thy superior said aught that nearly touched your master's honour?"

"I would say," replied Græme, "that he did ill to slander the absent, and that my master was a man who could render an account of his actions to any one who should manfully demand it of him to his face."

"And it were manfully said," replied the regent—"what thinkest thou, my Lord of Morton?"

"I think," replied Morton, "that if the young galliard resemble a certain ancient friend of ours, as much in the craft of his disposition as he does in eye and in brow, there may be a wide difference betwixt what he means and what he speaks."

"And whom meanest thou that he resembles so closely?" said Murray.

"Even the true and trusty Julian Avenel," replied Morton.

"But this youth belongs to the Debateable Land," said Murray.

"It may be so; but Julian was an outlying striker of venison, and made many a far cast when he had a fair doe in chase."

"Pshaw!" said the regent, "this is but idle talk—Here, thou Hyndman—thou Curiosity—conduct this youth to his companion—You will both," he said to Græme, "keep yourselves in readiness to travel on short notice."—And then motioning to him courteously to withdraw, he broke up the interview.

CHAPTER XIX.

It is and is not—'t is the thing I sought for,
Have kneeled for, prayed for, risked my fame and life for,
And yet it is not—no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polished mirror,
Is the warm, graceful, rounded, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

Old Play.

THE usher, with gravity which ill concealed a jealous scowl, conducted Roland Græme to a lower apartment, where he found his comrade the falconer. The man of office then briefly acquainted them that this would be their residence till his grace's further orders; that they were to go to the pantry, to the buttery, to the cellar, and to the kitchen, at the usual hours, to receive the allowances becoming their station,—instructions which Adam Woodcock's old familiarity with the court made him perfectly understand—"For your beds," he said, "you must go to the hostelrie of Saint Michael's, in respect the palace is now full of the domestics of the greater nobles."

No sooner was the usher's back turned than Adam exclaimed, with all the glee of eager curiosity, "And now, Master Roland, the news—the news—come, unbutton thy pouch, and give us thy tidings—What says the regent? asks he for Adam Woodcock?—and is all soldered up, or must the Abbot of Unreason strap for it?"

"All is well in that quarter," said the page; "and for the rest—But, hey-day, what, have you taken the chain and medal off from my bonnet?"

"And meet time it was, when yon usher, vinegar-faced rogue that he is, began to inquire what popish trangam you were wearing—By the mass, the metal would have been confiscated for conscience-sake, like your other rattle-trap yonder at Avenel, which Mrs Liliass bears about on her shoes in the guise of a pair of shoe-buckles—This comes of carrying popish nick-nackets about you."

"The jade!" exclaimed Roland Græme, "has she melted down my rosary into buckles for her clumsy hoofs, which will become such a garnish well nigh as well as a cow's might—But, hang her, let her keep them—many a dog's trick have I played old Liliass, for want of having something better to do, and the buckles will serve for a remembrance. Do you remember the verjuice I put into the comfits, when old Wingate and she were to breakfast together on Easter morning?"

"In troth do I, Master Roland—the major-domo's

mouth was as crooked as a hawk's beak for the whole morning afterward, and any other page in your room would have tasted the discipline of the porter's lodge for it—But my lady's favour stood between your skin and many a jerking—Lord send you may be the better for her protection in such matters."

"I am at least grateful for it, Adam; and I am glad you put me in mind of it."

"Well, but the news, my young master," said Woodcock, "spell me the tidings—what are we to fly at next?—what did the regent say to you?"

"Nothing that I am to repeat again," said Roland Græme, shaking his head.

"Why, hey-day," said Adam, "how prudent we are become all of a sudden! You have advanced rarely in brief space, Master Roland. You have well nigh had your head broken, and you have gained your gold chain, and you have made an enemy, Master Usher to wit, with his two legs like hawk's perches, and you have had audience of the first man in the realm, and bear as much mystery in your brow, as if you had flown in the court-sky ever since you were hatched.—I believe, in my soul, you would run with a piece of the egg-shell on your head like the curlious, whom (I would we were after them again) we used to call whaups in the halidome and its neighbourhood.—But sit thee down, boy; Adam Woodcock was never the lad to seek to enter into forbidden secrets—sit thee down, and I will go fetch the vivers—I know the butler and the pantler of old."

The good-natured falconer set forth upon his errand, busying himself about procuring their refreshment; and, during his absence, Roland Græme abandoned himself to the strange, complicated, and yet heart-stirring reflections, to which the events of the morning had given rise. Yesterday he was of neither mark nor likelihood, a vagrant boy, the attendant on the relative, of whose sane judgment he himself had not the highest opinion; but now he had become, he knew not why, or wherefore, or to what extent, the custodier, as the Scottish phrase went, of some important state secret, in the safe keeping of which the regent himself was concerned. It did not diminish from, but rather added to the interest of a situation so unexpected, that Roland himself did not perfectly understand wherein he stood committed by the state secrets, in which he had unwittingly become participator. On the contrary, he felt like one who looks on a romantic landscape, of which he sees the features for the first time, and then obscured with mist and driving tempest. The imperfect glimpse which the eye catches of rocks, trees, and other objects around him, adds double dignity to these shrouded mountains and darkened abysses, of which the height, depth, and extent, are left to imagination.

But mortals, especially at the well appetized age which precedes twenty years, are seldom so much engaged either by real or conjectural subjects of speculation, but what their earthly wants claim their hour of attention. And with many a smile did our hero, so the reader may term him if he will, hail the re-appearance of his friend Adam Woodcock, bearing on one wooden platter a tremendous portion of boiled beef, and on another a plentiful al-

lowance of greens, or rather what the Scotch call lang-kaile. A groom followed with bread, salt, and the other means of setting forth a meal; and when they had both placed on the oaken table what they bore in their hands, the falconer observed, that since he knew the court, it had got harder and harder every day to the poor gentlemen and yeomen retainers, but that now it was an absolute flaying of a flea for the hide and tallow. Such thronging to the wicket, and such churlish answers, and such bare beef-bones, such a shouldering at the buttery-hatch and cellarage, and nought to be gained beyond small insufficient single ale, or at best with a single straike of malt to counterbalance a double allowance of water—"By the mass, though, my young friend," said he, while he saw the food disappearing fast under Roland's active exertions, "it is not so well to lament for former times as to take the advantage of the present, else we are like to lose on both sides."

So saying, Adam Woodcock drew his chair towards the table, unsheathed his knife, for every one carried that minister of festive distribution for himself, and imitated his young companion's example, who for the moment had lost his anxiety for the future in the eager satisfaction of an appetite sharpened by youth and abstinence.

In truth, they made, though the materials were sufficiently simple, a very respectable meal, at the expense of the royal allowance; and Adam Woodcock, notwithstanding the deliberate censure which he had passed on the household beer of the palace, had taken the fourth deep draught of the black-jack ere he remembered him that he had spoken in its dispraise. Flinging himself jollily and luxuriously back in an old danske elbow-chair, and looking with a careless glee towards the page, extending at the same time his right leg, and stretching the other easily over it, he reminded his companion that he had not yet heard the ballad which he had made for the Abbot of Unreason's revel. And accordingly he struck merrily up with—

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Has blinded us full lang—"

Roland Græme, who felt no great delight, as may be supposed, in the falconer's satire, considering its subject, began to snatch up his mantle, and fling it around his shoulders, an action which instantly interrupted the ditty of Adam Woodcock.

"Where the vengeance are you going now," he said, "thou restless boy?—Thou hast quicksilver in the veins of thee to a certainty, and canst no more abide any douce and sensible communing, than a hoodless hawk would keep perched on my wrist!"

"Why, Adam," replied the page, "if you must needs know, I am about to take a walk and look at this fair city. One may as well be still mewed up in the old castle of the lake, if one is to sit the live-long night between four stone walls, and hearken to old ballads."

"It is a new ballad—the Lord help thee!" replied Adam, "and that one of the best that ever was matched with a rousing chorus."

"Be it so," said the page, "I will hear it another

day, when the rain is dashing against the windows, and there is neither steed stamping, nor spur jingling, nor feather waving in the neighbourhood, to mar my marking it well. But, even now, I want to be in the world, and to look about me."

"But the never a stride shall you go without me," said the falconer, "until the regent shall take you whole and sound off my hand; and so, if you will, we may go to the hostelry of Saint Michael's, and there you will see company enough, but through the casement, mark you me; for as to rambling through the street to seek Seytons and Leslies, and having a dozen holes drilled in your new jacket with rapier and poniard, I will yield no way to it."

"To the hostelry of Saint Michael's then, with all my heart," said the page; and they left the palace accordingly, rendered to the sentinels at the gate, who had now taken their posts for the evening, a strict account of their names and business, were dismissed through a small wicket of the close-barred portal, and soon reached the inn or hostelry of Saint Michael's, which stood in a large court-yard, off the main street, close under the descent of the Calton-hill. The place, wide, waste, and uncomfortable, resembled rather an eastern caravansary, where men found shelter indeed, but were obliged to supply themselves with every thing else, than one of our modern inns—

Where not one comfort shall to those be lost,
Who never ask, or never feel, the cost.

But still, to the inexperienced eye of Roland Græme, the bustle and confusion of this place of public resort furnished excitement and amusement. In the large room, into which they had rather found their own way than been ushered by mine host, travellers and natives of the city entered and departed, met and greeted, gamed or drank together, regardless of each other's presence, forming the strongest contrast to the stern and monotonous order and silence with which matters were conducted in the well-ordered household of the Knight of Avenel. Altercation of every kind, from brawling to jesting, was going on amongst the groups around them, and yet the noise and mingled voices seemed to disturb no one, and indeed to be noticed by no others than by those who composed the group to which the speaker belonged.

The falconer passed through the apartment to a projecting latticed window, which formed a sort of recess from the room itself; and having here ensconced himself and his companion, he called for some refreshments; and a tapster, after he had shouted for the twentieth time, accommodated him with the remains of a cold capon and a neat's tongue, together with a pewter stoup of weak French vin-de-pais. "Fetch a stoup of brandy-wine, thou knave—We will be jolly to-night, Master Roland," said he, when he saw himself thus accommodated, "and let care come to-morrow."

But Roland had eaten too lately to enjoy the good cheer; and feeling his curiosity much sharper than his appetite, he made it his choice to look out of the lattice, which overhung a large yard, surrounded by the stables of the hostelry, and fed his eyes on the busy sight beneath, while Adam Woodcock, after

he had compared his companion to the "Laird of Macfarlane's geese, who liked their play better than their meat," disposed of his time with the aid of cup and trencher, occasionally humming the burthen of his birth-strangled ballad, and beating time to it with his fingers on the little round table. In this exercise he was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of his companion, as he saw something new in the yard beneath to attract and interest him.

It was a busy scene ; for the number of gentlemen and nobles who were now crowded into the city, had filled all spare stables and places of public reception with their horses and military attendants. There were some score of yeomen, dressing their own or their masters' horses in the yard, whistling, singing, laughing, and upbraiding each other in a style of wit which the good order of Avenel Castle rendered strange to Roland Græme's ears. Others were busy repairing their own arms, or cleaning those of their masters. One fellow, having just bought a bundle of twenty spears, was sitting in a corner employed in painting the white handles of the weapons with yellow and vermillion. Other lacqueys led large stag-hounds or wolf-dogs of noble race, carefully muzzled to prevent accidents to passengers. All came and went, mixed together and separated, under the delighted eye of the page, whose imagination had not even conceived a scene so gaily diversified with the objects he had most pleasure in beholding ; so that he was perpetually breaking the quiet reverie of honest Woodcock, and the mental progress which he was making in his ditty, by exclaiming, "Look here, Adam—look at the bonnie bay horse—Saint Anthony, what a gallant forehand he hath got!—and see the goodly grey, which yonder fellow in the frieze jacket is dressing as awkwardly as if he had never touched aught but a cow—I would I were nigh him to teach him his trade!—And lo you, Adam, the gay Milan armour that the yeoman is scouring, all steel and silver, like our knight's prime suit, of which old Wingate makes such account—And see to yonder pretty wench, Adam, who comes tripping through them all with her milk-pail—I warrant me she has had a long walk from the loaning ; she has a stammel waistcoat, like your favourite Cissly Sunderland, Master Adam."

"By my hood, lad," answered the falconer, "it is well for thee thou wert brought up where grace grew. Even in the Castle of Avenel thou wert a wild-blood enough, but hadst thou been nurtured here, within a flight-shot of the court, thou hadst been the veriest crack-hemp of a page that ever wore feather in thy bonnet or steel by thy side ; truly, I wish it may end well with thee."

"Nay, but leave thy senseless humming and drumming, old Adam, and come to the window ere thou hast drowned thy senses in the pint-pot there. See here comes a merry minstrel with his crowd, and a wench with him, that dances with bells at her ancles ; and see, the yeomen and pages leave their horses and the armour they were cleaning, and gather round, as is very natural, to hear the music. Come, old Adam, we will thither too."

"You shall call me cutt if I do go down," said

Adam ; "you are near as good minstrelsy as he can make, if you had the grace to listen to it."

"But the wench in the stammel waistcoat is stopping too, Adam—by Heaven, they are going to dance. Frieze-jacket wants to dance with stammel-waistcoat, but she is coy and recusant."

Then suddenly changing his tone of levity into one of deep interest and surprise, he exclaimed, "Queen of Heaven ! what is it that I see !" and then remained silent.

The sage Adam Woodcock, who was in a sort of languid degree amused with the page's exclamations, even while he professed to despise them, became at length rather desirous to set his tongue once more a-going, that he might enjoy the superiority afforded by his own intimate familiarity with all the circumstances which excited in his young companion's mind so much wonderment.

"Well then," he said at last, "what is it you do see, Master Roland, that you have become mute all of a sudden ?"

Roland returned no answer.

"I say, Master Roland Græme," said the falconer, "it is manners in my country for a man to speak when he is spoken to."

Roland Græme remained silent.

"The murrain is in the boy," said Adam Woodcock, "he has stared out his eyes and talked his tongue to pieces, I think."

The falconer hastily drank off his can of wine, and came to Roland, who stood like a statue, with his eyes eagerly bent on the court-yard, though Adam Woodcock was unable to detect amongst the merry scene which it exhibited aught that could deserve such devoted attention.

"The lad is mazed !" said the falconer to himself.

But Roland Græme had good reasons for his surprise, though they were not such as he could communicate to his companion.

The touch of the old man's instrument, for he had already begun to play, had drawn in several auditors from the street, when one entered the gate of the yard, whose appearance exclusively arrested the attention of Roland Græme. He was of his own age, or a good deal younger, and from his dress and bearing might be of the same rank and calling, having all the air of coxcombry and pretension, which accorded with a handsome though slight and low figure, and an elegant dress, in part hid by a large purple cloak. As he entered, he cast a glance up towards the windows, and to his extreme astonishment, under the purple velvet bonnet and white feather, Roland recognized the features so deeply impressed on his memory, the bright and clustered tresses, the laughing full blue eyes, the well-formed eye-brows, the nose, with the slightest possible inclination to be aquiline, the ruby lip, of which an arch and half-suppressed smile seemed the habitual expression—in short, the form and face of Catherine Seyton ; in man's attire, however, and mimicking, as it seemed, not unsuccessfully, the bearing of a youthful but forward page.

"Saint George and Saint Andrew !" said the astonished Roland Græme to himself, "was there ever such an audacious quean!—she seems a little

ashamed of her mummery too, for she holds the lap of her cloak to her face, and her colour is heightened—but, Santa Maria! how she threads the throng, with as firm and bold a step as if she had never tied petticoat round her waist—Holy saints! she holds up her riding-rod as if she would lay it about some of their ears, that stand most in her way—by the hand of my father, she bears herself like the very model of pagehood.—Hey! what! sure she will not strike frieze-jacket in earnest.” But he was not long left in doubt; for the lout whom he had before repeatedly noticed, standing in the way of the bustling page, and maintaining his place with clownish obstinacy or stupidity, the advanced riding-rod was, without a moment’s hesitation, sharply applied to his shoulders, in a manner which made him spring aside, rubbing the part of the body which had received so unceremonious a hint that it was in the way of his betters. The party injured growled forth an oath or two of indignation, and Roland Græme began to think of flying down stairs to the assistance of the translated Catherine; but the laugh of the yard was against frieze-jacket, which indeed had, in these days, small chance of fair play in a quarrel with velvet and embroidery; so that the fellow, who was a menial in the inn, slunk back to finish his task of dressing the bonnie grey, laughed at by all, but most by the wench in the stammel waistcoat, his fellow-servant, who, to crown his disgrace, had the cruelty to cast an applauding smile upon the author of the injury, while, with a freedom more like the milk-maid of the town than she of the plains, she accosted him with—“Is there any one you want here, my pretty gentleman, that you seem in such haste?”

“I seek a sprig of a lad,” said the seeming gallant, “with a sprig of holly in his cap, black hair and black eyes, green jacket, and the air of a country coxcomb—I have sought him through every close and alley in the Canongate, the fiend gore him!”

“Why, God-a-mercy, nun!” muttered Roland Græme, much bewildered.

“I will inquire him presently out for your fair young worship,” said the wench of the inn.

“Do,” said the gallant squire, “and if you bring me to him, you shall have a groat to-night, and a kiss on Sunday when you have on a cleaner kirtle.”

“Why, God-a-mercy, nun!” again muttered Roland, “this is a note above E La.”

In a moment after the servant entered the room, and ushered in the object of his surprise.

While the disguised vestal looked with unabashed brow, and bold and rapid glance of her eye, through the various parties in the large old room, Roland Græme, who felt an internal awkward sense of bashful confusion, which he deemed altogether unworthy of the bold and dashing character to which he aspired, determined not to be brow-beaten and put down by this singular female, but to meet her with a glance of recognition so sly, so penetrating, so expressively humorous, as should show her at once he was in possession of her secret, and master of her fate, and should compel her to humble herself towards him, at least into the look and manner of respectful and deprecating observance.

This was extremely well planned; but just as Roland had called up the knowing glance, the suppressed smile, the shrewd intelligent look, which was to ensure his triumph, he encountered the bold, firm, and steady gaze of his brother or sister page, who, casting on him a falcon glance, and recognizing him at once as the object of his search, walked up with the most unconcerned look, the most free and undaunted composure, and hailed him with “You, Sir Holly-top, I would speak with you.”

The steady coolness and assurance with which these words were uttered, although the voice was the very voice he had heard at the old convent, and although the features more nearly resembled those of Catherine when seen close than when viewed from a distance, produced, nevertheless, such a confusion in Roland’s mind, that he became uncertain whether he was not still under a mistake from the beginning; the knowing shrewdness which should have animated his visage faded into a sheepish bashfulness, and the half-suppressed but most intelligible smile became the senseless giggle of one who laughs to cover his own disorder of ideas.

“Do they understand a Scotch tongue in thy country, Holly-top?” said this marvelous specimen of metamorphosis. “I said I would speak with thee.”

“What is your business with my comrade, my young chick of the game?” said Adam Woodcock, willing to step in to his companion’s assistance, though totally at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance of all Roland’s usual smartness and presence of mind.

“Nothing to you, my old cock of the perch,” replied the gallant; “go mind your hawk’s castings. I guess by your bag and your gauntlet that you are squire of the body to a sort of kites.”

He laughed as he spoke, and the laugh reminded Roland so irresistibly of the hearty fit of risibility in which Catherine had indulged at his expense when they first met in the old nunnery, that he could scarce help exclaiming, “Catherine Seyton, by heavens!”—He checked the exclamation, however, and only said, “I think, sir, we two are not totally strangers to each other.”

“We must have met in our dreams then,” said the youth; “and my days are too busy to remember what I think at nights.”

“Or apparently to remember upon one day those whom you may have seen on the preceding eve,” said Roland Græme.

The youth in his turn cast on him a look of some surprise, as he replied, “I know no more of what you mean than does the horse I ride on—if there be offence in your words, you shall find me as ready to take it as any lad in Lothian.”

“You know well,” said Roland, “though, if it pleases you to use the language of a stranger, that with you I can have no purpose to quarrel.”

“Let me do mine errand then, and be rid of you,” said the page. “Step hither this way, out of that old leathern fist’s hearing.”

They walked into the recess of the window, which Roland had left upon the youth’s entrance into the apartment. The messenger then turned his back on the company, after casting a hasty and sharp glance

around to see if they were observed. Roland did the same, and the page in the purple mantle thus addressed him, taking at the same time from under his cloak a short but beautifully wrought sword, with the hilt and ornaments upon the sheath of silver, massively chased and over-gilded—"I bring you this weapon from a friend, who gives it you under the solemn condition, that you will not unsheath it until you are commanded by your rightful sovereign. For your warmth of temper is known, and the presumption with which you intrude yourself into the quarrels of others; and, therefore, this is laid upon you as a penance by those who wish you well, and whose hand will influence your destiny for good or for evil. This is what I was charged to tell you. So if you will give a fair word for a fair sword, and pledge your promise, with hand and glove, good and well; and if not, I will carry back Caliburn to those who sent it."

"And may I not ask who these are?" said Roland Græme, admiring at the same time the beauty of the weapon thus offered him.

"My commission in no way leads me to answer such a question," said he of the purple mantle.

"But if I am offended," said Roland, "may I not draw to defend myself?"

"Not *this* weapon," answered the sword-bearer; "but you have your own at command, and, besides, for what do you wear your poniard?"

"For no good," said Adam Woodcock, who had now approached close to them; "and that I can witness as well as any one."

"Stand back, fellow," said the messenger; "thou hast an intrusive curious face, that will come by a buffet if it is found where it has no concern."

"A buffet, my young Master Malapert," said Adam, drawing back, however; "best keep down fist, or, by Our Lady, buffet will beget buffet!"

"Be patient, Adam Woodcock," said Roland Græme;—"and let me pray you, fair sir, since by such addition you chuse for the present to be addressed, may I not barely unsheath this fair weapon, in pure simplicity of desire to know whether so fair a hilt and scabbard are matched with a befitting blade?"

"By no manner of means," said the messenger; "at a word, you must take it under the promise that you never draw it until you receive the commands of your lawful sovereign, or you must leave it alone."

"Under that condition, and coming from your friendly hand, I accept of the sword," said Roland, taking it from his hand; "but credit me, that if we are to work together in any weighty emprise, as I am induced to believe, some confidence and openness on your part will be necessary to give the right impulse to my zeal—I press for no more at present, it is enough that you understand me."

"I understand you!" said the page, exhibiting the appearance of unfeigned surprise in his turn,—
"Renounce me if I do—here you stand jiggeting, and sniggling, and looking cunning, as if there were some mighty matter of intrigue and common understanding betwixt you and me, whom you never set your eyes on before!"

"What!" said Roland Græme, "will you deny that we have met before?"

"Marry that I will, in any christian court," said the other page.

"And will you also deny," said Roland, "that it was recommended to us to study each other's features well, that in whatsoever disguise the time might impose upon us, each should recognize in the other the secret agent of a mighty work? Do not you remember, that Sister Magdalen and Dame Bridget——"

The messenger here interrupted him, shrugging up his shoulders with a look of compassion, "Bridget and Magdalen! why this is madness and dreaming. Hark ye, Master Holly-top, your wits are gone on wool-gathering; comfort yourself with a caudle, thatch your brain-sick noddle with a woollen night-cap, and so God be with you."

As he concluded this polite parting address, Adam Woodcock, who was again seated by the table on which stood the now empty can, said to him, "Will you drink a cup, young man, in the way of courtesy, now you have done your errand, and listen a good song?" and without waiting for an answer, he commenced his ditty,—

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us full long"——

It is probable that the good wine had made some innovation in the falconer's brain, otherwise he would have recollected the danger of introducing any thing like political or polemical pleasantry into a public assemblage, at a time when men's minds were in a state of great irritability. To do him justice, he perceived his error, and stopped short so soon as he saw that the word pope had at once interrupted the separate conversations of the various parties which were assembled in the apartment; and that many began to draw themselves up, bridle, look big, and prepare to take part in the impending brawl; while others, more decent and cautious persons, hastily paid down their lawing, and prepared to leave the place ere bad should come to worse.

And to worse it was soon likely to come; for no sooner did Woodcock's ditty reach the ear of the stranger page, than, uplifting his riding-rod, he exclaimed, "He who speaks irreverently of the holy father of the church in my presence, is the cub of a heretic wolf-bitch, and I will switch him as I would a mongrel cur."

"And I will break thy young pate," said Adam, "if thou darest to lift a finger to me." And then, in defiance of the young Drawcansir's threats, with a stout heart and dauntless accent, he again uplifted the stave,

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded"——

But Adam was able to proceed no farther, being himself unfortunately blinded by a stroke of the impatient youth's switch across his eyes. Enraged at once by the smart and the indignity, the falconer started up, and darkling as he was, for his eyes watered too fast to permit his seeing any thing, he would soon have been at close grips with his insolent adversary, had not Roland Græme, contrary to his nature, played for once the prudent man and the peace-maker, and thrown himself betwixt them, in-

ploring Woodcock's patience. "You know not," he said, "with whom you have to do.—And thou," addressing the messenger, who stood scornfully laughing at Adam's rage, "get thee gone, whoever thou art; if thou be'st what I guess thee, thou well knowest there are earnest reasons why thou shouldst."

"Thou hast hit it right for once, Holly-top," said the gallant, "though I guess you drew your bow at a venture.—Here, host, let this yeoman have a pottle of wine to wash the smart out of his eyes—and there is a French crown for him." So saying, he threw the piece of money on the table, and left the apartment, with a quick yet steady pace, looking firmly at right and left, as if to defy interruption; and snapping his fingers at two or three respectable burghers, who, declaring it was a shame that any one should be suffered to rant and ruffle in defence of the pope, were labouring to find the hilts of their swords, which had got for the present unhappily entangled in the folds of their cloaks. But, as the adversary was gone ere any of them had reached his weapon, they did not think it necessary to unsheath cold iron, but merely observed to each other, "This is more than masterful violence, to see a poor man stricken in the face, just for singing a ballad against the whore of Babylon. If the pope's champions are to be bangsters in our very change-houses, we shall soon have the old shavelings back again."

"The provost should look to it," said another, "and have some five or six armed with partisans, to come in upon the first whistle, to teach these gallants their lesson. For, look you, neighbour Luggleather, it is not for decent householders like ourselves to be brawling with the godless grooms and pert pages of the nobles, that are bred up to little else save bloodshed and blasphemy."

"For all that, neighbour," said Luggleather, "I would have curried that youngster as properly as ever I curried a lamb's hide, had not the hilt of my bilbo been for the instant beyond my grasp; and before I could turn my girdle, gone was my master."

"Ay," said the others, "the devil go with him, and peace abide with us—I give my rede, neighbours, that we pay the lawing, and be stepping homeward, like brother and brother; for old Saint Giles's is tolling curfew, and the street grows dangerous at night."

With that the good burghers adjusted their cloaks, and prepared for their departure; while he that seemed the briskest of the three, laying his hand on his Andrea Ferrara, observed, "That they that spoke in praise of the pope on the High Gait of Edinburgh, had best bring the sword of Saint Peter to defend them."

While the ill-humour excited by the insolence of the young aristocrat was thus evaporating in empty menace, Roland Græme had to control the far more serious indignation of Adam Woodcock. "Why, man, it was but a switch across the mazzard—blow your nose, dry your eyes, and you will see all the better for it."

"By this light, which I cannot see," said Adam Woodcock, "thou hast been false friend to me, young man—neither taking up my rightful quarrel, nor letting me fight it out myself."

"Fie for shame, Adam Woodcock," replied the youth, determined to turn the tables on him, and become in turn the counsellor of good order and peaceable demeanour—"I say fie for shame!—Alas, that you will speak thus! Here are you sent with me, to prevent my innocent youth getting into snares—"

"I wish your innocent youth were cut short with a halter, with all my heart," said Adam, who began to see which way the admonition tended.

"—and instead of setting before me," continued Roland, "an example of patience and sobriety becoming the falconer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, you quaff me off I know not how many flagons of ale, besides a gallon of wine, and a full measure of strong waters."

"It was but one poor pottle," said poor Adam, whom consciousness now reduced to a merely defensive warfare.

"It was enough to pottle you handsomely, however," said the page—"And then, instead of going to bed to sleep off your liquor, must you sit singing your roistering songs about popes and pagans, till you have got your eyes almost switched out of your head; and but for my interference, whom your drunken ingratitude accuses of deserting you, yon galliard would have cut your throat, for he was whipping out a whinger as broad as my hand and as sharp as a razor—And these are lessons for an inexperienced youth!—Oh Adam! out upon you! out upon you!"

"Marry, amen, and with all my heart," said Adam; "out upon my folly for expecting any thing but impertinent raillery from a page like thee, that if he saw his father in a scrape would laugh at him instead of lending him aid."

"Nay, but I will lend you aid," said the page, still laughing, "that is, I will lend thee aid to thy chamber, good Adam, where thou shalt sleep off wine and ale, ire and indignation, and awake the next morning with as much fair wit as nature has blessed thee withal. Only one thing I will warn thee, good Adam, that henceforth and for ever, when thou railest at me for being somewhat hot at hand, and rather too prompt to out with poniard or so, thy admonition shall serve as a prologue to the memorable adventure of the switching of Saint Michael's."

With such condoling expressions he got the crest-fallen falconer to his bed, and then retired to his own pallet, where it was some time ere he could fall asleep. If the messenger whom he had seen were really Catherine Seyton, what a masculine virago and termagant must she be! and stored with what an inimitable command of insolence and assurance!—The brass on her brow would furbish the front of twenty pages, and I should know, thought Roland, what that amounts to—And yet, her features, her look, her light gait, her laughing eye, the art with which she disposed the mantle to show no more of her limbs than needs must be seen—I am glad she had at least that grace left—the voice, the smile—it must have been Catherine Seyton, or the devil in her likeness. One thing is good, I have silenced the eternal predications of that ass, Adam Woodcock, who has set up for being a

preacher and a governor over me, so soon as he has left the hawks' mew behind him.

And with this comfortable reflection, joined to the happy indifference which youth hath for the events of the morrow, Roland Græme fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XX.

Now have you reft from me my staff, my guide,
Who taught my youth, as men teach untamed falcons,
To use my strength discreetly—I am reft
Of comrade and of counsel.

Old Play.

In the grey of the next morning's dawn there was a loud knocking at the gate of the hostelry; and those without, proclaiming that they came in the name of the regent, were instantly admitted. A moment or two afterwards, Michael Wing-the-wind stood by the bed-side of our travellers.

"Up! up!" he said, "there is no slumber where Murray hath work ado."

Both sleepers sprung up, and began to dress themselves.

"You, old friend," said Wing-the-wind to Adam Woodcock, "must to horse instantly, with this packet to the monks of Kennaquhair; and with this," delivering them as he spoke, "to the Knight of Avenel."

"As much as commanding the monks to annul their election, I'll warrant me, of an abbot," quoth Adam Woodcock, as he put the packets into his bag, "and charging my master to see it done—To hawk at one brother with another, is less than fair play, methinks."

"Fash not thy beard about it, old boy," said Michael, "but betake thee to the saddle presently; for if these orders are not obeyed, there will be bare walls at the Kirk of Saint Mary's, and it may be at the Castle of Avenel to boot; for I heard my Lord of Morton loud with the regent, and we are at a pass that we cannot stand with him anent trifles."

"But," said Adam, "touching the Abbot of Unreason—what say they to that outbreak?—An they be shrewishly disposed, I were better pitch the packets to Satan, and take the other side of the Border for my bield."

"Oh, that was passed over as a jest, since there was little harm done.—But, hark thee, Adam," continued his comrade, "if there was a dozen vacant abbacies in your road, whether of jest or earnest, reason or unreason, draw thou never one of their mitres over thy brows—The time is not fitting, man!—besides, our maiden longs to clip the neck of a fat churchman."

"She shall never shear mine in that capacity," said the falconer, while he knotted the kerchief in two or three double folds around his sun-burnt bull neck, calling out at the same time, "Master Roland, Master Roland, make haste! we must back to perch and mew, and thank Heaven, more than our own wit, with our bones whole, and without a stab in the stomach."

"Nay, but," said Wing-the-wind, "the page

goes not back with you; the regent has other employment for him."

"Saints and sorrows!" exclaimed the falconer—"Master Roland Græme to remain here, and I to return to Avenel!—Why it cannot be—the child cannot manage himself in this wide world without me, and I question if he will stoop to any other whistle than mine own; there are times I myself can hardly bring him to my lure."

It was at Roland's tongue's end to say something concerning the occasion they had for using mutually each other's prudence, but the real anxiety which Adam evinced at parting with him took away his disposition to such ungracious raillery. The falconer did not altogether escape, however; for in turning his face towards the lattice, his friend Michael caught a glimpse of it, and exclaimed, "I pr'ythee, Adam Woodcock, what hast thou been doing with these eyes of thine? They are swelled to the starting from the hool!"

"Nought in the world," said he, after casting a deprecating glance at Roland Græme, "but the effect of sleeping in this d——d truckle, without a pillow."

"Why, Adam Woodcock, thou art grown strangely dainty," said his old companion; "I have known thee sleep all night with no better pillow than a bush of ling, and start up with the sun as gleg as a falcon; and now thine eyes resemble——"

"Tush, man, what signifies how mine eyes look now?" said Adam—"let us but roast a crab-apple, pour a pottle of ale on it, and bathe our throats withal, thou shalt see a change in me."

"And thou wilt be in heart to sing thy jolly ballad about the pope," said his comrade.

"Ay, that I will," replied the falconer, "that is, when we have left this quiet town five miles behind us, if you will take your hobby and ride so far on my way."

"Nay, that I may not," said Michael—"I can but stop to partake your morning's draught, and see you fairly to horse—I will see that they saddle them, and toast the crab for thee, without loss of time."

During his absence the falconer took the page by the hand—"May I never hood hawk again," said the good-natured fellow, "if I am not as sorry to part with you as if you were a child of mine own, craving pardon for the freedom—I cannot tell what makes me love you so much, unless it be for the reason that I loved the vicious devil of a brown galloway nag, whom my master the knight called Satan, till Master Warden changed his name to Seyton; for, he said, it was over boldness to call a beast after the King of Darkness——"

"And," said the page, "it was over boldness in him, I trow, to call a vicious brute after a noble family."

"Well," proceeded Adam, "Seyton or Satan, I loved that nag over every other horse in the stable—There was no sleeping on his back—he was for ever fidgiting, bolting, rearing, biting, kicking, and giving you work to do, and maybe the measure of your back on the heather to the boot of it all. And I think I love you better than any lad in the castle, for the self-same qualities."

"Thanks, thanks, kind Adam. I hold myself bound to you for the good estimation in which you hold me."

"Nay, interrupt me not," said the falconer—"Satan was a good nag—But I say I think I shall call the two eyasses after you, the one Roland, and the other Græme; and, while Adam Woodcock lives, be sure you have a friend—Here is to thee, my dear son."

Roland most heartily returned the grasp of the hand, and Woodcock, having taken a deep draught, continued his farewell speech.

"There are three things I warn you against, Roland, now that you are to tread this weary world without my experience to assist you. In the first place, never draw dagger on slight occasion—every man's doublet is not so well stuffed as a certain abbot's that you wot of. Secondly, fly not at every pretty girl, like a merlin at a thrush—you will not always win a gold chain for your labour—and, by the way, here I return to you your fanfaronade—keep it close, it is weighty, and may benefit you at a pinch more ways than one. Thirdly, and to conclude, as our worthy preacher says, beware of the pottle-pot—it has drenched the judgment of wiser men than you. I could bring some instances of it, but I dare say it needeth not; for if you should forget your own mishaps, you will scarce fail to remember mine—And so farewell, my dear son."

Roland returned his good wishes, and failed not to send his humble duty to his kind lady, charging the falconer, at the same time, to express his regret that he should have offended her, and his determination so to bear him in the world that she would not be ashamed of the generous protection she had afforded him.

The falconer embraced his young friend, mounted his stout, round-made, trotting nag, which the serving man, who had attended him, held ready at the door, and took the road to the southward. A sullen and heavy sound echoed from the horse's feet, as if indicating the sorrow of the good-natured rider. Every hoof-tread seemed to tap upon Roland's heart as he heard his comrade withdraw with so little of his usual alert activity, and felt that he was once more alone in the world.

He was roused from his reverie by Michael Wing-the-wind, who reminded him that it was necessary they should instantly return to the palace, as my lord regent went to the sessions early in the morning. They went thither accordingly; and Wing-the-wind, a favourite old domestic, who was admitted nearer to the regent's person and privacy than many whose posts were more ostensible, soon introduced Græme into a small matted chamber, where he had an audience of the present head of the troubled State of Scotland. The Earl of Murray was clad in a sad-coloured morning-gown, with a cap and slippers of the same cloth, but, even in this easy dishabille, held his sheathed rapier in his hand; a precaution which he adopted when receiving strangers, rather in compliance with the earnest remonstrances of his friends and partisans, than from any personal apprehensions of his own. He answered with a silent nod the respectful obeisance of the page, and took one or two turns through the small apartment

in silence, fixing his keen eye on Roland, as if he wished to penetrate into his very soul. At length he broke silence.

"Your name is, I think, Julian Græme."

"Roland Græme, my lord, not Julian," replied the page.

"Right—I was misled by some trick of my memory—Roland Græme, from the Debateable Land.—Roland, thou knowest the duties which belong to a lady's service?"

"I should know them, my lord," replied Roland, "having been bred so near the person of my Lady of Avenel; but I trust never more to practise them, as the knight hath promised——"

"Be silent, young man," said the regent, "I am to speak, and you to hear and to obey. It is necessary that, for some space at least, you shall again enter into the service of a lady, who, in rank, hath no equal in Scotland; and this service accomplished, I give thee my word, as knight and prince, that it shall open to you a course of ambition, such as may well gratify the aspiring wishes of one whom circumstances entitle to entertain much higher views than thou. I will take thee into my household and near to my person, or, at your own choice, I will give you the command of a foot-company—either is a preferment which the proudest laird in the land might be glad to assure to a second son."

"May I presume to ask, my lord," said Roland, observing the earl pause for a reply, "to whom my poor services are in the first place destined?"

"You will be told hereafter," said the regent; and then, as if overcoming some internal reluctance to speak further himself, he added, "or why should I not myself tell you, that you are about to enter into the service of a most illustrious—most unhappy lady—into the service of Mary of Scotland."

"Of the queen, my lord!" said the page, unable to repress his surprise.

"Of her who was the queen!" said Murray, with a singular mixture of displeasure and embarrassment in his tone of voice. "You must be aware, young man, that her son reigns in her stead."

He sighed from an emotion, partly perhaps natural, and partly assumed.

"And am I to attend upon her grace in her place of imprisonment, my lord?" again demanded the page, with a straight-forward and hardy simplicity, which somewhat disconcerted the sage and powerful statesman.

"She is not imprisoned," answered Murray, angrily; "God forbid she should—she is only sequestered from state affairs, and from the business of the public, until the world be so effectually settled, that she may enjoy her natural and uncontrolled freedom, without her royal disposition being exposed to the practices of wicked and designing men. It is for this purpose," he added, "that while she is to be furnished, as right is, with such attendance as may befit her present secluded state, it becomes necessary that those placed around her are persons on whose prudence I can have reliance. You see, therefore, you are at once called on to discharge an office most honourable in itself, and so to discharge it that you may make a friend of the Regent of Scotland. Thou art, I have been told, a singularly ap-

prehensive youth; and I perceive by thy look, that thou dost already understand what I would say on this matter. In this schedule your particular points of duty are set down at length—but the sum required of you is fidelity—I mean fidelity to myself and to the state. You are, therefore, to watch every attempt which is made, or inclination displayed, to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west—with Hamilton, with Seyton, with Fleming, or the like. It is true that my gracious sister, reflecting upon the ill chances that have happed to the state of this poor kingdom, from evil counsellors who have abused her royal nature, in time past, hath determined to sequester herself from state affairs in future. But it is our duty, as acting for and in the name of our infant nephew, to guard against the evils which may arise from any mutation or vacillation in her royal resolutions. Wherefore it will be thy duty to watch, and report to our lady mother, whose guest our sister is for the present, whatever may infer a disposition to withdraw her person from the place of security in which she is lodged, or to open communication with those without. If, however, your observation should detect any thing of weight, and which may exceed mere suspicion, fail not to send notice by an especial messenger to me directly, and this ring shall be thy warrant to order horse and man on such service.—And now begone. If there be half the wit in thy head that there is apprehension in thy look, thou fully comprehendest all that I would say—Serve me faithfully, and sure as I am belted earl, thy reward shall be great.”

Roland Græme made an obeisance, and was about to depart.

The earl signed to him to remain. “I have trusted thee deeply,” he said, “young man, for thou art the only one of her suite who has been sent to her by my own recommendation. Her gentlewomen are of her own nomination—it were too hard to have barred her that privilege, though some there were who reckoned it inconsistent with sure policy. Thou art young and handsome. Mingle in their follies, and see they cover not deeper designs under the appearance of female levity—if they do mine, do thou countermine. For the rest, bear all decorum and respect to the person of thy mistress—she is a princess, though a most unhappy one, and hath been a queen, though now, alas! no longer such—Pay, therefore, to her all honour and respect, consistent with thy fidelity to the king and me—and now farewell.—Yet stay—you travel with Lord Lindesay, a man of the old world, rough and honest, though untaught; see that thou offend him not, for he is not patient of raillery, and thou, I have heard, art a crack-halter.” This he said with a smile; then added, “I could have wished the Lord Lindesay’s mission had been entrusted to some other and more gentle noble.”

“And wherefore should you wish that, my lord?” said Morton, who even then entered the apartment; “the council have decided for the best—we have had but too many proofs of this lady’s stubbornness of mind, and the oak that resists the sharp steel axe, must be riven with the rugged iron wedge. And this is to be her page?—My lord regent hath doubtless

instructed you, young man, how you shall guide yourself in these matters; I will add but a little hint on my part. You are going to the castle of a Douglas, where treachery never thrives—the first moment of suspicion will be the last of your life. My kinsman, William Douglas, understands no raillery, and if he once have cause to think you false, you will waver in the wind from the castle battlements ere the sun set upon his anger.—And is the lady to have an almoner withal?”

“Occasionally, Douglas,” said the regent; “it were hard to deny the spiritual consolation which she thinks essential to her salvation.”

“You are ever too soft-hearted, my lord.—What, a false priest to communicate her lamentations, not only to our unfriends in Scotland, but to the Guises, to Rome, to Spain, and I know not where!”

“Fear not,” said the regent, “we will take such order that no treachery shall happen.”

“Look to it then,” said Morton; “you know my mind respecting the wench you have consented she shall receive as a waiting-woman—one of a family, which, of all others, has ever been devoted to her, and inimical to us. Had we not been wary, she would have been purveyed of a page as much to her purpose as her waiting damsel. I hear a rumour that an old mad Romish pilgrimer, who passes for at least half a saint among them, was employed to find a fit subject.”

“We have escaped that danger at least,” said Murray, “and converted it into a point of advantage, by sending this boy of Glendinning’s—and for her waiting damsel, you cannot grudge her one poor maiden instead of her four noble Maries, and all their silken train.”

“I care not so much for the waiting maiden,” said Morton, “but I cannot brook the almoner—I think priests of all persuasions are much like each other—Here is John Knox, who made such a noble puller-down, is ambitious of becoming a setter-up, and a founder of schools and colleges out of the abbey lands, and bishop’s rents, and other spoils of Rome, which the nobility of Scotland have won with their sword and bow, and with which he would now endow new hives to sing the old drone.”

“John is a man of God,” said the regent, “and his scheme is a devout imagination.”

The sedate smile with which this was spoken, left it impossible to conjecture whether the words were meant in approbation, or in derision, of the plan of the Scottish reformer. Turning then to Roland Græme, as if he thought he had been long enough a witness of this conversation, he bade him get him presently to horse, since my Lord of Lindesay was already mounted. The page made his reverence, and left the apartment.

Guided by Michael Wing-the-wind, he found his horse ready saddled and prepared for the journey, in front of the palace porch, where hovered about a score of men-at-arms, whose leader showed no small symptoms of surly impatience.

“Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited this long?” said he to Wing-the-wind. “And my Lord Ruthven will reach the castle long before us.”

Michael assented, and added that the boy had been

detained by the regent to receive some parting instructions. The leader made an inarticulate sound in his throat, expressive of sullen acquiescence, and calling to one of his domestic attendants, "Edward," said he, "take the gallant into your charge, and let him speak with no one else."

He then addressed, by the title of Sir Robert, an elderly and respectable looking gentleman, the only one of the party who seemed above the rank of a retainer or domestic, and observed that they must get to horse with all speed.

During this discourse, and while they were riding slowly along the street of the suburb, Roland had time to examine more accurately the looks and figure of the baron, who was at their head.

Lord Lindesay of the Byres was rather touched than stricken with years. His upright stature and strong limbs still showed him fully equal to all the exertions and fatigues of war. His thick eyebrows, now partially grizzled, lowered over large eyes full of dark fire, which seemed yet darker from the uncommon depth at which they were set in his head. His features, naturally strong and harsh, had their sternness exaggerated by one or two scars received in battle. These features, naturally calculated to express the harsher passions, were shaded by an open steel cap, with a projecting front, but having no visor, over the gorget of which fell the black and grizzled beard of the grim old baron, and totally hid the lower part of his face. The rest of his dress was a loose buff-coat, which had once been lined with silk and adorned with embroidery, but which seemed much stained with travel, and damaged with cuts, received probably in battle. It covered a corslet, which had once been of polished steel, fairly gilded, but was now somewhat injured with rust. A sword of antique make and uncommon size, framed to be wielded with both hands, a kind of weapon which was then beginning to go out of use, hung from his neck in a baldrick, and was so disposed as to traverse his whole person—the huge hilt appearing over his left shoulder, and the point reaching well nigh to the right heel, and jarring against his spur as he walked. This unwieldy weapon could only be unsheathed by pulling the handle over the left shoulder—for no human arm was long enough to draw it in the usual manner. The whole equipment was that of a rude warrior, negligent of his exterior even to misanthropical sullenness; and the short, harsh, haughty tone, which he used towards his attendants, belonged to the same unpolished character.

The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay, at the head of the party, was an absolute contrast to him, in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating—his form thin, spare, and bent by an habitual stoop—his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence—his eye was quick though placid, and his whole demeanour mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful profession—wore a riding-habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal—and for show as

a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking-sword, (as the short light rapiers were called), without any other arms offensive or defensive.

The party had now quitted the town, and proceeded, at a steady trot, towards the westward. As they prosecuted their journey, Roland Græme would gladly have learned something of its purpose and tendency, but the countenance of the personage next to whom he had been placed in the train, discouraged all approach to familiarity. The baron himself did not look more grim and inaccessible than his feudal retainer, whose grizzled beard fell over his mouth like the portcullis before the gate of a castle, as if for the purpose of preventing the escape of any word, of which absolute necessity did not demand the utterance. The rest of the train seemed under the same taciturn influence, and journeyed on without a word being exchanged amongst them—more like a troop of carthusian friars than a party of military retainers. Roland Græme was surprised at this extremity of discipline: for even in the household of the Knight of Avenel, though somewhat distinguished for the accuracy with which decorum was enforced, a journey was a period of license, during which jest and song, and every thing within the limits of becoming mirth and pastime, were freely permitted. This unusual silence was, however, so far acceptable, that it gave him time to bring any shadow of judgment which he possessed to council on his own situation and prospects, which would have appeared to any reasonable person in the highest degree dangerous and perplexing.

It was quite evident that he had, through various circumstances not under his own control, formed contradictory connexions with both the contending factions, by whose strife the kingdom was distracted, without being properly an adherent of either. It seemed also clear, that the same situation in the household of the deposed queen, to which he was now promoted by the influence of the regent, had been destined to him by his enthusiastic grandmother, Magdalen Græme; for on this subject, the words which Morton had dropped had been a ray of light: yet it was no less clear that these two persons—the one the declared enemy, the other the enthusiastic votary, of the catholic religion—the one at the head of the king's new government, the other who regarded that government as a criminal usurpation,—must have required and expected very different services from the individual whom they had thus united in recommending. It required very little reflection to foresee that these contradictory claims on his services might speedily place him in a situation where his honour as well as his life might be endangered. But it was not in Roland Græme's nature to anticipate evil before it came, or to prepare to combat difficulties before they arrived. "I will see this beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stuart," said he, "of whom we have heard so much, and then there will be time enough to determine whether I will be kingsman or queensman. None of them can say I have given word or promise to either of their factions; for they have led me up and down like a blind Billy, without giving me any light into what I was to do. But it was lucky that grim Douglas came into the regent's closet this morning,

otherwise I had never got free of him without plighting my troth to do all the earl would have me, which seemed, after all, but foul play to the poor imprisoned lady, to place her page as an espial on her."

Skipping thus lightly over a matter of such consequence, the thoughts of the hair-brained boy went a wool-gathering after more agreeable topics. Now, he admired the Gothic towers of Barnbogle, rising from the sea-beaten rock, and overlooking one of the most glorious landscapes in Scotland—and now he began to consider what notable sport for the hounds and the hawks must be afforded by the variegated ground over which they travelled—and now he compared the steady and dull trot at which they were then prosecuting their journey, with the delight of sweeping over hill and dale in pursuit of his favourite sports. As, under influence of these joyous recollections, he gave his horse the spur, and made him execute a gambade, he instantly incurred the censure of his grave neighbour, who hinted to him to keep the pace, and move quietly and in order, unless he wished such notice to be taken of his eccentric movements as was likely to be very displeasing to him.

The rebuke and the restraint under which the youth now found himself, brought back to his recollection his late good-humoured and accommodating associate and guide, Adam Woodcock; and from that topic his imagination made a short flight to Avenel Castle, to the quiet and unconfined life of its inhabitants, the goodness of his early protectress, not forgetting the denizens of its stables, kennels, and hawk-mews. In a brief space, all these subjects of meditation gave way to the remembrance of that riddle of womankind, Catherine Seyton, who appeared before the eye of his mind—now in her female form—now in her male attire—now in both at once—like some strange dream, which presents to us the same individual under two different characters at the same instant. Her mysterious present also recurred to his recollection—the sword which he now wore at his side, and which he was not to draw, save by command of his legitimate sovereign! But the key of this mystery he judged he was likely to find in the issue of his present journey.

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Roland Græme accompanied the party of Lord Lindesay to the Queens ferry, which they passed in vessels that lay in readiness for them. They encountered no adventure whatsoever in their passage, excepting one horse being lamed in getting into the boat, an incident very common on such occasions, until a few years ago, when the ferry was completely regulated. What was more peculiarly characteristic of the olden age, was the discharge of a culverin at the party from the battlements of the old Castle of Rosythe, on the north side of the ferry, the lord of which happened to have some public or private quarrel with the Lord Lindesay, and took this mode of expressing his resentment. The insult, however, as it was harmless, remained unnoticed and unavenged, nor did any thing else occur worth notice until the band had come where Lochleven spread its magnificent sheet of waters to the beams of a bright summer sun.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the centre of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated; and instead of being embosomed in hills like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous screen, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills, and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Græme looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled fortress, which then, as now, consisted only of one large donjon-keep, surrounded with a court-yard, with two round flanking-towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees clustered together, near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestered, could not but feel for the situation of a captive princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. I must have been born, he thought, under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one or from dwelling in the other. But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild-drake, as a youth who can swim like one.

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one of the party advancing displayed Lord Lindesay's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that baron himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one or two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

"It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat," said the companion of the Lord Lindesay; "should we not do well to proceed to the town, and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before—"

"You may do as you list, Sir Robert," replied Lindesay, "I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offence at the threadbare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland."

"Do not speak so harshly," said Sir Robert; "if she hath done wrong, she hath dearly abied it; and in losing all real power, one would not deprive her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess."

"I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville," replied Lindesay, "do as you will—for me, I am now too old to deck myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames."

"The bower of dames, my lord!" said Melville, looking at the rude old tower—"is it yon dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive queen, to which you give so gay a name?"

"Name it as you list," replied Lindesay; "had the regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion

to make speeches out of Amadis of Gaul, or the Mirror of Knighthood. But when he sent blunt old Lindesay, he knew he would speak to a misguided woman, as her former misdoings and her present state render necessary. I sought not this employment—it has been thrust upon me; and I will not cumber myself with more form in the discharge of it, than needs must be tacked to such an occupation."

So saying, Lord Lindesay threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, lay down at lazy length upon the sward to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle toward the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted, walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sate like statues on horseback, without moving so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place, near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord Lindesay started up from his recumbent posture, and asked the person who steered, why he had not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

"So please you," replied the boatman, "because it is the order of our lady, that we bring not to the castle more than four persons."

"Thy lady is a wise woman," said Lindesay, "to suspect me of treachery!—Or, had I intended it, what is to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake, and filling the boat with my own fellows?"

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars, and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

"Why, thou ass," said Lindesay, "thou didst not think that I meant thy fool's head serious harm? Hark thee, friend—with fewer than three servants I will go no whither—Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady's to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern."

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revival of his orders.

"Do so, my friend," said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavoured to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train, "row back to the castle, sith it will be no better, and obtain thy lady's orders to transport the Lord of Lindesay, myself, and our retinue thither."

"And hearken," said Lord Lindesay, "take with you this page, who comes as an attendant on your lady's guest.—Dismount, sirrah," said he, addressing Roland, "and embark with them in that boat."

"And what is to become of my horse?" said Græme; "I am answerable for him to my master."

"I will relieve you of the charge," said Lindesay;

"thou wilt have little enow to do with horses for ten years to come."

"If I thought so," said Roland—but he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him, good-humouredly, "Dispute it not, young friend—resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger."

Roland Græme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter nor manner of Lindesay's address, deemed it best to submit to necessity, and to embark without further remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes—the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing-place. The steersman and Græme leaped ashore; the boatmen remained lying on their oars, ready for further service.

CHAPTER XXI.

Could valour aught avail or people's love,

France had not wept Navarre's brave Henry slain:

If wit or beauty could compassion move,

The Rose of Scotland had not wept in vain.

LEWIS: *Elegy in a Royal Mausoleum.*

AT the gate of the court-yard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, a female whose early charms had captivated James V., by whom she became mother of the celebrated Regent Murray. As she was of noble birth (being a daughter of the house of Mar) and of great beauty, her intercourse with James did not prevent her being afterwards sought in honourable marriage by many gallants of the time, among whom she had preferred Sir William Douglas of Lochleven. But well has it been said,

— our pleasant vices

Are made the whips to scourge us—

The station which the Lady of Lochleven now held, as the wife of a man of high rank and interest, and the mother of a lawful family, did not prevent her nourishing a painful sense of degradation, even while she was proud of the talents, the power, and the station of her son, now prime ruler of the state, but still a pledge of her illicit intercourse. Had James done to her (she said in her secret heart) the justice he owed her, she had seen in her son, as a source of unmixed delight and of unchastened pride, the lawful monarch of Scotland, and one of the ablest who ever swayed the sceptre. The house of Mar, not inferior in antiquity or grandeur to that of Drummond, would then have also boasted a queen amongst its daughters, and escaped the stain attached to female frailty, even when it has a royal lover for its apology. While such feelings preyed on a bosom naturally proud and severe, they had a corresponding effect on her countenance, where, with the remains of great beauty, were mingled traits indicative of inward discontent and peevish melancholy. It perhaps contributed to increase this habitual temperament that the Lady Lochleven had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of re-

ligion, imitating in her ideas of reformed faith the very worst errors of the catholics, in limiting the benefit of the Gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect, the unfortunate Queen Mary, now the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, the legal possessor of those rights over James's heart and hand, of which she conceived herself to have been injuriously deprived; and yet more so as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than paganism.

Such was the dame, who, with stately mien, and sharp yet handsome features, shrouded by her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindsay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, "Fools must be flattered, not foughten with.—Row back—make thy excuse as thou canst—say Lord Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindsay's presence. Away with thee, Randal—yet stay—what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?"

"So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon——"

"Ay, the new male minion," said the Lady Lochleven; "the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal—and you (to Roland Græme) follow me to the garden."

She led the way with a slow and stately step to the small garden, which, enclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues, and an artificial fountain in the centre, extended its dull parterres on the side of the court-yard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. Within the narrow circuit of its formal and limited walks, Mary Stuart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two female attendants; but in the first glance which Roland Græme bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination, that, even at the distance of nearly three centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which characterize that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished woman. Who is there, at the very mention of Mary Stuart's name, that has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth, or the favourite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much of what her enemies laid to her

charge, cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of any thing rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal—those eye-brows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories—the nose, with all its Grecian precision of outline—the mouth, so well proportioned, so sweetly formed, as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear—the dimpled chin—the stately swan-like neck, form a countenance, the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that high class of life, where the actresses as well as the actors command general and undivided attention. It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who, in latter days, have adopted the unfavourable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner, with which faithful tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stuart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavoured to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm, with which women can successfully avenge themselves, for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted whether this talent was not as fatal to its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly gifted, but most unhappy female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged, were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, with the keenest irony and ridicule.

As the ladies met together, the queen said, bending her head at the same time in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven, "We are this day fortunate—we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period

which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe the useless ceremony of requiring our permission."

"I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your grace," said the Lady of Lochleven. "I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train," motioning with her hand towards Roland Græme; "a circumstance towards which ladies are seldom indifferent."

"O! I crave your ladyship's pardon; and am bent to the earth with obligation for the kindness of my nobles,—or my sovereigns shall I call them?—who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue."

"They have indeed studied, madam," said the Lady of Lochleven, "to show their kindness toward your grace—something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued."

"Impossible!" said the queen; "the bounty which permits the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is queen of the realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stuart can never sufficiently acknowledge. Why! my train will be equal to that of any country dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman usher, and two blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess, and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this, I am aware, which clouds your brows, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer; the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight your husband with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges."

"The Douglasses of Lochleven, madam," answered the lady, "have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the state, without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous."

"Nay! but, my dear Lochleven," said the queen, "you are over scrupulous—I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland in this her princely court, saving her own crown lands—and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination?—Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow?—No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my body-guard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindesay refused even now to venture within the reach of a force so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue."

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked something surprised; and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth ironical affectation of mildness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said with the full majesty of her rank; "Yes! Lady of Lochleven;

I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come—and why am I not in ordinary decency apprized of their arrival?"

"Their purpose, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "they must themselves explain—but a formal annunciation were needless, where your grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well."

"Alas! poor Fleming," said the queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, "thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbeted, for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but of show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak, for us all.—We excuse your further attendance, my lady hostess," she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, "and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the ante-chamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience.—You, young man," she proceeded, addressing Roland Græme, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humoured raillery, "you, who are all our male attendance, from our lord high chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court."

She turned and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms and smiled in bitter resentment, as she watched her retiring steps.

"Thy whole male attendance!" she muttered, repeating the queen's last words, "and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger;" then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, "Art thou already eaves-dropping! Follow thy mistress, minion, and if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said."

Roland Græme hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern-gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding stair as high as the second story, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive princess. The outermost was a small hall or outer-room, within which opened a large parlour, and from that again the queen's bed-room. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlour, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Græme stepped, as became his station, into the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindesay, Melville, and their followers, disembark; and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindesay exclaimed, in his loud harsh voice,—“My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!”

At this instant the page's attention was called to

a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

"Hasten, young man!" said the elder lady, in alarm, "fly—call in assistance—she is swooning!"

But the queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, "Stir not, I charge you!—call no one to witness—I am better—I will recover instantly." And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sate up in her chair, and endeavoured to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. "I am ashamed of my weakness, girls," she said, taking the hands of her attendants; "but it is over—and I am Mary Stuart once more. The savage tone of that man's voice—my knowledge of his insolence—the name which he named—the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness—and it shall be a moment's only." She snatched from her head the curch or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony—shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veiled under it—and, drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. "We are ill appointed," she said, "to meet our rebel subjects; but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their queen. Follow me, my maidens," she said; "what says thy favourite song, my Fleming?"

My maids, come to my dressing-bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair;
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times mair.

Alas!" she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, "violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank; and the few that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear." Yet while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beautiful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivaled charms. Roland Græme, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely, the demeanour of so fair and high-born a lady wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so fair as that which Mary Stuart's must needs be. She had been bred in France—she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty—she had reigned a queen, and a Scottish queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capa-

cities, Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might have melted a heart of stone. "My poor boy," she said, with a feeling partly real, partly political, "thou art a stranger to us—sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the may-pole. I grieve for you;—but you are the only male in my limited household—wilt thou obey my orders?"

"To the death, madam," said Græme, in a determined tone.

"Then keep the door of mine apartment," said the queen; "keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive these intrusive visitors."

"I will defend it till they pass over my body," said Roland Græme; any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

"Not so, my good youth," answered Mary; "not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need, God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way, I charge you. Remember my commands." And, with a smile expressive at once of favour and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bed-room.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Roland Græme with her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton—a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellects, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted nunnery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet such was the engrossing effect of Mary's presence that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared, that Roland began to consider in what relation they were to stand to each other.—She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner, he thought; perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the queen's commands; for I think she could scarce purpose to scare me with the sort of discipline which she administered to frieze-jacket, and to poor Adam Woodcock. But we will see to that anon; meantime, let us do justice to the trust reposed in us by this unhappy queen. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy.

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast with lock and bar the door which opened from thence to the large staircase, and then sate himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait—a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and when it resisted his attempt to open it,

exclaimed, "Undo the door there, you within!"

"Why, and at whose command," said the page, "am I to undo the door of the Queen of Scotland?"

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolts jingle, showed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered without regarding his challenge; but at length an answer was returned.

"Undo the door, on your peril—the Lord Lindesay comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland."

"The Lord Lindesay, as a Scottish noble," answered the page, "must await his sovereign's leisure."

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkably harsh voice of Lindesay in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language—"No! no! no! I tell thee no! I will place a petard against the door rather than be balked by a profligate woman, and bearded by an insolent footboy."

"Yet, at least," said Melville, "let me try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon for ever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes."

"I will await no longer," said Lindesay; "it is high time the business were done, and we on our return to the council. But thou mayest try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field."

"For God's sake be patient," said Melville; and, approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, "Let the queen know that I, her faithful servant, Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequence, that she will undo the door, and admit Lord Lindesay, who brings a mission from the council of state."

"I will do your errand to the queen," said the page, "and report to you her answer."

He went to the door of the bed-chamber, and tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elder lady, to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the queen to admit Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindesay. Roland Græme returned to the vestibule, and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindesay strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress; while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

"I draw you to witness, and to record," said the page to this last, "that, save for the especial commands of the queen, I would have made good the entrance, with my best strength, and my best blood, against all Scotland."

"Be silent, young man," said Melville, in a tone of grave rebuke; "add not brands to fire—this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry."

"She has not appeared even yet," said Lindesay, who had now reached the midst of the parlour or audience room; "how call you this trifling?"

"Patience, my lord," replied Sir Robert, "time presses not—and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended."

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, ad-

vancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled, either by the visit, or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small ruff, open in front, gave a full view of her beautifully formed chin and neck, but veiled the bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe, in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies who remained standing behind her during the conference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her, whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

"We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay," said the queen, while she curtsied with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance; "but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilette. Men, my lord, are less dependent on such ceremonies."

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, muttered something of a hasty journey, and the queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay looked towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The queen alone was entirely unembarrassed, and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbrous sword which he wore, as already mentioned, hanging from his neck.

"You have there a trusty and a weighty travelling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary? It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I well need to be, too much of a Stuart to fear a sword."

"It is not the first time, madam," replied Lindesay, bringing round the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross-handle, "it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the house of Stuart."

"Possibly, my lord," replied the queen, "it may have done service to my ancestors.—Your ancestors were men of loyalty."

"Ay, madam," replied he, "service it hath done; but such as kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers, which rob it of nourishment."

"You talk riddles, my lord," said Mary; "I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it."

"You shall judge, madam," answered Lindesay. "With this good sword was Archibald Douglas,

Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of minions, flatterers, and favourites, whom he hanged over the bridge of Lauder, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon, the same inflexible champion of Scottish honour and nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilspindie, a courtier of your grandfather James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala; and Bell-the-Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling."

"My lord," replied the queen, reddening, "my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history—May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the house of Douglas to that of Lindesay?—Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relic, by a family who have held all that they could do against their king, to be done in favour of their country."

"Nay, madam," said Melville, anxiously interfering, "ask not that question of Lord Lindesay—And you, my lord, for shame—for decency—forbear to reply to it."

"It is time that this lady should hear the truth," replied Lindesay.

"And be assured that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger."

"Then know," said Lindesay, "that upon the field of Carberry-hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murderer, James, some time Earl of Bothwell, and nick-named Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of Morton gifted with this good sword that I might therewith fight it out—Ah! so help me Heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse, that the hounds and carrion-crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use!"

The queen's courage well nigh gave way to the mention of Bothwell's name—a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame, and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself, and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt—"It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stuart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity, and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell-the-Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them, had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment, and you, Fleming, shall finish

reading to us yonder little treatise *Des Rhodoman-tades Espagnoles*."

"Tarry, madam," said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn; "I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought an interview that you might sharpen its edge at the expense of my honour. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your grace on the part of the secret council, to tender to you what much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the state."

"The secret council?" said the queen; "by what powers can it subsist or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint? But it matters not—what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stuart, come from whatsoever quarter it will—and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty-five.—Where is your colleague, my lord—why tarryes he?"

"He comes, madam," said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the queen returned his salutation she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as seneschal of the castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

CHAPTER XXII.

I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With my own hand I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.

Richard II.

LORD RUTHVEN had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features procured him the popular epithet of Greysteil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff-coat embroidered, had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindesay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy, by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the queen's mind, arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio: his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness, that he could not endure the weight of his armour, having arisen from a sick-bed to commit a murder in the presence of his

sovereign. On that occasion, his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at that the queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal actors in the murder. She returned, however, with grace the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand to George Douglas, who kneeled and kissed it with respect; the first mark of a subject's homage which Roland Græme had seen any of them render to the captive sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions, a table and writing materials; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew after a low reverence. When he had closed the door behind him, the queen broke silence—"With your favour, my lords, I will sit—my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual."

She sat down accordingly, and shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme exchanged a glance, which showed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress, to think of any thing which regarded themselves.

"I wait your business, my lords," said the queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken—"I wait your message from those you call the secret council.—I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my rightful throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have dispossessed me of it."

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore pardon.—In a word, madam, we have to propose to you, on the part of the secret council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the state, the advancement of God's word, and the welfare of your own future life."

"Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord, or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers, ere I am asked to sign them?"

"Unquestionably, madam; it is our purpose and wish you should read what you are required to sign," replied Ruthven.

"Required?" replied the queen, with some emphasis; "but the phrase suits well the matter—read, my lord."

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument, running in the queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called at an early age to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and disgusted, that

she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of state affairs; and that since God blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to ensure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. "Wherefore," the instrument proceeded, "we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and by these our letters of free good will, renounce and demit the crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favour of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by decease, and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit, full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindesay of the Byres, and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burgesses, as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their presence, to renounce the crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland."

The queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise. "How is this, my lords?" she said; "are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary?—And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding.—Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honour of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, my right trusty cousins of Lindesay and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honour and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me."

"No madam," said Ruthven gravely, "your ears do *not* deceive you—they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the evangele, and the honest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pick-thanks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore, I pray you to comply with the last remaining wish of your subjects and counsellors, and spare yourself and us the further agitation of matter so painful."

"And is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?" said Mary, in a tone of bitter irony. "Do they really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birth-right, to an infant, which is scarcely more than a year old—fling down my sceptre, and take up a distaff—O no! it is too little for them to ask—That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be complied with, and which may more highly tax my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges."

"This parchment," answered Ruthven, in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke, "is one by which your grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honourable and trust-worthy of your subjects, James Earl of Murray, regent of the kingdom during the

minority of the young king. He already holds the appointment from the secret council."

The queen gave a sort of shriek, and, clapping her hands together, exclaimed, "Comes the arrow out of his quiver?—out of my brother's bow? Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance. And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name."

"I must pray your answer, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "to the demand of the council."

"The demand of the council!" said the queen; "say rather the demand of a set of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer."

"I trust, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion, Rizzio, cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants, died in exile, and broken-hearted."

The queen clasped her hands on her face, and, resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head, and wept so bitterly, that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavoured to conceal them.

"My lords," said Sir Robert Melville, "this is too much rigour. Under your lordships' favour, we came hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones."

"Sir Robert Melville," said Ruthven, "we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us."

"Nay, by my hand," said Lord Lindesay, "I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothicars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child—a needless labour, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise."

"Nay, my lords," said Melville, "ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her grace and you."

"Be silent, Sir Robert Melville," said the queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. "My kerchief, Fleming—I shame that traitors should have power to move me thus.—Tell me, proud lords," she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, "by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed sovereign—to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which divine warrant hath placed it?"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie-Cleuch, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now,

that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissensions, and foreign wars, that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, of one consent, made Scotland the battle-field on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel. For ourselves, every man's hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and slaughter, exile of nobles, and oppressing of the commons. We may endure it no longer, and, therefore, as a princess to whom God hath refused the gift of hearkening to wise counsel, and on whose dealings and projects no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm."

"My lord," said Mary, "it seems to me that you fling on my unhappy and devoted head those evils, which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untameable dispositions—the frantic violence with which you, the Magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, sticking at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offences, and setting at defiance those wise laws which your ancestors made for staunching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land; or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on me—on me, whose life has been embittered—whose sleep has been broken—whose happiness has been wrecked by your dissensions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle; fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a queen, that I might show an example to my followers?"

"We grant, madam," said Lindesay, rudely, "that the affrays occasioned by your misgovernment may sometimes have startled you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of the mass, or the jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your grace has taken in my memory, was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the state, or for your own honour, rests with your grace's conscience."

The queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which Heaven had assigned her, as if to show that the choicest arts to win men's affections may be given in vain. "Lindesay," she said, "you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening's collation, in the privy garden of Saint Andrews. The Master of Lindesay was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindesay I know not; unless honours have changed manners."

Hard-hearted as he was, Lindesay seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly

replied, "Madam, it is well known that your grace could in those days make fools of whosoever approached you.—I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gayer men and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage; and I think your grace cannot but remember times, when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you, were the sport of the court-popinjays, the Maries, and the Frenchwomen."

"My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety," said the queen; "and can but say it was most unwittingly done. You are fully revenged; for through gaiety," she said with a sigh, "will I never offend any one more."

"Our time is wasting, madam," said Lord Ruthven; "I must pray your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you."

"What, my lord," said the queen, "upon the instant, and without a moment's time to deliberate—can the council, as they term themselves, expect this of me?"

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "the council hold the opinion, that since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry-hill, your grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties."

"Great God!" exclaimed the queen; "and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every christian king ought to regard as a loss of honour equal to the loss of life!—You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance?"

"We give you pardon," answered Ruthven, sternly—"we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion—we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure Gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted."

The queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer—"And if I do not comply with your request, so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows?"

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity.—There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke; "There is little need to tell to your grace, who are well read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death."

"And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible against her who stands before you?" said Queen Mary. "The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and have placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt."

"We need look for no further proof, than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of murderers! They that joined hands in the fated month of May, had already united hearts and counsel in the deed

which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks."

"My lord, my lord!" said the queen eagerly, "remember well there were more consents than mine to that fatal union—that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adopted by sovereigns are often the suggestions of bad counsellors; but these counsellors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice.—Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton, and of Lindesay, and of Ruthven, may be found in that bond, which pressed me to marry that unhappy man.—Ah! stout, and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonour, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel! Faithful knight and true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and those counsellors of evil, who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me!"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "we know that you are an orator; and perhaps for that reason the council has sent hither men, whose converse hath been more with the wars than with the language of the schools, or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honour, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland?"

"And what warrant have I," said the queen. "that ye will keep treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion, and leave to weep in secret?"

"Our honour and our word, madam," answered Ruthven.

"They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord," said the queen; "add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance."

"Away, Ruthven," said Lindesay; "she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants; let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it."

"Stay, my lord," said Sir Robert Melville, "or rather permit me to have but a few minutes private audience with her grace. If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator—do not, I conjure you, leave the castle or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her grace shall finally stand disposed."

"We will remain in the hall," said Lindesay, "for half an hour's space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honour, she has touched the honour of my name—let her look herself to the course she has to pursue. If the half hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough."

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding stairs, the clash of Lindesay's huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

As soon as they were gone, the queen, giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavoured yet to pray her to be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Melville, "Kneel not to me, Melville—mock me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away—Why stay you behind with the deposed, the condemned—her who has but a few hours perchance to live? You have been favoured as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?"

"Madam," said Sir Robert Melville, "so help me Heaven, at my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place."

"True to me! true to me!" repeated the queen, with some scorn; "tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walks hand in hand with my enemies' falsehood?—thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required—O, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!"

Roland Græme could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a princess so distressed and so beautiful—"If one sword," he said, "madam, can do any thing to back the wisdom of this grave counsellor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it." And raising his sword with one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, "Methinks I see a token from my father, madam;" and immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Græme by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword.

The page answered with surprise, "Methinks this is no presence in which to jest—Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon."

"Is this a time for folly?" said Catherine Seyton; "unsheathe the sword instantly!"

"If the queen commands me?" said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress.

"For shame, maiden!" said the queen; "wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?"

"In your grace's cause," replied the page, "I will venture my life upon them!" And as he spoke, he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor. Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste.

"It is my father's hand-writing," she said, "and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your majesty; I knew that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger."

By my faith, fair one, thought Roland, and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant.

The queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. "Sir Robert Melville," she at length said, "this

scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murderers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter."

"Madam," said Melville, "if I have not the strength of body of the lords Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your majesty's service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them are more willing to die for your service."

"I believe it, my old and faithful counsellor," said the queen; "and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment's injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel."

He glanced over the parchment, and instantly replied, "O! my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you other advice than Lord Seyton has here expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English ambassador Throgmorton, and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion, that whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls, must lose all force and effect, as extorted from your grace by duress, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured, that in subscribing what parchments they present to you you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the granter."

"Ay, so says my Lord Seyton," replied Mary; "yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birthright, because rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush! Sir Robert Melville, the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person."

"Alas! madam, they have already dared so far, and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost."

"Surely," said the queen, her fears again predominating, "Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?"

"Bethink you, madam," he replied, "what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark, that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it? Lord Lindesay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a casket with letters—of I know not what."

"Ah! good Melville," answered the queen, "were I as sure of the even-handed integrity of my judges as of my own innocence—and yet——"

"Oh! pause, madam," said Melville; "even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here——"

He looked round, and paused.

"Speak out, Melville," said the queen; "never one approached my person who wished to work me

evil; and even this poor page, whom I have to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication."

"Nay, madam," answered Melville, "in such emergence, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will venture to say before him and these fair ladies, whose truth and fidelity I dispute not—I say I will venture to say, that there are other modes besides that of open trial, by which deposed sovereigns often die, and that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave."

"Oh! were it but swift and easy for the body," said the unfortunate princess; "were it but safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the step so soon as I!—But, alas! Melville, when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trode as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of being aiding of Darnley's death; yet, blessed Lady! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion—I espoused Bothwell."

"Think not of that now, madam," said Melville; "think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with the present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive."

"Madam," said Roland Græme, "if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will show you have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise."

The queen turned her round, and with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

"Madam," he said, "time presses, and you must not let these boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses—your ladies—this bold youth—myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter—but even without me here is evidence enough to show, that you have yielded to the demands of the council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return—oh! permit your old servant to recal them."

"Melville," said the queen, "thou art an ancient courtier—when didst thou ever know a sovereign prince recal to his presence subjects, who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology?—Let it cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence."

"Alas! madam, that empty form should make a barrier! If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel—but your scruple is saved—I hear them return to ask your final resolution.—O! take the advice of the noble

VOL. III.

Seyton, and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule."

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshaled in the two noble envoys.

"We come, madam," said the Lord Ruthven, "to request your answer to the proposal of the council."

"Your final answer," said Lord Lindesay, "for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your fate, and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God, and ensuring your longer abode in the world."

"My lords," said Mary, with inexpressible grace and dignity, "the evils we cannot resist we must submit to—I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore, with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would subscribe my sentence of eternal condemnation as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the Castle of Lochleven, with deep water around me—and you, my lords, beside me,—I have no freedom of choice. Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it."

"It is our hope your grace will not suppose yourself compelled, by any apprehensions from us," said the Lord Ruthven, "to execute what must be your own voluntary deed."

The queen had already stooped towards the table, and placed the parchment before her, with the pen between her fingers, ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking, she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. "If," said she, "I am expected to declare that I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth—not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland, all once my own, in possession or by right."

"Beware, madam," said Lindesay; and snatching hold of the queen's arm with his own gauntleted hand, he pressed it, in the rudeness of his passion, more closely perhaps than he was himself aware of,—*"beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate."*

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Melville cried shame; and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door, as if to interfere. The rude baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such extent, under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his grasp had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh—"My lord," she said, "as a knight and gentleman, you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to

use it. But I thank you for it—it is the most decisive token of the terms on which this day's business is to rest.—I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies," she said, showing the marks of the grasp on her arm, "that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign manual of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm."

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, "Peace, my lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it, and carry it to the council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was adhibited, there will be time enough for it."

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard, "I meant not to hurt her; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow."

The queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality. When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having curtsied to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose—"Lady," he said, "thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness of spirit, which I would not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded—I kneel to Mary Stuart, not to the queen."

"The queen and Mary Stuart pity thee alike, Lindesay," said Mary—"alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honoured soldier hadst thou been by a king's side—leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian?—Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper traitor.—Farewell, Melville. Mayest thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly than Mary Stuart.—Farewell, George of Douglas—make your respected grand-dame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day—God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts."

All bowed and withdrew; but scarce had they entered the vestibule, ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. "Chide not with me, Ruthven," Lindesay was heard to say, in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague—"Chide not with me, for I will not brook it!—You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy—thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel."

"Thou art a sweet minion," said Ruthven, "to

fight a lady's quarrel, and all for a bent brow and a tear in the eye! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year."

"Do me right, Ruthven," said Lindesay. "You are like a polished corslet of steel; it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer—nay, it is five times harder than a Glasgow breast-plate of hammered iron. Enough—we know each other."

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the queen signed to Roland Græme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Give me a morsel on the green-sward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking—Let the fresh spring
Bubble beside my napkin—and the free birds,
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough,
To claim the crumbs I leave for perquisites—
Your prison-feasts I like not.—

The Woodsman, a Drama.

A RECESS in the vestibule was enlightened by a small window, at which Roland Græme stationed himself to mark the departure of the lords. He could see their followers mustering on horseback under their respective banners—the western sun glancing on their corslets and steel caps as they moved to and fro, mounted or dismounted, at intervals. On the narrow space betwixt the castle and the water, the lords Ruthven and Lindesay were already moving slowly to their boats, accompanied by the Lady of Lochleven, her grandson, and their principal attendants. They took a ceremonious leave of each other, as Roland could discern by their gestures, and the boats put off from the landing-place; the boatmen stretched to their oars, and they speedily diminished upon the eye of the idle gazer, who had no better employment than to watch their motions. Such seemed also the occupation of the Lady Lochleven and George Douglas, who, returning from the landing-place, looked frequently back to the boats, and at length stopped as if to observe their progress under the window at which Roland Græme was stationed.—As they gazed on the lake, he could hear the lady distinctly say, "And she has bent her mind to save her life at the expense of her kingdom?"

"Her life, madam!" replied her son; "I know not who would dare to attempt it in the castle of my father. Had I dreamt that it was with such purpose that Lindesay insisted on bringing his followers hither, neither he nor they should have passed the iron gate of Lochleven Castle."

"I speak not of private slaughter, my son, but of open trial, condemnation, and execution; for with such she has been threatened, and to such threats she has given way. Had she not had more of the false Guisian blood than of the royal race of Scotland in her veins, she had bidden them defiance to their teeth—But it is all of the same complexion, and meanness is the natural companion of profligacy.—I am discharged, forsooth, from intruding on her gracious presence this evening. Go thou, my son, and render the usual service of the meal to this unqueened queen."

"So please you, lady mother," said Douglas, "I care not greatly to approach her presence."

"Thou art right, my son; and therefore I trust thy prudence, even because I have noted thy caution. She is like an isle on the ocean, surrounded with shelves and quicksands; its verdure fair and inviting to the eye, but the wreck of many a goodly vessel which hath approached it too rashly. But for thee, my son, I fear nought; and we may not, with our honour, suffer her to eat without the attendance of one of us. She may die by the judgment of Heaven, or the fiend may have power over her in her despair; and then we would be touched in honour to show, that in our house, and at our table, she had had all fair play and fitting usage."

Here Roland was interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulders, reminding him sharply of Adam Woodcock's adventure of the preceding evening. He turned round, almost expecting to see the page of Saint Michael's hostelry. He saw indeed Catherine Seyton; but she was in female attire, differing indeed a great deal in shape and materials from that which she had worn when they first met, and becoming her birth as the daughter of a great baron, and her rank as the attendant on a princess. "So, fair page," said she, "eaves-dropping is one of your page-like qualities I presume."

"Fair sister," answered Roland, in the same tone, "if some friends of mine be as well acquainted with the rest of our mystery, as they are with the arts of swearing, swaggering, and switching, they need ask no page in Christendom for further insight into his vocation."

"Unless that pretty speech infer that you have yourself had the discipline of the switch since we last met, the probability whereof I nothing doubt, I profess, fair page, I am at a loss to conjecture your meaning. But there is no time to debate it now, they come with the evening meal. Be pleased, Sir Page, to do your duty."

Four servants entered, bearing dishes, preceded by the same stern old steward whom Roland had already seen, and followed by George Douglas, already mentioned as the grandson of the Lady of Lochleven, and who, acting as seneschal, represented, upon this occasion, his father, the lord of the castle. He entered with his arms folded on his bosom, and his looks bent on the ground. With the assistance of Roland Græme, a table was suitably covered in the next or middle apartment, on which the domestics placed their burthens with great reverence, the steward and Douglas bending low when they had seen the table properly adorned, as if their royal prisoner had sate at the board in question. The door opened, and Douglas raising his eyes hastily, cast them again on the earth, when he perceived it was only the Lady Mary Fleming who entered.

"Her grace," she said, "will not eat to-night."

"Let us hope she may be otherwise persuaded," said Douglas; "meanwhile, madam, please to see our duty performed."

A servant presented bread and salt on a silver plate, and the old steward carved for Douglas a small morsel in succession from each of the dishes presented, which he tasted, as was then the custom at the tables of princes, to which death was often

suspected to find its way in the disguise of food.

"The queen will not then come forth to-night?" said Douglas.

"She has so determined," replied the lady.

"Our further attendance then is unnecessary—we leave you to your supper, fair ladies, and wish you good even."

He retired slowly as he came, and with the same air of deep dejection, and was followed by the attendants belonging to the castle. The two ladies sate down to their meal, and Roland Græme, with ready alacrity, prepared to wait upon them. Catherine Seyton whispered her companion, who replied, with the question spoken in a low tone, but looking at the page—"Is he of gentle blood and well nurtured?"

The answer which she received seemed satisfactory, for she said to Roland, "Sit down, young gentleman, and eat with your sisters in captivity."

"Permit me rather to perform my duty in attending them," said Roland, anxious to show he was possessed of the high tone of deference prescribed by the rules of chivalry towards the fair sex, and especially to dames and maidens of quality.

"You will find, Sir Page," said Catherine, "you will have little time allowed you for your meal; waste it not in ceremony, or you may rue your politeness ere to-morrow morning."

"Your speech is too free, maiden," said the elder lady; "the modesty of the youth may teach you more fitting fashions towards one whom to-day you have seen for the first time."

Catherine Seyton cast down her eyes, but not till she had given a single glance of inexpressible archness towards Roland, whom her more grave companion now addressed in a tone of protection.

"Regard her not, young gentleman—she knows little of the world, save the forms of a country nunnery—take thy place at the board-end, and refresh thyself after thy journey."

Roland Græme obeyed willingly, as it was the first food he had that day tasted; for Lindesay and his followers seemed regardless of human wants. Yet, notwithstanding the sharpness of his appetite, a natural gallantry of disposition, the desire of showing himself a well-nurtured gentleman in all courtesies towards the fair sex, and, for aught I know, the pleasure of assisting Catherine Seyton, kept his attention awake during the meal, to all those nameless acts of duty and service which gallants of that age were accustomed to render. He carved with neatness and decorum, and selected duly whatever was most delicate to place before the ladies. Ere they could form a wish, he sprung from the table, ready to comply with it—poured wine—tempered it with water—removed and exchanged trenchers, and performed the whole honours of the table, with an air at once of cheerful diligence, profound respect, and graceful promptitude.

When he observed that they had finished eating, he hastened to offer to the elder lady the silver ewer, basin, and napkin, with the ceremony and gravity which he would have used towards Mary herself. He next, with the same decorum, having supplied the basin with fair water, presented it to Catherine Seyton. Apparently, she was determined to disturb

his self-possession, if possible; for, while in the act of bathing her hands, she contrived, as it were by accident, to flirt some drops of water upon the face of the assiduous assistant. But if such was her mischievous purpose, she was completely disappointed; for Roland Græme, internally piquing himself on his self-command, neither laughed nor was discomposed; and all that the maiden gained by her frolic was a severe rebuke from her companion, taxing her with mal-address and indecorum. Catherine replied not, but sat pouting, something in the humour of a spoilt child, who watches the opportunity of wreaking upon some one or other its resentment for a deserved reprimand.

The Lady Mary Fleming, in the meanwhile, was naturally well pleased with the exact and reverent observance of the page, and said to Catherine, after a favourable glance at Roland Græme,—“You might well say, Catherine, our companion in inactivity was well-born and gently nurtured. I would not make him vain by my praise, but his services enable us to dispense with those which George Douglas condescends not to afford us, save when the queen is herself in presence.”

“Umph! I think hardly,” answered Catherine. “George Douglas is one of the most handsome gallants in Scotland, and ’tis pleasure to see him even still, when the gloom of Lochleven Castle has shed the same melancholy over him that it has done over every thing else. When he was at Holyrood, who would have said the young sprightly George Douglas would have been contented to play the locksmith here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of turning the key on two or three helpless women?—a strange office for a Knight of the Bleeding Heart—why does he not leave it to his father or his brothers?”

“Perhaps, like us, he has no choice,” answered the Lady Fleming. “But, Catherine, thou hast used thy brief space at court well, to remember what George Douglas was then.”

“I used mine eyes, which I suppose was what I was designed to do, and they were worth using there. When I was at the nunnery, they were very useless appurtenances; and now I am at Lochleven, they are good for nothing, save to look over that eternal work of embroidery.”

“You say thus, when you have been but a few brief hours amongst us—was this the maiden who would live and die in a dungeon, might she but have permission to wait on her gracious queen?”

“Nay, if you chide in earnest, my jest is ended,” said Catherine Seyton. “I would not yield in attachment to my poor godmother, to the gravest dame that ever had wise saws upon her tongue, and a double starch’d ruff around her throat—you know I would not, Dame Mary Fleming, and it is putting shame on me to say otherwise.”

She will challenge the other court lady, thought Roland Græme; she will to a certainty fling down her glove, and if Dame Mary Fleming hath but the soul to lift it, we may have a combat in the lists!—But the answer of Lady Mary Fleming was such as turns away wrath.

“Thou art a good child,” she said, “my Catherine, and a faithful; but Heaven pity him who shall

have one day a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievous to torment him—thou art fit to drive twenty husbands stark mad.”

“Nay,” said Catherine, resuming the full career of her careless good humour, “he must be half-witted beforehand that gives me such an opportunity. But I am glad you are not angry with me in sincerity,” casting herself as she spoke into the arms of her friend, and continuing, with a tone of apologetic fondness, while she kissed her on either side of the face, “you know, my dear Fleming, that I have to contend with both my father’s lofty pride, and with my mother’s high spirit—God bless them! they have left me these good qualities, having small portion to give beside, as times go—and so I am wilful and saucy; but let me remain but a week in this castle, and O, my dear Fleming, my spirit will be as chastised and as humble as thine own.”

Dame Mary Fleming’s sense of dignity, and love of form, could not resist this affectionate appeal. She kissed Catherine Seyton in her turn affectionately; while answering the last part of her speech, she said, “Now, Our Lady forbid, dear Catherine, that you should lose aught that is befitting of what becomes so well your light heart and lively humour. Keep but your sharp wit on this side of madness, and it cannot but be a blessing to us. But let me go, mad wench—I hear her grace touch her silver call.” And, extricating herself from Catherine’s grasp, she went towards the door of Queen Mary, from which was heard the low tone of a silver whistle, which, now only used by the boatswains in the navy, was then, for want of bells, the ordinary mode by which ladies, even of the very highest rank, summoned their domestics. When she had made two or three steps towards the door of the queen’s apartment, however, she turned back, and advancing to the young couple whom she left together, she said in a very serious though a low tone, “I trust it is impossible that we can, any of us, or in any circumstances, forget, that few as we are, we form the household of the Queen of Scotland; and that, in her calamity, all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly, that the young and the gay practised in her court.” So saying, she left the apartment.

Catherine Seyton seemed much struck with this remonstrance—She suffered herself to drop into the seat which she had quitted when she went to embrace Dame Mary Fleming, and for some time rested her brow upon her hands; while Roland Græme looked at her earnestly with a mixture of emotions which perhaps he himself could neither have analyzed nor explained. As she raised her face slowly from the posture to which a momentary feeling of self-rebuke had depressed it, her eyes encountered those of Roland, and became gradually animated with their usual spirit of malicious drollery, which not unnaturally excited a similar expression in those of the equally volatile page. They sate for the space of two minutes, each looking at the other with great seriousness on their features, and much mirth in their eyes, until at length Catherine was the first to break silence.

"May I pray you, fair sir," she began, very demurely, "to tell me what you see in my face to arouse looks so extremely sagacious and knowing as those with which it is your worship's pleasure to honour me? It would seem as there were some wonderful confidence and intimacy betwixt us, fair sir, if one is to judge from your extremely cunning looks; and so help me, Our Lady, as I never saw you but twice in my life before."

"And where were these happy occasions," said Roland, "if I may be bold enough to ask the question?"

"At the nunnery of Saint Catherine's," said the damsel, "in the first instance; and, in the second, during five minutes of a certain raid or foray which it was your pleasure to make into the lodging of my lord and father, Lord Seyton, from which, to my surprise, as probably to your own, you returned with a token of friendship and favour, instead of broken bones, which were the more probable reward of your intrusion, considering the prompt ire of the house of Seyton. I am deeply mortified," she added, ironically, "that your recollection should require refreshment on a subject so important; and that my memory should be stronger than yours on such an occasion, is truly humiliating."

"Your own memory is not so exactly correct, fair mistress," answered the page, "seeing you have forgotten meeting the third, in the hostelry of Saint Michael's, when it pleased you to lay your switch across the face of my comrade, in order, I warrant, to show that, in the house of Seyton, neither the prompt ire of its descendants, nor the use of the doublet and hose, are subject to Salique law, or confined to the use of the males."

"Fair sir," answered Catherine, looking at him with great steadiness, and some surprise, "unless your fair wits have forsaken you, I am at a loss what to conjecture of your meaning."

"By my troth, fair mistress," answered Roland, "and were I as wise a warlock as Michael Scott, I could scarce riddle the dream you read me. Did I not see you last night in the hostelry of Saint Michael's?—Did you not bring me this sword, with command not to draw it, save at the command of my native and rightful sovereign? And have I not done as you required me? Or is the sword a piece of lath—my word a bulrush—my memory a dream—and my eyes good for nought—espials which corbies might pick out of my head?"

"And if your eyes serve you not more truly on other occasions than in your vision of Saint Michael," said Catherine, "I know not, the pain apart, that the corbies would do you any great injury in the deprivation—But hark, the bell—hush, for God's sake, we are interrupted."

The damsel was right; for no sooner had the dull toll of the castle bell begun to resound through the vaulted apartment, than the door of the vestibule flew open, and the steward, with his severe countenance, his gold chain, and his white rod, entered the apartment, followed by the same train of domestics who had placed the dinner on the table, and who now, with the same ceremonious formality, began to remove it.

The steward remained motionless as some old

picture, while the domestics did their office; and when it was accomplished, every thing removed from the table, and the board itself taken from its tressels and disposed against the wall, he said aloud, without addressing any one in particular, and somewhat in the tone of a herald reading a proclamation, "My noble lady, Dame Margaret Erskine, by marriage Douglas, lets the Lady Mary of Scotland and her attendants to wit, that a servant of the true evangele, her reverend chaplain, will to-night, as usual, expound, lecture, and catechize, according to the forms of the congregation of gospellers."

"Hark you, my friend, Mr Dryfesdale," said Catherine, "I understand this announcement is a nightly form of yours. Now, I pray you to remark, that the Lady Fleming and I—for I trust your insolent invitation concerns us only—have chosen Saint Peter's pathway to heaven; so I see no one whom your godly exhortation, catechize, or lecture, can benefit, excepting this poor page, who, being in Satan's hand as well as yourself, had better worship with you than remain to cumber our better-advised devotions."

The page was well nigh giving a round denial to the assertion which this speech implied, when, remembering what had passed betwixt him and the regent, and seeing Catherine's finger raised in a monitory fashion, he felt himself, as on former occasions at the Castle of Avenel, obliged to submit to the task of dissimulation, and followed Dryfesdale down to the castle chapel, where he assisted in the devotions of the evening.

The chaplain was named Elias Henderson. He was a man in the prime of life, and possessed of good natural parts, carefully improved by the best education which these times afforded. To these qualities were added a faculty of close and terse reasoning, and, at intervals, a flow of happy illustration and natural eloquence. The religious faith of Roland Græme, as we have already had opportunity to observe, rested on no secure basis, but was entertained rather in obedience to his grandmother's behests, and his secret desire to contradict the chaplain of Avenel Castle, than from any fixed or steady reliance which he placed on the Romish creed. His ideas had been of late considerably enlarged by the scenes he had passed through; and feeling that there was shame in not understanding something of those political disputes betwixt the professors of the ancient and of the reformed faith, he listened with more attention than it had hitherto been in his nature to yield on such occasions, to an animated discussion of some of the principal points of difference betwixt the churches. So passed away the first day in the Castle of Lochleven; and those which followed it, were, for some time, of a very monotonous and uniform tenor.

CHAPTER XXIV.

'T is a weary life this—

Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions,
Whose thoughts are brooding o'er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine.

The Woodsman.

THE course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed, was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the queen's usual walk in the garden, or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needle-work, many of which still remain proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and islet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George of Douglas when he went asporting upon the lake, or on its margin; opportunities of diversion, which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gentleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanour,—a sadness so profound, that Roland never observed him to smile or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. On these occasions, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent, of which the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and hair-brained vivacity, which seemed rather to belong to some village-maid, the coquette of the ring around the may-pole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity, altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave as it were a wildness to all that she did, and Mary, while defending her from some occasional censure of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the green-wood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature, danced so rapidly away, that, brief as they were, they compensated the weary dulness of all the rest of the day. The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the queen's household, or whether it were her gene-

ral ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired, when mother of the queen's maidens of honour, and by which she had acquired their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interview neither afforded time nor opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak, at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

The winter months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he became by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in agitation among his companions in captivity, to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay, he became almost certain that, by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her attendants, at which he was necessarily present, the queen could not always avoid showing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as if desirous to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot—"They think I am blind," he said to himself, "and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the regent. Well!—be it so!—they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confidant as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson; but it was their own fault for sending me there, and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the word of God, he is as like to be right as either pope or councils."

It is probable that in this last conjecture, Roland Græme had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not entrusted him with their counsel. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

Elias Henderson, a keen propagator of the reformed faith, had sought the seclusion of Lochleven Castle, with the express purpose and expectation of making converts from Rome amongst the domestics of the dethroned queen, and confirming the faith of those who already held the protestant doctrines. Perhaps his hopes soared a little higher, and he might nourish some expectation of a proselyte more distinguished, in the person of the deposed queen. But the pertinacity with which she and her female attendants refused to see or listen to him, rendered such hope, if he nourished it, altogether abortive.

The opportunity, therefore, of enlarging the religious information of Roland Græme, and bringing him to a more due sense of his duties to Heaven, was hailed by the good man as a door opened by Providence for the salvation of a sinner. He dreamed not, indeed, that he was converting a papist; but such was the ignorance which Roland displayed upon some material points of the reformed doctrine, that Master Henderson, while praising his docility to the Lady Lochleven and her grandson, seldom failed to add, that his venerable brother, Henry Warden, must be now decayed in strength and in mind, since he found a catechumen of his flock so ill-grounded in the principles of his belief. For this, indeed, Roland Græme thought it was unnecessary to assign the true reason, which was his having made it a point of honour to forget all that Henry Warden taught him, as soon as he was no longer compelled to repeat it over as a lesson acquired by rote. The lessons of his new instructor, if not more impressively delivered, were received by a more willing ear, and a more awakened understanding, and the solitude of Lochleven Castle was favourable to graver thoughts than the page had hitherto entertained. He wavered yet, indeed, as one who was almost persuaded; but his attention to the chaplain's instructions procured him favour even with the stern old dame herself; and he was once or twice, but under great precaution, permitted to go to the neighbouring village of Kinross, situated on the mainland, to execute some ordinary commission of his unfortunate mistress.

For some time Roland Græme might be considered as standing neuter betwixt the two parties who inhabited the water-girdled Tower of Lochleven; but, as he rose in the opinion of the lady of the castle and her chaplain, he perceived, with great grief, that he lost ground in that of Mary and her female allies.

He came gradually to be sensible that he was regarded as a spy upon their discourse, and that, instead of the ease with which they had formerly conversed in his presence, without suppressing any of the natural feelings of anger, or sorrow, or mirth, which the chance topic of the moment happened to call forth, their talk was now studiously restricted to the most indifferent subjects, and a studied reserve observed even in their mode of treating these. This obvious want of confidence was accompanied with a correspondent change in their personal demeanour towards the unfortunate page. The queen, who had at first treated him with marked courtesy, now scarce spoke to him, save to convey some necessary command for her service; the Lady Flem-

ing restricted her notice to the most dry and distant expressions of civility; and Catherine Seyton became bitter in her pleasantries, and shy, cross, and petted, in any intercourse they had together. What was yet more provoking, he saw, or thought he saw, marks of intelligence betwixt George Douglas and the beautiful Catherine Seyton; and, sharpened by jealousy, he wrought himself almost into a certainty, that the looks which they exchanged conveyed matters of deep and serious import. No wonder, he thought, if, courted by the son of a proud and powerful baron, she can no longer spare a word or look to the poor fortuneless page.

In a word, Roland Græme's situation became truly uncomfortable, and his heart naturally enough rebelled against the injustice of this treatment, which deprived him of the only comfort which he had received for submitting to a confinement in other respects irksome. He accused Queen Mary and Catherine Seyton (for concerning the opinion of Dame Fleming he was indifferent) of inconsistency, in being displeased with him on account of the natural consequences of an order of their own. Why did they send him to hear this overpowering preacher? The Abbot Ambrosius, he recollected, understood the weakness of their popish cause better, when he enjoined him to repeat within his own mind *aves*, and *credos*, and *paters*, all the while old Henry Warden preached or lectured, that so he might secure himself against lending even a momentary ear to his heretical doctrine. "But I will endure this life no longer," said he to himself manfully; "do they suppose I would betray my mistress because I see cause to doubt of her religion?—that would be a serving, as they say, the devil for God's sake—I will forth into the world—he that serves fair ladies may at least expect kind looks and kind words, and I bear not the mind of a gentleman, to submit to cold treatment and suspicion, and a life-long captivity besides. I will speak to George Douglas to-morrow when we go out together fishing."

A sleepless night was spent in agitating this magnanimous resolution, and he arose in the morning not perfectly decided in his own mind whether he should abide by it or not. It happened that he was summoned by the queen at an unusual hour, and just as he was about to go out with George Douglas. He went to attend her commands in the garden; but as he had his angling-rod in his hand, the circumstance announced his previous intention, and the queen, turning to the Lady Fleming, said, "Catherine must devise some other amusement for us, *ma bonne amie*; our discreet page has already made his party for the day's pleasure."

"I said from the beginning," answered the Lady Fleming, "that your grace ought not to rely on being favoured with the company of a youth who has so many Huguenot acquaintances; and has the means of amusing himself far more agreeably than with us."

"I wish," said Catherine, her animated features reddening with mortification, "that his friends would sail away with him for good, and bring us in return a page (if such a thing can be found) faithful to his queen and to his religion."

"One part of your wishes may be granted, madam," said Roland Græme, unable any longer to

restrain his sense of the treatment which he received on all sides; and he was about to add, "I heartily wish you a companion in my room, if such can be found, who is capable of enduring women's caprices without going distracted." Luckily, he recollected the remorse which he had felt at having given way to the vivacity of his temper upon a similar occasion; and, closing his lips, imprisoned, until it died on his tongue, a reproach so misbecoming the presence of majesty.

"Why do you remain there," said the queen, "as if you were rooted to the parterre?"

"I but attend your grace's commands," said the page.

"I have none to give you—Begone, sir!"

As he left the garden to go to the boat, he distinctly heard Mary upbraid one of her attendants in these words:—"You see to what you have exposed us!"

This brief scene at once determined Roland Græme's resolution to quit the castle, if it were possible, and to impart his resolution to George Douglas without loss of time. That gentleman, in his usual mood of silence, sat in the stern of the little skiff which they used on such occasions, trimming his fishing-tackle, and, from time to time, indicating by signs to Græme, who pulled the oars, which way he should row. When they were a furlong or two from the castle, Roland rested on the oars, and addressed his companion somewhat abruptly, "I have something of importance to say to you, under your pleasure, fair sir."

The pensive melancholy of Douglas's countenance at once gave way to the eager, keen, and startled look of one who expects to hear something of deep and alarming import.

"I am wearied, to the very death, of this Castle of Lochleven," continued Roland.

"Is that all?" said Douglas; "I know none of its inhabitants who are much better pleased with it."

"Ay—but I am neither a native of the house, nor a prisoner in it, and so I may reasonably desire to leave it."

"You might desire to quit it with equal reason," answered Douglas, "if you were both the one and the other."

"But," said Roland Græme, "I am not only tired of living in Lochleven Castle, but I am determined to quit it."

"That is a resolution more easily taken than executed," replied Douglas.

"Not if yourself, sir, and your lady mother, chuse to consent," answered the page.

"You mistake the matter, Roland," said Douglas; "you will find that the consent of two other persons is equally essential—that of the Lady Mary your mistress, and that of my uncle the regent, who placed you about her person, and who will not think it proper that she should change her attendants so soon."

"And must I then remain whether I will or no?" demanded the page, somewhat appalled at a view of the subject, which would have occurred sooner to a person of more experience.

"At least," said George Douglas, "you must will to remain till my uncle wills to dismiss you."

"Frankly," said the page, "and speaking to

you as a gentleman who is incapable of betraying me, I will confess, that if I thought myself a prisoner here, neither walls nor water should confine me long."

"Frankly," said Douglas, "I could not much blame you for the attempt; yet, for all that, my father, or uncle, or the earl, or any of my brothers, or, in short, any of the king's lords into whose hands you fell, would in such a case hang you like a dog, or like a sentinel who deserts his post. And I promise you that you will hardly escape them—but row towards Saint Serf's island—there is a breeze from the west, and we will have sport keeping to windward of the isle, where the ripple is strongest. We will speak more of what you have mentioned, when we have had an hour's sport."

Their fishing was successful, though never did two anglers pursue even that silent and unsocial pleasure with less verbal intercourse.

When their time was expired, Douglas took the oars in his turn, and by his order Roland Græme steered the boat, directing her course upon the landing-place at the castle. But he also stopped in the midst of his course, and looking around him, said to Græme, "There is a thing which I could mention to thee, but it is so deep a secret, that even here, surrounded as we are by sea and sky, without the possibility of a listener, I cannot prevail on myself to speak it out."

"Better leave it unspoken, sir," answered Roland Græme, "if you doubt the honour of him who alone can hear it."

"I doubt not your honour," replied George Douglas; "but you are young, imprudent, and changeable."

"Young," said Roland, "I am, and it may be imprudent—but who hath informed you that I am changeable?"

"One that knows you, perhaps, better than you know yourself," replied Douglas.

"I suppose you mean Catherine Seyton," said the page, his heart rising as he spoke; "but she is herself fifty times more variable in her humour than the very water which we are floating upon."

"My young acquaintance," said Douglas, "I pray you to remember that Catherine Seyton is a lady of blood and birth, and must not be lightly spoken of."

"Master George of Douglas," said Græme, "as that speech seemed to be made under the warrant of something like a threat, I pray you to observe, that I value not the threat at the estimation of a fin of one of these dead trouts; and, moreover, I would have you to know, that the champion who undertakes the defence of every lady of blood and birth, whom men accuse of change of faith and of fashion, is like to have enough of work on his hands."

"Go to," said the seneschal, but in a tone of good humour, "thou art a foolish boy, unfit to deal with any matter more serious than the casting of a net, or the flying of a hawk."

"If your secret concern Catherine Seyton," said the page, "I care not for it, and so you may tell her if you will. I wot she can shape you opportunity to speak with her, as she has ere now."

The flush which passed over Douglas's face, made

the page aware that he had lighted on a truth, when he was, in fact, speaking at random; and the feeling that he had done so, was like striking a dagger into his own heart. His companion, without farther answer, resumed the oars, and pulled lustily till they arrived at the island and the castle. The servants received the produce of their spoil, and the two fishers, turning from each other in silence, went each to his several apartment.

Roland Græme had spent about an hour in grumbling against Catherine Seyton, the queen, the regent, and the whole house of Lochleven, with George Douglas at the head of it, when the time approached that his duty called him to attend the meal of Queen Mary. As he arranged his dress for this purpose, he grudged the trouble, which, on similar occasions, he used, with boyish foppery, to consider as one of the most important duties of his day; and when he went to take his place behind the chair of the queen, it was with an air of offended dignity, which could not escape her observation, and probably appeared to her ridiculous enough, for she whispered something in French to her ladies, at which the Lady Fleming laughed, and Catherine appeared half diverted and half disconcerted. This pleasantry, of which the subject was concealed from him, the unfortunate page received, of course, as a new offence, and called an additional degree of sullen dignity into his mien, which might have exposed him to farther raillery, but that Mary appeared disposed to make allowance for and compassionate his feelings.

With the peculiar tact and delicacy which no woman possessed in greater perfection, she began to sooth by degrees the vexed spirit of her magnanimous attendant. The excellence of the fish which he had taken in his expedition, the high flavour and beautiful red colour of the trouts which have long given distinction to the lake, led her first to express her thanks to her attendant for so agreeable an addition to her table, especially upon a *jour de jeûne*; and then brought on inquiries into the place where the fish had been taken, their size, their peculiarities, the times when they were in season, and a comparison between the Lochleven trouts and those which are found in the lakes and rivers of the south of Scotland. The ill-humour of Roland Græme was never of an obstinate character. It rolled away like mist before the sun, and he was easily engaged in a keen and animated dissertation about Lochleven trout, and sea trout, and river trout, and bull trout, and char, which never rise to a fly, and par, which some suppose infant salmon, and *herlings*, which frequent the Nith, and *vendisses*, which are only found in the castle-loch of Lochmaben; and he was hurrying on with the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm of a young sportsman, when he observed that the smile with which the queen at first listened to him died languidly away, and that, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, tears rose to her eyes. He stopt suddenly short, and, distressed in his turn, asked, "if he had had the misfortune unwittingly to give displeasure to her grace?"

"No, my poor boy," replied the queen; "but as you numbered up the lakes and rivers of my kingdom, imagination cheated me, as it will do, and snatched me from these dreary walls, away to the

romantic streams of Nithsdale, and the royal towers of Lochmaben. O land, which my fathers have so long ruled! of the pleasures which you extend so freely, your queen is now deprived, and the poorest beggar, who may wander free from one landward town to another, would scorn to change fates with Mary of Scotland!"

"Your highness," said the Lady Fleming, "will do well to withdraw."

"Come with me then, Fleming," said the queen, "I would not burthen hearts so young as these are with the sight of my sorrows."

She accompanied these words with a look of melancholy compassion towards Roland and Catherine, who were now left alone together in the apartment.

The page found his situation not a little embarrassing, for, as every reader has experienced who may have chanced to be in such a situation, it is extremely difficult to maintain the full dignity of an offended person in the presence of a beautiful girl, whatever reason we may have for being angry with her. Catherine Seyton, on her part, sate still like a lingering ghost, which, conscious of the awe which its presence imposes, is charitably disposed to give the poor confused mortal whom it visits, time to recover his senses, and comply with the grand rule of demonology by speaking first. But as Roland seemed in no hurry to avail himself of her condescension, she carried it a step farther, and herself opened the conversation.

"I pray you, fair sir, if it may be permitted me to disturb your august reverie by a question so simple,—what may have become of your rosary?"

"It is lost, madam—lost some time since," said Roland, partly embarrassed and partly indignant.

"And may I ask farther, sir," said Catherine, "why you have not replaced it with another?—I have half a mind," she said, taking from her pocket a string of ebony beads adorned with gold, "to bestow one upon you, to keep for my sake, just to remind you of former acquaintance."

There was a little tremulous accent in the tone with which these words were delivered, which at once put to flight Roland Græme's resentment, and brought him to Catherine's side; but she instantly resumed the bold and firm accent which was more familiar to her. "I did not bid you," she said, "come and sit so close by me; for the acquaintance that I spoke of, has been stiff and cold, dead and buried, for this many a day."

"Now Heaven forbid!" said the page; "it has only slept; and now that you desire it should awake, fair Catherine, believe me that a pledge of your returning favour——"

"Nay, nay," said Catherine, withholding the rosary, towards which, as he spoke, he extended his hand, "I have changed my mind on better reflection. What should a heretic do with these holy beads, that have been blessed by the father of the church himself?"

Roland winced grievously, for he saw plainly which way the discourse was now likely to tend, and felt that it must at all events be embarrassing. "Nay, but," he said, "it was as a token of your own regard that you offered them."

"Ay, fair sir, but that regard attended the faithful subject, the loyal and pious catholic, the individual who was so solemnly devoted at the same time with myself to the same grand duty; which, you must now understand, was to serve the church and the queen,—to such a person, if you ever heard of him, was my regard due, and not to him who associates with heretics, and is about to become a renegade."

"I should scarce believe, fair mistress," said Roland, indignantly, "that the vane of your favour turned only to a catholic wind, considering that it points so plainly to George Douglas, who, I think, is both kingsman and protestant."

"Think better of George Douglas," said Catherine, "than to believe"—and then checking herself, as if she had spoken too much, she went on, "I assure you, fair Mr Roland, that all who wish you well are sorry for you."

"Their number is very few, I believe," answered Roland, "and their sorrow, if they feel any, not deeper than ten minutes' time will cure."

"They are more numerous, and think more deeply concerning you, than you seem to be aware," answered Catherine. "But perhaps they think wrong—You are the best judge for yourself; and if you prefer gold and church lands to honour and loyalty, and the faith of your fathers, why should you be hampered in conscience more than others?"

"May Heaven bear witness for me," said Roland, "that if I entertain any difference of opinion—that is, if I nourish any doubts in point of religion, they have been adopted on the conviction of my own mind, and the suggestion of my conscience!"

"Ay, ay, your conscience—your conscience!" repeated she with satiric emphasis; "your conscience is the scape-goat; I warrant it an able one—it will bear the burthen of one of the best manors of the Abbey of Saint Mary's of Kennaquhair, lately forfeited to our noble lord the king, by the abbot and community thereof, for the high crime of fidelity to their religious vows, and now to be granted by the high and mighty traitor, and so forth, James Earl of Murray, to the good squire of dames Roland Græme, for his loyal and faithful service as underespial, and deputy-turnkey, for securing the person of his lawful sovereign, Queen Mary."

"You misconstrue me cruelly," said the page; "yes, Catherine, most cruelly—God knows I would protect this poor lady at the risk of my life, or with my life; but what can I do,—what can any one do for her?"

"Much may be done—enough may be done—all may be done—if men will be but true and honourable, as Scottish men were in the days of Bruce and Wallace. O, Roland, from what an enterprise you are now withdrawing your heart and hand, through mere fickleness and coldness of spirit!"

"How can I withdraw," said Roland, "from an enterprise which has never been communicated to me?—Has the queen, or have you, or has any one communicated with me upon any thing for her service which I have refused? Or have you not, all of you, held me at such distance from your counsels, as if I were the most faithless spy since the days of Ganelon?"

"And who," said Catherine Seyton, "would trust the sworn friend, and pupil, and companion, of the heretic preacher Henderson? ay—a proper tutor you have chosen, instead of the excellent Ambrosius, who is now turned out of house and homestead, if indeed he is not languishing in a dungeon, for withstanding the tyranny of Morton, to whose brother the temporalities of that noble house of God have been gifted away by the regent."

"Is it possible?" said the page; "and is the excellent Father Ambrose in such distress?"

"He would account the news of your falling away from the faith of your fathers," answered Catherine, "a worse mishap than aught that tyranny can inflict on himself."

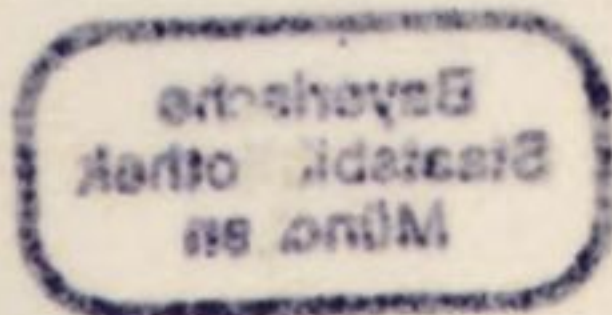
"But why," said Roland, very much moved, "should you suppose that—that—that it is with me as you say?"

"Do you yourself deny it?" replied Catherine; "do you not admit that you have drank the poison which you should have dashed from your lips?—Do you deny that it now ferments in your veins, if it has not altogether corrupted the springs of life?—Do you deny that you have your doubts, as you proudly term them, respecting what popes and councils have declared it unlawful to doubt of?—Is not your faith wavering, if not overthrown?—Does not the heretic preacher boast his conquest?—Does not the heretic woman of this prison-house hold up thy example to others?—Do not the queen and the Lady Fleming believe in thy falling away?—And is there any except one—yes, I will speak it out, and think as lightly as you please of my good will—is there one except myself that holds even a lingering hope that you may yet prove what we once all believed of you?"

"I know not," said our poor page, much embarrassed by the view which was thus presented to him of the conduct he was expected to pursue, and by a person in whom he was not the less interested that so long residence in Lochleven Castle, with no object so likely to attract his undivided attention, had taken place since they had first met,—“I know not what you expect of me, or fear from me. I was sent hither to attend Queen Mary, and to her I acknowledge the duty of a servant through life and death. If any one had expected service of another kind, I was not the party to render it. I neither avow nor disclaim the doctrines of the reformed church.—Will you have the truth? It seems to me that the profligacy of the catholic clergy has brought this judgment on their own heads, and, for aught I know, it may be for their reformation. But, for betraying this unhappy queen, God knows I am guiltless of the thought. Did I believe worse of her than as her servant I wish—as her subject I dare to do—I would not betray her—far from it—I would aid her in aught which could tend to a fair trial of her cause."

"Enough! enough!" answered Catherine, clasping her hands together; "then thou wilt not desert us if any means are presented, by which, placing our royal mistress at freedom, this case may be honestly tried betwixt her and her rebellious subjects."

"Nay—but fair Catherine," replied the page,



"bear but what the Lord of Murray said when he sent me hither."

"Hear but what the devil said," replied the maiden, "rather than what a false subject, a false brother, a false counsellor, a false friend said! A man raised from a petty pensioner on the crown's bounty, to be the counsellor of majesty, and the prime distributor of the bounties of the state;—one with whom rank, fortune, title, consequence, and power, all grew up like a mushroom, by the mere warm good will of the sister, whom, in requital, he hath mewed up in this place of melancholy seclusion—whom, in further requital, he has deposed, and whom, if he dared, he would murder."

"I think not so ill of the Earl of Murray," said Roland Græme; "and sooth to speak," he added, with a slight smile, "it would require some bribe to make me embrace, with firm and desperate resolution, either one side or the other."

"Nay, if that is all," replied Catherine Seyton, in a tone of enthusiasm, "you shall be guerdoned with prayers from oppressed subjects—from dispossessed clergy—from insulted nobles—with immortal praise by future ages—with eager gratitude by the present—with fame on earth, and with felicity in heaven! Your country will thank you—your queen will be debtor to you—you will achieve at once the highest from the lowest degree in chivalry—all men will honour, all women will love you—and I, sworn with you so early to the accomplishment of Queen Mary's freedom, will—yes, I will, love you better than ever sister loved brother."

"Say on—say on," said Roland, kneeling on one knee, and taking her hand, which, in the warmth of her exhortation, Catherine held towards him.

"Nay," said she, pausing, "I have already said too much—far too much, if I prevail not with you—far too little if I do. But I prevail," she continued, seeing that the countenance of the youth she addressed returned the enthusiasm of her own—"I prevail; or rather the good cause prevails through its own strength—thus I devote thee to it." And as she spoke, she approached her finger to the brow of the astonished youth; and, without touching it, signed the cross over his forehead—stooped her face towards him, and seemed to kiss the empty space in which she had traced the symbol; then starting up and extricating herself from his grasp, darted into the queen's apartment.

Roland Græme remained as the enthusiastic maiden had left him, kneeling on one knee, with breath withheld, and with eyes fixed upon the space which the fairy form of Catherine Seyton had so lately occupied. If his thoughts were not of unmixed delight, they at least partook of that thrilling and intoxicating, though mingled sense of pain and pleasure, the most overpowering which life offers in its blended cup. He rose and retired slowly; and although the chaplain Mr Henderson preached on that evening his best sermon against the errors of popery, I would not engage that he was followed accurately through the train of his reasoning by the young proselyte, with a view to whose especial benefit he had handled the subject.

CHAPTER XXV.

And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
Comes Seignor Reason, with his saws and cautions,
Giving such aid as the old grey-beard sexton,
Who from the church-vault drags his crazy engine,
To ply its dribbling ineffectual streamlet
Against a conflagration.

Old Play.

IN a musing mood, Roland Græme upon the ensuing morning betook himself to the battlements of the castle, as a spot where he might indulge the course of his thick-coming fancies with least chance of interruption. But his place of retirement was in the present case ill chosen, for he was presently joined by Master Elias Henderson.

"I sought you, young man," said the preacher, "having to speak of something which concerns you nearly."

The page had no pretence for avoiding the conference which the chaplain thus offered, though he felt that it might prove an embarrassing one.

"In teaching thee, as far as my feeble knowledge hath permitted, thy duty towards God," said the chaplain, "there are particulars of your duty towards man, upon which I was unwilling long or much to insist. You are here in the service of a lady, honourable as touching her birth, deserving of all compassion as respects her misfortunes, and garnished with even but too many of those outward qualities which win men's regard and affection. Have you ever considered your regard to this Lady Mary of Scotland in its true light and bearing?"

"I trust, reverend sir," replied Roland Græme, "that I am well aware of the duties a servant in my condition owes to his royal mistress, especially in her lowly and distressed condition."

"True," answered the preacher, "but it is even that honest feeling which may, in the Lady Mary's case, carry thee into great crime and treachery."

"How so, reverend sir?" replied the page; "I profess I understand you not."

"I speak to you not of the crimes of this ill-advised lady," said the preacher; "they are not subjects for the ears of her sworn servant. But it is enough to say, that this unhappy person hath rejected more offers of grace, more hopes of glory, than ever were held out to earthly princes; and that she is now, her day of favour being passed, sequestered in this lonely castle, for the common weal of the people of Scotland, and it may be for the benefit of her own soul."

"Reverend sir," said Roland, somewhat impatiently, "I am but too well aware that my unfortunate mistress is imprisoned, since I have the misfortune to share in her restraint myself—of which, to speak sooth, I am heartily weary."

"It is even of that which I am about to speak," said the chaplain, mildly; "but first, my good Roland, look forth on the pleasant prospect of yonder cultivated plain. You see, where the smoke arises, yonder village standing half hidden by the trees, and you know it to be the dwelling-place of peace and industry. From space to space, each by the side of its own stream, you see the grey towers of

barons, with cottages interspersed; and you know that they also, with their household, are now living in unity; the lance hung up on the wall, and the sword resting in its sheath.—You see, too, more than one fair church, where the pure waters of life are offered to the thirsty, and where the hungry are refreshed with spiritual food.—What would he deserve, who should bring fire and slaughter into so fair and happy a scene—who should bare the swords of the gentry and turn them against each other—who should give tower and cottage to the flames, and slake the embers with the blood of the in-dwellers?—What would he deserve who should lift up again that ancient Dagon of superstition, whom the worthies of the time have beaten down, and who should once more make the churches of God the high places of Baal?”

“You have limned a frightful picture, reverend sir,” said Roland Græme; “yet I guess not whom you would charge with the purpose of effecting a change so horrible.”

“God forbid,” replied the preacher, “that I should say to thee, thou art the man.—Yet beware, Roland Græme, that thou, in serving thy mistress, hold fast the still higher service which thou owest to the peace of thy country, and the prosperity of her inhabitants; else, Roland Græme, thou mayest be the very man upon whose head will fall the curses and assured punishment due to such work. If thou art won by the song of these syrens to aid that unhappy lady’s escape from this place of penitence and security, it is over with the peace of Scotland’s cottages, and with the prosperity of her palaces—and the babe unborn shall curse the name of the man, who gave inlet to the disorder which will follow the war betwixt the mother and the son.”

“I know of no such plan, reverend sir,” answered the page, “and therefore can aid none such. My duty towards the queen has been simply that of an attendant; it is a task of which, at times, I would willingly have been freed, nevertheless——”

“It is to prepare thee for the enjoyment of something more of liberty,” said the preacher, “that I have endeavoured to impress upon you the deep responsibility under which your office must be discharged. George Douglas hath told the Lady Lochleven that you are weary of this service, and my intercession hath partly determined her good ladyship, that, as your discharge cannot be granted, you shall, instead, be employed in certain commissions on the mainland, which have hitherto been discharged by other persons of confidence. Wherefore, come with me to the lady, for even to-day such duty will be imposed on you.”

“I trust you will hold me excused, reverend sir,” said the page, who felt that an increase of confidence on the part of the lady of the castle and her family would render his situation in a moral view doubly embarrassing; “one cannot serve two masters—and I much fear that my mistress will not hold me excused for taking employment under another.”

“Fear not that,” said the preacher, “her consent shall be asked and obtained. I fear she will yield it but too easily, as hoping to avail herself of your agency to maintain correspondence with her friends,

as those falsely call themselves, who would make her name the watch-word for civil war.”

“And thus,” said the page, “I will be exposed to suspicion on all sides; for my mistress will consider me as a spy placed on her by her enemies, seeing me so far trusted by them; and the Lady Lochleven will never cease to suspect the possibility of my betraying her, because circumstances put it into my power to do so—I would rather remain as I am.”

There followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which Henderson looked steadily in Roland’s countenance, as if desirous to ascertain whether there was not more in the answer than the precise words seemed to imply. He failed in this point, however; for Roland, bred a page from childhood, knew how to assume a sullen petted cast of countenance, well enough calculated to hide all internal emotions.

“I understand thee not, Roland,” said the preacher, “or rather thou thinkest on this matter more deeply than I apprehended to be in thy nature. Methought the delight of going on shore with thy bow, or thy gun, or thy angling-rod, would have borne away all other feelings.”

“And so it would,” replied Roland, who perceived the danger of suffering Henderson’s half-raised suspicions to become fully awake,—“I would have thought of nothing but the gun and the oar, and the wild water-fowl that tempt me by sailing among the sedges yonder so far out of flight-shot, had you not spoken of my going on shore as what was to occasion burning of town and tower, the downfall of the evangele, and the upsetting of the mass.”

“Follow me, then,” said Henderson, “and we will seek the Lady Lochleven.”

They found her at breakfast with her grandson George Douglas—“Peace be with your ladyship,” said the preacher, bowing to his patroness, “Roland Græme awaits your order.”

“Young man,” said the lady, “our chaplain hath warranted for thy fidelity, and we are determined to give you certain errands to do for us in our town of Kinross.”

“Not by my advice,” said Douglas, coldly.

“I said not that it was,” answered the lady, something sharply. “The mother of thy father may, I should think, be old enough to judge for herself in a matter so simple.—Thou wilt take the skiff, Roland, and two of my people, whom Dryfesdale or Randal will order out, and fetch off certain stuff of plate and hangings, which should last night be lodged at Kinross by the wains from Edinburgh.”

“And give this packet,” said George Douglas, “to a servant of ours, whom you will find in waiting there.—It is the report to my father,” he added, looking towards the grandmother, who acquiesced by bending her head.

“I have already mentioned to Master Henderson,” said Roland Græme, “that, as my duty requires my attendance on the queen, her grace’s permission for my journey ought to be obtained before I can undertake your commission.”

“Look to it, my son,” said the old lady, “the scruple of the youth is honourable.”

“Craving your pardon, madam, I have no wish to force myself on her presence thus early,” said

Douglas, in an indifferent tone; "it might displease her, and were no way agreeable to me."

"And I," said the Lady Lochleven, "although her temper hath been more gentle of late, have no will to undergo, without necessity, the rancour of her wit."

"Under your permission, madam," said the chaplain, "I will myself render your request to the queen. During my long residence in this house she hath not deigned to see me in private, or to hear my doctrine; yet so may Heaven prosper my labours, as love for her soul, and desire to bring her into the right path, was my chief desire for coming hither."

"Take care, Master Henderson," said Douglas, in a tone which seemed almost sarcastic, "lest you rush hastily on an adventure to which you have no vocation—you are learned, and know the adage, *Ne accesseris in consilium nisi vocatus*.—Who hath required this at your hand?"

"The Master to whose service I am called," answered the preacher, looking upward, "He who hath commanded me to be earnest in season and out of season."

"Your acquaintance hath not been much, I think, with courts or princes," continued the young esquire.

"No, sir," replied Henderson, "but, like my master Knox, I see nothing frightful in the fair face of a pretty lady."

"My son," said the Lady of Lochleven, "quench not the good man's zeal—let him do the errand to this unhappy princess."

"With more willingness than I would do it myself," said George Douglas. Yet something in his manner appeared to contradict his words.

The minister went accordingly, and, demanding an audience of the imprisoned princess, was admitted. He found her with her ladies engaged in the daily task of embroidery. The queen received him with that courtesy, which, in ordinary cases, she used towards all who approached her; and the clergyman, in opening his commission, was obviously somewhat more embarrassed than he had expected to be.—"The good Lady of Lochleven—may it please your grace——"

He made a short pause, during which Mary said, with a smile, "My grace would, in truth, be well pleased, were the Lady Lochleven our good lady—But go on—what is the will of the good Lady of Lochleven?"

"She desires, madam," said the chaplain, "that your grace will permit this young gentleman, your page, Roland Græme, to pass to Kinross to look after some household stuff and hangings, sent hither for the better furnishing your grace's apartments."

"The Lady of Lochleven," said the queen, "uses needless ceremony, in requesting our permission for that which stands within her own pleasure. We well know that this young gentleman's attendance on us had not been so long permitted, were he not thought to be more at the command of that good lady than at ours.—But we cheerfully yield consent that he shall go on her errand—with our will we would doom no living creature to the captivity which we ourselves must suffer."

"Ay, madam," answered the preacher, "and it is doubtless natural for humanity to quarrel with its prison-house. Yet there have been those, who have found that time spent in the house of temporal captivity, may be so employed as to redeem us from spiritual slavery."

"I apprehend your meaning, sir," replied the queen, "but I have heard your apostle—I have heard Master John Knox; and were I to be perverted, I would willingly resign to the ablest and most powerful of heresiarchs the poor honour he might acquire by overcoming my faith and my hope."

"Madam," said the preacher, "it is not to the talents or skill of the husbandman that God gives the increase—the words which were offered in vain by him whom you justly call our apostle, during the bustle and gaiety of a court, may yet find better acceptance during the leisure for reflection which this place affords. God knows, lady, that I speak in singleness of heart, as one who would as soon compare himself to the immortal angels, as to the holy man whom you have named. Yet would you but condescend to apply to their noblest use, those talents and that learning which all allow you to be possessed of—would you afford us but the slightest hope that you would hear and regard what can be urged against the blinded superstition and idolatry in which you are brought up, sure am I, that the most powerfully gifted of my brethren, that even John Knox himself, would hasten hither, and account the rescue of your single soul from the nets of Romish error—"

"I am obliged to you and to them for their charity," said Mary; "but as I have at present but one presence-chamber, I will reluctantly see it converted into a Huguenot synod."

"At least, madam, be not thus obstinately blinded in your errors. Hear one who has hungered and thirsted, watched and prayed, to undertake the good work of your conversion, and who would be content to die the instant that a work so advantageous for yourself and so beneficial to Scotland were accomplished—Yes, lady, could I but shake the remaining pillar of the heathen temple in this land—and that permit me to term your faith in the delusions of Rome—I could be content to die overwhelmed in the ruins."

"I will not insult your zeal, sir," replied Mary, "by saying you are more likely to make sport for the Philistines than to overwhelm them—your charity claims my thanks, for it is warmly expressed and may be truly purposed—But believe as well of me as I am willing to do of you, and think that I may be as anxious to recal you to the ancient and only road, as you are to teach me your new bye-ways to paradise."

"Then, madam, if such be your generous purpose," said Henderson, eagerly, "what hinders that we should dedicate some part of that time, unhappily now too much at your grace's disposal, to discuss a question so weighty? You, by report of all men, are both learned and witty, and I, though without such advantage, am strong in my cause as in a tower of defence. Why should we not spend some space in endeavouring to discover which of us hath the wrong side in this most important matter?"

"Nay," said Queen Mary, "I never alleged my force was strong enough to accept of a combat *en champ clos*, with a scholar and a polemic. Besides, the match is not equal. You, sir, might retire when you felt the battle go against you, while I am tied to the stake, and have no permission to say the debate wearies me.—I would be alone."

She curtsied low to him as she uttered these words; and Henderson, whose zeal was indeed ardent, but did not extend to the neglect of delicacy, bowed in return, and prepared to withdraw.

"I would," he said, "that my earnest wish, my most zealous prayer, could procure to your grace any blessing or comfort, but especially that in which alone blessing or comfort is, as easily as the slightest intimation of your wish will remove me from your presence."

He was in the act of departing, when Mary said to him, with much courtesy, "Do me no injury in your thoughts, good sir; it may be, that if my time here be protracted longer—as surely I hope it will not, trusting that either my rebel subjects will repent of their disloyalty, or that my faithful lieges will obtain the upper hand—but if my time be here protracted, it may be I shall have no displeasure in hearing one who seems so reasonable and compassionate as yourself, and I may hazard your contempt by endeavouring to recollect and repeat the reasons which schoolmen and councils give for the faith that is in me,—although I fear that, God help me! my Latin has deserted me with my other possessions. This must, however, be for another day. Meanwhile, sir, let the Lady of Lochleven employ my page as she lists—I will not afford suspicion by speaking a word to him before he goes.—Roland Græme, my friend, lose not an opportunity of amusing thyself—dance, sing, run, and leap—all may be done merrily on the mainland; but he must have more than quicksilver in his veins who could frolic here."

"Alas! madam," said the preacher, "to what is it you exhort the youth, while time passes, and eternity summons! Can our salvation be insured by idle mirth, or our good work wrought out without fear and trembling?"

"I cannot fear or tremble," replied the queen; "to Mary Stuart such emotions are unknown. But, if weeping and sorrow on my part will atone for the boy enjoying an hour of boyish pleasure, be assured the penance shall be duly paid."

"Nay, but, gracious lady," said the preacher, "in this you greatly err;—our tears and our sorrows are all too little for our own faults and follies, nor can we transfer them, as your church falsely teaches, to the benefit of others."

"May I pray you, sir," answered the queen, "with as little offence as such a prayer may import, to transfer yourself elsewhere. We are sick at heart, and may not now be disturbed with further controversy—and thou, Roland, take this little purse; (then turning to the divine, she said, showing its contents,)—Look, reverend sir—it contains only these two or three gold testoons, a coin which, though bearing my own poor features, I have ever found more active against me than on my side, just as my subjects take arms against me, with my own name for their summons and signal.—Take this

purse, that thou mayest want no means of amusement. Fail not—fail not to bring me back news from Kinross, only let it be such as, without suspicion or offence, may be told in the presence of this reverend gentleman, or of the good Lady Lochleven herself."

The last hint was too irresistible to be withstood; and Henderson withdrew, half mortified, half pleased, with his reception; for Mary, from long habit, and the address which was natural to her, had learned, in an extraordinary degree, the art of evading discourse which was disagreeable to her feelings or prejudices, without affronting those by whom it was proffered.

Roland Græme retired with the chaplain, at a signal from his lady; but it did not escape him, that as he left the room, stepping backwards, and making the deep obeisance due to royalty, Catherine Seyton held up her slender fore-finger, with a gesture which he alone could witness, and which seemed to say, "Remember what has passed betwixt us."

Roland Græme had now his last charge from the Lady of Lochleven. "There are revels," she said, "this day at the village—my son's authority is, as yet, unable to prevent these continued workings of the ancient leaven of folly which the Romish priests have kneaded into the very souls of the Scottish peasantry. I do not command thee to abstain from them—that would be only to lay a snare for thy folly, or to teach thee falsehood; but enjoy these vanities with moderation, and mark them as what thou must soon learn to renounce and condemn. Our chamberlain at Kinross, Luke Lundin,—Doctor, as he foolishly calleth himself—will acquaint thee what is to be done in the matter about which thou goest. Remember thou art trusted—show thyself, therefore, worthy of trust."

When we recollect that Roland Græme was not yet nineteen, and that he had spent his whole life in the solitary Castle of Avenel, excepting the few hours he had passed in Edinburgh, and his late residence at Lochleven (the latter period having very little served to enlarge his acquaintance with the gay world), we cannot wonder that his heart beat high with hope and curiosity at the hope of partaking the sport even of a country wake. He hastened to his little cabin, and turned over the wardrobe with which (in every respect becoming his station) he had been supplied from Edinburgh, probably by order of the Earl of Murray. By the queen's command he had hitherto waited upon her in mourning, or at least in sad-coloured raiment. Her condition, she said, admitted of nothing more gay. But now he selected the gayest dress his wardrobe afforded; composed of scarlet, slashed with black satin, the royal colours of Scotland—combed his long curled hair—disposed his chain and medal round a beaver hat of the newest block; and with the gay faulchion, which had reached him in so mysterious a manner, hung by his side in an embroidered belt, his apparel, added to his natural frank mien and handsome form, made a most commendable and pleasing specimen of the young gallant of the period. He sought to make his parting reverence to the queen and her ladies, but old Dryfesdale hurried him to the boat.

"We will have no private audiences," he said, "my master; since you are to be trusted with some—"

what, we will try at least to save thee from the temptation of opportunity. God help thee, child," he added, with a glance of contempt at his gay clothes, "an the bear-ward be yonder from Saint Andrews, have a care thou go not near him."

"And wherefore, I pray you?" said Roland.

"Lest he take thee for one of his runaway jack-an-apes," answered the steward, smiling sourly.

"I wear not my clothes at thy cost," said Roland, indignantly.

"Nor at thine own either, my son," replied the steward, "else would thy garb better resemble thy merit."

Roland Græme suppressed with difficulty the repartee which arose to his lips, and wrapping his scarlet mantle around him, threw himself into the boat, which two rowers, themselves urged by curiosity to see the revels, pulled stoutly towards the west end of the lake. As they put off, Roland thought he could discover the face of Catherine Seyton, though carefully withdrawn from observation, peeping from a loop hole to view his departure. He pulled off his hat and held it up as a token that he saw and wished her adieu. A white kerchief waved for a second across the window, and for the rest of the little voyage, the thoughts of Catherine Seyton disputed ground in his breast with the expectations excited by the approaching revel. As they approached nigher and nigher to the shore, the sounds of mirth and music, the laugh, the halloo, and the shout, came thicker upon the ear, and in a trice the boat was moored, and Roland Græme hastened in quest of the chamberlain, that, being informed what time he had to his own disposal, he might lay it out to the best advantage.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Room for the master of the ring, ye swains,
Divide your crowded ranks—before him march
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum,
The clamorous war-pipe, and far echoing horn.

SOMERVILLE: *Rural Sports.*

No long space intervened ere Roland Græme was able to discover among the crowd of revelers, who gamboled upon the open space which extends betwixt the village and the lake, a person of so great importance as Doctor Luke Lundin, upon whom devolved officially the charge of representing the lord of the land, and who was attended for support of his authority by a piper, a drummer, and four sturdy clowns armed with rusty halberts, garnished with party-coloured ribbons, myrmidons, who, early as the day was, had already broken more than one head in the awful names of the Laird of Lochleven and his chamberlain.

As soon as this dignitary was informed that the castle skiff had arrived with a gallant, dressed like a lord's son at the least, who desired presently to speak with him, he adjusted his ruff and his black coat, turned round his girdle till the garnished hilt of his long rapier became visible, and walked with due solemnity towards the beach. Solemn indeed he was entitled to be, even on less important occasions, for he had been bred to the venerable study

of medicine, as those acquainted with the science very soon discovered from the aphorisms which ornamented his discourse. His success had not been equal to his pretensions; but as he was a native of the neighbouring Kingdom of Fife, and bore distant relation to, or dependence upon, the ancient family of Lundin of that ilk, who were bound in close friendship with the house of Lochleven, he had, through their interest, got planted comfortably enough in his present station upon the banks of that beautiful lake. The profits of his chamberlainry being moderate, especially in these unsettled times, he had eked it out a little with some practice in his original profession; and it was said that the inhabitants of the village and barony of Kinross were not more effectually thirled (which may be translated enthralled) to the baron's mill, than they were to the medical monopoly of the chamberlain. Woe betide the family of the rich boor, who presumed to depart this life without a passport from Doctor Luke Lundin! for if his representatives had aught to settle with the baron, as it seldom happened otherwise, they were sure to find a cold friend in the chamberlain. He was considerate enough, however, gratuitously to help the poor out of their ailments, and sometimes out of all their other distresses at the same time.

Formal, in a double proportion, both as a physician and as a person in office, and proud of the scraps of learning which rendered his language almost universally unintelligible, Doctor Luke Lundin approached the beach, and hailed the page as he advanced towards him.—"The freshness of the morning upon you, fair sir—You are sent, I warrant me, to see if we observe here the regimen which her good ladyship hath prescribed, for eschewing all superstitious ceremonies and idle anilities in these our revels. I am aware that her good ladyship would willingly have altogether abolished and abrogated them—But as I had the honour to quote to her from the works of the learned Hercules of Saxony, *omnis curatio est vel canonica vel coacta*, that is, fair sir (for silk and velvet have seldom their Latin *ad unguem*), every cure must be wrought either by art and induction of rule, or by constraint; and the wise physician chuseth the former. Which argument her ladyship being pleased to allow well of, I have made it my business so to blend instruction and caution with delight (*fiat mixtio*, as we say), that I can answer that the vulgar mind will be defæcated and purged of anile and popish fooleries by the medicament adhibited, so that the *primæ viæ* being cleansed, Master Henderson, or any other able pastor, may at will throw in tonics, and effectuate a perfect moral cure, *tuto, cito, jucundo*."

"I have no charge, Doctor Lundin," replied the page—

"Call me not doctor," said the chamberlain, "since I have laid aside my furred gown and bonnet, and retired me into this temporality of chamberlainship."

"O, sir," said the page, who was no stranger by report to the character of this original, "the cowl makes not the monk, neither the cord the friar—we have all heard of the cures wrought by Doctor Lundin."

"Toys, young sir—trifles," answered the leech, with grave disclamation of superior skill; "the hit-or-miss practice of a poor retired gentleman, in a short cloak and doublet—Marry, Heaven sent its blessing—and this I must say, better fashioned mediciners have brought fewer patients through—*longa robba, corta scienza*, saith the Italian—ha, fair sir, you have the language!"

Roland Græme did not think it necessary to expound to this learned Theban whether he understood him or no; but, leaving that matter uncertain, he told him he came in quest of certain packages which should have arrived at Kinross, and been placed under the chamberlain's charge, the evening before.

"Body o' me!" said Doctor Lundin, "I fear our common carrier, John Auchtermuchty, hath met with some mischance, that he came not up last night with his wains—bad land this to journey in, my master; and the fool will travel by night too, although (besides all maladies from your *tussis* to your *pestis*, which walk abroad in the night-air), he may well fall in with half a dozen swash-bucklers, who will ease him at once of his baggage and his earthly complaints. I must send forth to inquire after him, since he hath stuff of the honourable household on hand—and, by Our Lady, he hath stuff of mine too—certain drugs sent me from the city for composition of my alexipharmics—this gear must be looked to.—Hodge," said he, addressing one of his redoubted body-guard, "do thou and Toby Telford take the mickle brown aver and the black cut-tailed mare, and make out towards the Keiry-craigs, and see what tidings you can have of Auchtermuchty and his wains—I trust it is only the medicine of the pottle-pot (being the only *medicamentum* which the beast useth) which hath caused him to tarry on the road. Take the ribbons from your halberts, you knaves, and get on your jacks, plate-sleeves, and knapskulls, that your presence may work some terror if you meet with opposers." He then added, turning to Roland Græme, "I warrant me we shall have news of the wains in brief season. Meantime, it will please you to look upon the sports; but first to enter my poor lodging, and take your morning's cup. For what saith the school of Salerno:

Poculum mane haustum
 Restaurat naturam exhaustam.

"Your learning is too profound for me," replied the page; "and so would your draught be likewise, I fear."

"Not a whit, fair sir—a cordial cup of sack, impregnated with wormwood, is the best anti-pestilential draught; and, to speak truth, the pestilential miasmata are now very rife in the atmosphere. We live in a happy time, young man," continued he, in a tone of grave irony, "and have many blessings unknown to our fathers—Here are two sovereigns in the land, a regnant and a claimant—that is enough of one good thing—but if any one wants more, he may find a king in every peel-house in the country; so if we lack government, it is not for want of governors—Then have we a civil war to refresh us every year, and to prevent our population from starving for want of food—and for the same purpose, we have the plague proposing us a visit, the best of all recipes for

thinning a land, and converting younger brothers into elder ones. Well, each man in his vocation. You young fellows of the sword desire to wrestle, fence, or so forth, with some expert adversary; and for my part, I love to match myself for life or death against that same plague."

As they proceeded up the street of the little village towards the doctor's lodgings, his attention was successively occupied by the various personages whom he met, and pointed out to the notice of his companion.

"Do you see that fellow with the red bonnet, the blue jerkin, and the great rough baton in his hand?—I believe that clown hath the strength of a tower—he has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the liberal sciences by buying one pennyworth of medicaments.—But see you that man with the *facies Hippocratica*?" said he, pointing out a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance; "that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony—he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine; and, for his own single part, will go farther to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceuticals, than half the country besides.—How do you, my honest friend?" said he to the party in question, with a tone of condolence.

"Very weakly, sir, since I took the electuary," answered the patient; "it neighboured ill with the two spoonful of pease-porridge and the kirk-milk."

"Pease-porridge and kirk-milk! Have you been under medicine these ten years, and keep your diet so ill?—the next morning take the electuary by itself, and touch nothing for six hours." The poor object bowed, and shuffled off.

The next whom the doctor deigned to take notice of, was a lame fellow, by whom the honour was altogether undeserved, for, at sight of the mediciner, he began to shuffle away in the crowd as fast as his infirmities would permit.

"There is an ungrateful hound for you," said Doctor Lundin; "I cured him of the gout in his feet, and now he talks of the chargeableness of medicine, and makes the first use of his restored legs to fly from his physician. His *podagra* hath become a *chiragra*, as honest Martial hath it—the gout has got into his fingers, and he cannot draw his purse. Old saying, and true,

Præmia cum poscit medicus, Sathan est.

We are angels when we come to cure—devils when we ask payment—but I will administer a purgation to his purse, I warrant him. There is his brother too, a sordid chuff.—So ho there! Saunders Darlet! you have been ill I hear?"

"Just got the turn, as I was thinking to send to your honour, and I am brawly now again—it was nae great thing that ailed me."

"Hark you, sirrah," said the doctor, "I trust you remember you are owing to the laird four stones of barley-meal, and a bow of oats; and I would have you send no more such kain-fowls as you sent last season, that looked as wretchedly as patients just dismissed from a plague-hospital; and there is hard money owing besides."

"I was thinking, sir," said the man, *more Scotico*,

that is, returning no direct answer on the subject on which he was addressed, "my best way would be to come down to your honour, and take your advice yet, in case my trouble should come back."

"Do so then, knave," replied Lundin, "and remember what Ecclesiasticus saith—'Give place to the physician—let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.'"

His exhortation was interrupted by an apparition, which seemed to strike the doctor with as much horror and surprise as his own visage inflicted upon sundry of those persons whom he had addressed.

The figure which produced this effect on the Esculapius of the village, was that of a tall old woman, who wore a high-crowned hat and muffler. The first of these habiliments added apparently to her stature, and the other served to conceal the lower part of her face; and as the hat itself was slouched, little could be seen besides two brown cheek-bones, and the eyes of swarthy fire, that gleamed from under two shaggy grey eye-brows. She was dressed in a long dark-coloured robe, of unusual fashion, bordered at the skirts, and on the stomacher, with a sort of white trimming resembling the Jewish phylacteries, on which were wrought the characters of some unknown language. She held in her hand a walking-staff of black ebony.

"By the soul of Celsus," said Doctor Luke Lundin, "it is old Mother Nicneven herself—she hath come to beard me within mine own bounds, and in the very execution of mine office. Have at thy coat, old woman, as the song says—Hob Anster, let her presently be seized and committed to the tolbooth; and if there are any zealous brethren here who would give the hag her deserts, and duck her, as a witch, in the loch, I pray let them in no way be hindered."

But the myrmidons of Doctor Lundin showed in this case no alacrity to do his bidding. Hob Anster even ventured to remonstrate in the name of himself and his brethren. "To be sure he was to do his honour's bidding; and for a' that folks said about the skill and the witcheries of Mother Nicneven, he would put his trust in God, and his hand on her collar, without dreadour. But she was no common spaewife this Mother Nicneven, like Jean Jopp that lived in the Brierie-baulk. She had lords and lairds that would ruffle for her. There was Moncrieff off Tippermalloch, that was popish, and the Laird of Carslogie, a kenn'd queen's man, were in the fair, with wha kenn'd how many swords and bucklers at their back; and they would be sure to make a break-out if the officers meddled with the auld popish witch-wife, who was sae weel friended; mair especially as the laird's best men, such as were not in the castle, were in Edinburgh with him, and he doubted his honour the doctor would find ower few to make a good backing, if blades were bare."

The doctor listened unwillingly to this prudential counsel, and was only comforted by the faithful promise of his satellite, that "the old woman should," as he expressed it, "be ta'en canny the next time she trespassed on the bounds."

"And in that event," said the doctor to his companion, "fire and fagot shall be the best of her welcome."

VOL. III.

This he spoke in hearing of the dame herself, who even then, and in passing the doctor, shot towards him from under her grey eye-brows a look of the most insulting and contemptuous superiority.

"This way," continued the physician, "this way," marshaling his guest into his lodging,—"take care you stumble not over a retort, for it is hazardous for the ignorant to walk in the ways of art."

The page found all reason for the caution; for, besides stuffed birds, and lizards, and snakes bottled up, and bundles of simples made up, and other parcels spread out to dry, and all the confusion, not to mention the confused and sickening smells, incidental to a druggist's stock in trade, he had also to avoid heaps of charcoal, crucibles, bolt-heads, stoves, and the other furniture of a chemical laboratory.

Amongst his other philosophical qualities, Doctor Lundin failed not to be a confused sloven, and his dame housekeeper, whose life, as she said, was spent in "redding him up," had trotted off to the mart of gaiety with other and younger folks. Much clattering and jangling therefore there was among jars and bottles and vials, ere the doctor produced the salutiferous potion which he recommended so strongly, and a search equally long and noisy followed, among broken cans and cracked pipkins, ere he could bring forth a cup out of which to drink it. Both matters being at length achieved, the doctor set the example to his guest, by quaffing off a cup of the cordial, and smacking his lips, with approbation as it descended his gullet. Roland, in turn, submitted to swallow the potion which his host so earnestly recommended, but which he found so insufferably bitter, that he became eager to escape from the laboratory in search of a draught of fair water to expel the taste. In spite of his efforts he was nevertheless detained by the garrulity of his host, till he gave him some account of Mother Nicneven.

"I care not to speak of her," said the doctor, "in the open air, and among the throng of people; not for fright, like yon cowardly dog Anster, but because I would give no occasion for a fray, having no leisure to look to stabs, slashes, and broken bones. Men call the old hag a prophetess—I do scarce believe she could foretel when a brood of chickens will chip the shell—Men say she reads the heavens—my black bitch knows as much of them when she sits baying the moon—Men pretend the old wretch is a sorceress, a witch, and what not—*Inter nos*, I will never contradict a rumour which may bring her to the stake, which she so richly deserves; but neither will I believe that the tales of witches which they din into our ears are aught but knavery, cozenage, and old women's fables."

"In the name of Heaven, what is she then," said the page, "that you make such a stir about her?"

"She is one of those cursed old women," replied the physician, "who take currently and impudently upon themselves to act as advisers and curers of the sick, on the strength of some trash of herbs, some rhyme of spells, some julep or diet, drink or cordial."

"Nay, go no farther," said the page; "if they brew cordials, evil be their lot and all their partakers!"

"You say well, young man," said Doctor Lundin; "for mine own part, I know no such pests to the commonwealth as these old incarnate devils, who haunt the chambers of the brain-sick patients that are mad enough to suffer them to interfere with, disturb, and let, the regular progress of a learned and artificial cure, with their syrups, and their juleps, and diascordum, and mithridate, and my Lady What-shall-call'um's powder, and worthy Dame Trashem's pill; and thus make widows and orphans, and cheat the regular and well-studied physician, in order to get the name of wise women and sleeky neighbours, and so forth. But no more on't—Mother Nicneven and I will meet one day, and she shall know there is danger in dealing with the doctor."

"It is a true word, and many have found it," said the page; "but, under your favour, I would fain walk abroad for a little, and see these sports."

"It is well moved," said the doctor; "and I too should be showing myself abroad.—Moreover, the play waits us, young man—to-day, *totus mundus agit histrionem*."—And they sallied forth accordingly into the mirthful scene.

CHAPTER XXVII.

See on yon verdant lawn, the gathering crowd
Thickens amain; the buxom nymphs advance,
Usher'd by jolly clowns; distinctions cease,
Lost in the common joy, and the bold slave
Leans on his wealthy master unreprieved.

SOMERVILLE: *Rural Games.*

THE reappearance of the dignified chamberlain on the street of the village, was eagerly hailed by the revelers, as a pledge that the play, or dramatic representation, which had been postponed owing to his absence, was now full surely to commence. Any thing like an approach to this most interesting of all amusements, was of recent origin in Scotland, and engaged public attention in proportion. All other sports were discontinued. The dance around the may-pole was arrested—the ring broken up and dispersed, while the dancers, each leading his partner by the hand, tripped off to the sylvan theatre. A truce was in like manner achieved betwixt a huge brown bear and certain mastiffs, who were tugging and pulling at his shaggy coat, under the mediation of the bear-ward and half a dozen butchers and yeomen, who, by dint of *staving and tailing*, as it was technically termed, separated the unfortunate animals, whose fury had for an hour past been their chief amusement. The itinerant minstrel found himself deserted by the audience he had collected, even in the most interesting passage of the romance which he recited, and just as he was sending about his boy, with bonnet in hand, to collect their oblations. He indignantly stopped short in the midst of Rosewal and Lilian, and replacing his three-stringed fiddle or rebec in its leathern case, followed the crowd, with no good will, to the exhibition which had superseded his own. The juggler ceased his exertions of emitting flame and smoke, and was content to respire in the manner of ordinary mortals, rather than to play gratuitously the part of a fiery dragon. In short, all

other sports were suspended, so eagerly did the revelers throng towards the place of representation.

They would err greatly, who should regulate their ideas of this dramatic exhibition upon those derived from a modern theatre; for the rude shows of Thespis were far less different from those exhibited by Euripides on the stage of Athens, with all its magnificent decorations and pomp of dresses and of scenery. In the present case, there were no scenes, no stage, no machinery, no pit, box, and gallery, no box-lobby; and, what might in poor Scotland be some consolation for other negations, there was no taking of money at the door. As in the devices of the magnanimous Bottom, the actors had a green-sward plot for a stage, and a hawthorn-bush for a green-room and tying-house: the spectators being accommodated with seats on the artificial bank which had been raised around three-fourths of the play-ground, the remainder being left open for the entrance and exit of the performers. Here sate the uncritical audience, the chamberlain in the centre, as the person highest in office; all alive to enjoyment and admiration, and all, therefore, dead to criticism.

The characters which appeared and disappeared before the amused and interested audience, were those which fill the earlier stage in all nations—old men, cheated by their wives and daughters, pillaged by their sons, and imposed on by their domestics, a braggadocio captain, a knavish pardoner, a quæstionary, a country bumpkin, and a wanton city-dame. Amid all these, and more acceptable than almost the whole put together, was the all-licensed fool, the Gracioso of the Spanish drama, who, with his cap fashioned into the resemblance of a coxcomb, and his bauble, a truncheon terminated by a carved figure, wearing a fool's-cap, in his hand, went, came, and returned, mingling in every scene of the piece, and interrupting the business, without having any share himself in the action, and ever and anon transferring his jibes from the actors on the stage to the audience who sate around, prompt to applaud the whole.

The wit of the piece, which was not of the most polished kind, was chiefly directed against the superstitious practices of the catholic religion; and the stage artillery had on this occasion been leveled by no less a person than Doctor Lundin, who had not only commanded the manager of the entertainment to select one of the numerous satires which had been written against the papists (several of which were cast in a dramatic form), but had even, like the Prince of Denmark, caused them to insert, or, according to his own phrase, to infuse, here and there a few pleasantries of his own penning, on the same inexhaustible subject, hoping thereby to mollify the rigour of the Lady of Lochleven towards pastimes of this description. He failed not to jog Roland's elbow, who was sitting in state behind him, and recommend to his particular attention those favourite passages. As for the page, to whom the very idea of such an exhibition, simple as it was, was entirely new, he beheld it with the undiminished and ecstatic delight with which men of all ranks look for the first time on dramatic representation, and laughed, shouted, and clapped his hands

as the performance proceeded. An incident at length took place which effectually broke off his interest in the business of the scene.

One of the principal personages in the comic part of the drama was, as we have already said, a quæstionary or pardoner, one of those itinerants who hawked about from place to place relics, real or pretended, with which he excited the devotion at once, and the charity of the populace, and generally deceived both the one and the other. The hypocrisy, impudence, and profligacy of these clerical wanderers, had made them the subject of satire from the time of Chaucer down to that of Heywood. Their present representative failed not to follow the same line of humour, exhibiting pigs' bones for relics, and boasting the virtues of small tin crosses, which had been shaken in the holy porringer at Loretto, and of cockle-shells, which had been brought from the shrine of Saint James of Compostella, all which he disposed of to the devout catholics at nearly as high a price as antiquaries are now willing to pay for baubles of similar intrinsic value. At length the pardoner pulled from his scrip a small vial of clear water, of which he vaunted the quality in the following verses:—

Listneth, gode people, everiche one,
For in the lond of Babylone,
Far eastward I wot it lyeth,
And is the first lond the sonne espieth,
Ther, as he cometh fro out the sé;
In this ilk lond, as thinketh me,
Right as holie legendes tell,
Snottreth from a rocke a well,
And falleth into ane bath of ston,
Wher chast Susanne in times long gon,
Was wont to wash her bodie and lim—
Mickle vertue hath that streme
As ye shall se er that ye pas,
Ensample by this little glas—
Through nightes cold and dayes hote,
Hiderward I have it brought;
Hath a wife made slip or slide,
Or a maiden stepp'd aside;
Putteth this water under her nese,
Wold she nold she, she shall snese.

The jest, as the reader skilful in the antique language of the drama must at once perceive, turned on the same pivot as in the old minstrel tales of the Drinking-horn of King Arthur, and the Mantle made Amiss. But the audience were neither learned nor critical enough to challenge its want of originality. The potent relic was, after such grimace and buffoonery as befitted the subject, presented successively to each of the female personages of the drama, not one of whom sustained the supposed test of discretion; but, to the infinite delight of the audience, sneezed much louder and longer than perhaps they themselves had counted on. The jest seemed at last worn threadbare, and the pardoner was passing on to some new pleasantry, when the jester or clown of the drama, possessing himself secretly of the vial which contained the wondrous liquor, applied it suddenly to the nose of a young woman, who, with her black silk muffler or screen drawn over her face, was sitting in the foremost rank of the spectators, intent apparently upon the business of the stage.

The contents of the vial, well calculated to sustain the credit of the pardoner's legend, set the damsel a sneezing violently: an admission of frailty which was received with shouts of rapture by the audience. These were soon, however, renewed at the expense of the jester himself, when the insulted maiden extricated, ere the paroxysm was well over, one hand from the folds of her mantle, and bestowed on the wag a buffet, which made him reel fully his own length from the pardoner, and then acknowledge the favour by instant prostration.

No one pities a jester overcome in his vocation, and the clown met with little sympathy, when, rising from the ground, and whimpering forth his complaints of harsh treatment, he invoked the assistance and sympathy of the audience. But the chamberlain feeling his own dignity insulted, ordered two of his halberdiers to bring the culprit before him. When these official persons first approached the virago, she threw herself into an attitude of firm defiance, as if determined to resist their authority; and from the sample of strength and spirit which she had already displayed, they showed no alacrity at executing their commission. But on half a minute's reflection, the damsel changed totally her attitude and manner, folded her cloak around her arms in modest and maiden-like fashion, and walked of her own accord to the presence of the great man, followed and guarded by the two manful satellites. As she moved across the vacant space, and more especially as she stood at the footstool of the doctor's judgment-seat, the maiden discovered that lightness and elasticity of step, and natural grace of manner which connoisseurs in female beauty know to be seldom divided from it. Moreover, her neat russet-coloured jacket, and short petticoat of the same colour, displayed a handsome form and a pretty leg. Her features were concealed by the screen; but the doctor, whose gravity did not prevent his pretensions to be a connoisseur of the school we have hinted at, saw enough to judge favourably of the piece by the sample.

He began, however, with considerable austerity of manner—"And, how now, saucy quean," said the medical man of office, "what have you to say why I should not order you to be ducked in the loch, for lifting your hand to the man in my presence?"

"Marry," replied the culprit, "because I judge that your honour will not think the cold bath necessary for my complaints."

"A pestilent jade," said the doctor, whispering to Roland Græme; "and I'll warrant her a good one—her voice is as sweet as syrup.—But, my pretty maiden," said he, "you show us wonderfully little of that countenance of yours—be pleased to throw aside your muffler."

"I trust your honour will excuse me till we are more private," answered the maiden; "for I have acquaintance, and I should like ill to be known in the country as the poor girl whom that scurvy knave put his jest upon."

"Fear nothing for thy good name, my sweet little modicum of candied manna," replied the doctor; "for I protest to you, as I am Chamberlain of Lochleven, Kinross, and so forth, that the chaste Susanna herself could not have snuffed that elixir without sternutation, being in truth a curious distillation of

rectified *acetum*, or vinegar of the sun, prepared by mine own hands—Wherefore, as thou sayest thou wilt come to me in private and express thy contrition for the offence whereof thou hast been guilty, I command that all for the present go forward as if no such interruption of the prescribed course had taken place.”

The damsel curtsied and tripped back to her place. The play proceeded, but it no longer attracted the attention of Roland Græme.

The voice, the figure, and what the veil permitted to be seen of the neck and tresses of the village damsel, bore so strong a resemblance to those of Catherine Seyton, that he felt like one bewildered in the mazes of a changeful and stupifying dream. The memorable scene of the hostelry rushed on his recollection, with all its doubtful and marvelous circumstances. Were the tales of enchantment which he had read in romances realized in this extraordinary girl? Could she transport herself from the walled and guarded Castle of Lochleven, moated with its broad lake (towards which he cast back a look as if to ascertain if it was still in existence), and watched with such scrupulous care as the safety of a nation demanded—Could she surmount all these obstacles, and make such careless and dangerous use of her liberty, as to engage herself publicly in a quarrel in a village fair? Roland was unable to determine whether the exertions which it must have cost her to gain her freedom, or the use to which she had put it, rendered her the most unaccountable creature.

Lost in these meditations, he kept his gaze fixed on the subject of them; and in every casual motion, discovered, or thought he discovered, something which reminded him still more strongly of Catherine Seyton. It occurred to him more than once, indeed, that he might be deceiving himself by exaggerating some casual likeness into absolute identity. But then the meeting at the hostelry of Saint Michael's returned to his mind, and it seemed in the highest degree improbable, that, under such various circumstances, mere imagination should twice have found opportunity to play him the self-same trick. This time, however, he determined to have his doubts resolved; and for this purpose he sate during the rest of the play like a greyhound in the slip, ready to spring upon the hare the instant that she was started. The damsel, whom he watched attentively lest she should escape in the crowd when the spectacle was closed, sate as if perfectly unconscious that she was observed. But the worthy doctor marked the direction of his eyes, and magnanimously suppressed his own inclination to become the Theseus to this Hippolita, in deference to the rights of hospitality which enjoined him to forbear interference with the pleasurable pursuits of his young friend. He passed one or two formal gibes upon the fixed attention which the page paid to the unknown, and upon his own jealousy; adding, however, that if both were to be presented to the patient at once, he had little doubt she would think the younger man the sounder prescription. “I fear me,” he added, “we shall have no news of the knave Auchtermuchty for some time, since the vermin whom I sent after him seem to have proved corbie-messengers. So you have

an hour or two on your hands, Master Page; and as the minstrels are beginning to strike up, now that the play is ended, why, an you incline for a dance, yonder is the green, and there sits your partner—I trust you will hold me perfect in my diagnostics, since I see with half an eye what disease you are sick of, and have administered a pleasing remedy.

Discernit sapiens res (as Chambers hath it) quas confundit asellus”

The page hardly heard the end of the learned adage, or the charge which the chamberlain gave him to be within reach, in case of the wains arriving suddenly, and sooner than expected—so eager he was at once to shake himself free of his learned associate, and to satisfy his curiosity regarding the unknown damsel. Yet, in the haste with which he made towards her, he found time to reflect, that in order to secure an opportunity of conversing with her in private, he must not alarm her at first accosting her. He therefore composed his manner and gait, and advancing with becoming self-confidence before three or four country-fellows who were intent on the same design, but knew not so well how to put their request into shape, he acquainted her that he, as the deputy of the venerable chamberlain, requested the honour of her hand as a partner.

“The venerable chamberlain,” said the damsel, frankly, reaching the page her hand, “does very well to exercise this part of his privilege by deputy; and I suppose the laws of the revels leave me no choice but to accept of his faithful delegate.”

“Providing, fair damsel,” said the page, “his choice of a delegate is not altogether distasteful to you.”

“Of that, fair sir,” replied the maiden, “I will tell you more when we have danced the first measure.”

We have mentioned that Catherine Seyton had admirable skill in gestic lore, and that she was sometimes called on to dance for the amusement of her royal mistress. Roland Græme had often been a spectator of her skill, and sometimes, at the queen's command, Catherine's partner on such occasions. He was, therefore, perfectly acquainted with Catherine's mode of dancing; and observed that his present partner, in grace, in agility, in quickness of ear, and precision of execution, exactly resembled her, save that the Scottish jigg, which he now danced with her, required a more violent and rapid motion, and more rustic agility, than the stately pavens, lavoltas, and courantoes, which he had seen her execute in the chamber of Queen Mary. The active duties of the dance left him little time for reflection, and none for conversation; but when their *pas de deux* was finished, amidst the acclamation of the villagers, who had seldom witnessed such an exhibition, he took an opportunity, when they yielded up the green to another couple, to use the privilege of a partner, and enter into conversation with the mysterious maiden whom he still held by the hand. “Fair partner, may I not crave the name of her who has graced me thus far?”

“You may,” said the maiden; “but it is a question whether I shall answer you.”

"And why?" asked Roland.

"Because nobody gives any thing for nothing—and you can tell me nothing in return which I care to hear."

"Could I not tell you my name and lineage, in exchange for yours?" returned Roland.

"No!" answered the maiden, "for you know little of either."

"How?" said the page, somewhat angrily.

"Wrath you not for the matter," said the damsel; "I will show you in an instant that I know more of you than you do of yourself."

"Indeed!" answered Græme; "for whom then do you take me?"

"For the wild falcon," answered she, "whom a dog brought in his mouth to a certain castle, when he was but an unfledged eyass—for the hawk whom men dare not let fly, lest he should check at game, and pounce on carrion—whom folks must keep hooded till he has the proper light of his eyes, and can discover good from evil."

"Well—be it so," replied Roland Græme; "I guess at a part of your parable, fair mistress mine—and perhaps I know as much of you as you do of me, and can well dispense with the information which you are so niggard in giving."

"Prove that," said the maiden, "and I will give you credit for more penetration than I judged you to be gifted withal."

"It shall be proved instantly," said Roland Græme. "The first letter of your name is S, and the last N."

"Admirable!" said his partner; "guess on."

"It pleases you to-day," continued Roland, "to wear the snood and kirtle, and perhaps you may be seen to-morrow in hat and feather, hose and doublet."

"In the clout! in the clout! you have hit the very white!" said the damsel, suppressing a great inclination to laugh.

"You can switch men's eyes out of their heads as well as the heart out of their bosoms."

These last words were uttered in a low and tender tone, which to Roland's great mortification, and somewhat to his displeasure, was so far from allaying, that it greatly increased his partner's disposition to laughter. She could scarce compose herself while she replied, "If you had thought my hand so formidable," extricating it from his grasp, "you would not have grasped it so hard; but I perceive you know me so fully, that there is no occasion to show you my face."

"Fair Catherine," said the page, "he were unworthy ever to have seen you, far less to have dwelt so long in the same service, and under the same roof with you, who could mistake your air, your gesture, your step in walking or in dancing, the turn of your neck, the symmetry of your form—none could be so dull as not to recognize you by so many proofs; but for me, I could swear even to that tress of hair that escapes from under your muffler."

"And to the face of course which that muffler covers," said the maiden, removing her veil, and in an instant endeavouring to replace it. She showed the features of Catherine; but an unusual degree of petulant impatience inflamed them, when, from some awkwardness in her management of the muffler, she

was unable again to adjust it with that dexterity which was a principal accomplishment of the coquettes of the time.

"The fiend rive the rag to tatters," said the damsel, as the veil fluttered about her shoulders, with an accent so earnest and decided that it made the page start. He looked again at the damsel's face, but the information which his eyes received, was to the same purport as before. He assisted her to adjust her muffler, and both were for an instant silent. The damsel spoke first, for Roland Græme was overwhelmed with surprise at the contraries which Catherine Seyton seemed to include in her person and character.

"You are surprised," said the damsel to him, "at what you see and hear—But the times which make females men, are least of all fitted for men to become women; yet you yourself are in danger of such a change."

"I in danger of becoming effeminate!" said the page.

"Yes you, for all the boldness of your reply," said the damsel. "When you should hold fast your religion, because it is assailed on all sides by rebels, traitors, and heretics, you let it glide out of your breast like water grasped in the hand. If you are driven from the faith of your fathers from fear of a traitor, is not that womanish?—If you are cajoled by the cunning arguments of a trumpeter of heresy, or the praises of a puritanic old woman, is not that womanish?—If you are bribed by the hope of spoil and preferment, is not that womanish?—And when you wonder at my venting a threat or an execration, should you not wonder at yourself, who, pretending to a gentle name, and aspiring to knighthood, can be at the same time cowardly, silly, and self-interested?"

"I would that a man would bring such a charge," said the page; "he should see, ere his life was a minute older, whether he had cause to term me coward or no."

"Beware of such big words," answered the maiden; "you said but anon that I sometimes wear hose and doublet."

"But remain still Catherine Seyton, wear what you list," said the page, endeavouring again to possess himself of her hand.

"You, indeed, are pleased to call me so," replied the maiden, evading his intention, "but I have many other names besides."

"And will you not reply to that," said the page, "by which you are distinguished beyond every other maiden in Scotland?"

The damsel, unallured by his praises, still kept aloof, and sung with gaiety a verse from an old ballad:

"O some do call me Jack, sweet love,
And some do call me Gill;
But when I ride to Holyrood,
My name is Wilful Will."

"Wilful Will!" exclaimed the page, impatiently; "say rather Will o' the Wisp—Jack with the lantern, for never was such a deceitful or wandering meteor."

"If I be such," replied the maiden, "I ask no

fools to follow me—If they do so, it is at their own pleasure, and must be on their own proper peril.”

“Nay, but, dearest Catherine,” said Roland Græme, “be for one instant serious.”

“If you will call me your dearest Catherine, when I have given you so many names to chuse upon,” replied the damsel, “I would ask you how, supposing me for two or three hours of my life escaped from yonder tower, you have the cruelty to ask me to be serious during the only merry moments I have seen perhaps for months?”

“Ay, but, fair Catherine, there are moments of deep and true feeling, which are worth ten thousand years of the liveliest mirth; and such was that of yesterday, when you so nearly——”

“So nearly what?” demanded the damsel, hastily.

“When you approached your lips so near to the sign you had traced on my forehead.”

“Mother of Heaven!” said she, in a yet fiercer tone, and with a more masculine manner than she had yet exhibited; “Catherine Seyton approach her lips to a man’s brow, and thou that man!—vassal, thou liest!”

The page stood astonished; but, conceiving he had alarmed the damsel’s delicacy by alluding to the enthusiasm of a moment, and the manner in which she had expressed it, he endeavoured to falter forth an apology. His excuses, though he was unable to give them any regular shape, were accepted by his companion, who had indeed suppressed her indignation after its first explosion—“Speak no more on’t,” she said; “and now let us part, our conversation may attract more notice than is convenient for either of us.”

“Nay, but allow me at least to follow you to some sequestered place.”

“You dare not,” replied the maiden.

“How,” said the youth, “dare not? where is it you dare go where I dare not follow?”

“You fear a Will o’ the Wisp,” said the damsel; “how would you face a fiery dragon, with an enchantress mounted on its back?”

“Like Sir Eger, Sir Grime, or Sir Greysteil,” said the page; “but be there such toys to be seen here?”

“I go to Mother Nicneven’s,” answered the maid; “and she is witch enough to rein the horned devil with a red silk thread for a bridle, and a rowan-tree switch for a whip.”

“I will follow you,” said the page.

“Let it be at some distance,” said the maiden.

And wrapping her mantle around her with more success than on her former attempt, she mingled with the throng, and walked towards the village, heedfully followed by Roland Græme at some distance, and under every precaution which he could use to prevent his purpose from being observed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Yes, it is he whose eyes look’d on thy childhood,
And watch’d with trembling hope thy dawn of youth,
That now, with these same eye-balls dimm’d with age,
And dimmer yet with tears, sees thy dishonour.

Old Play.

AT the entrance of the principal, or indeed so to speak, the only street in Kinross, the damsel, whose

steps were pursued by Roland Græme, cast a glance behind her, as if to be certain he had not lost trace of her, and then plunged down a very narrow lane which ran betwixt two rows of poor and ruinous cottages. She paused for a second at the door of one of those miserable tenements, again cast her eye up the lane towards Roland, then lifted the latch, opened the door, and disappeared from his view.

With whatever haste the page followed her example, the difficulty which he found in discovering the trick of the latch, which did not work quite in the usual manner, and in pushing open the door, which did not yield to his first effort, delayed for a minute or two his entrance into the cottage. A dark and smoky passage passed as usual betwixt the exterior wall of the house, and the hallan or clay-wall which served as a partition betwixt it and the interior. At the end of this passage and through the partition, was a door leading into the ben, or inner chamber of the cottage; and when Roland Græme’s hand was upon the latch of this door, a female voice pronounced, “*Benedictus qui veniat in nomine Domini, damnandus qui in nomine inimici.*” On entering the apartment, he perceived the figure which the chamberlain had pointed out to him as Mother Nicneven, seated beside the lowly hearth. But there was no other person in the room. Roland Græme gazed around in surprise at the disappearance of Catherine Seyton, without paying much regard to the supposed sorceress, until she attracted and riveted his regard by the tone in which she asked him—“What seekest thou here?”

“I seek,” said the page, with much embarrassment; “I seek——”

But his answer was cut short, when the old woman, drawing her huge grey eye-brows sternly together, with a frown which knitted her brow into a thousand wrinkles, arose, and stretching herself up to her full natural size, tore the kerchief from her head, and seizing Roland by the arm, made two strides across the floor of the apartment to a small window through which the light fell full on her face, and showed the astonished youth the countenance of Magdalen Græme.—“Yes, Roland,” she said, “thine eyes deceive thee not, they show thee truly the features of her whom thou hast thyself deceived, whose wine thou hast turned into gall, her bread of joyfulness into bitter poison, her hope into the blackest despair—it is she who now demands of thee what seekest thou here?—She whose heaviest sin towards Heaven hath been that she loved thee even better than the weal of the whole church, and could not without reluctance surrender thee even in the cause of God—she now asks you what seekest thou here?”

While she spoke, she kept her broad black eye riveted on the youth’s face, with the expression with which the eagle regards his prey ere he tears it to pieces. Roland felt himself at the moment incapable either of reply or evasion. This extraordinary enthusiast had preserved over him in some measure the ascendancy which she had acquired during his childhood; and, besides, he knew the violence of her passions and her impatience of contradiction; and was sensible that almost any reply which he could make, was like to throw her into an ecstasy

of rage. He was therefore silent, and Magdalen Græme proceeded with increasing enthusiasm in her apostrophe—"Once more, what seek'st thou, false boy?—seek'st thou the honour thou hast renounced, the faith thou hast abandoned, the hopes thou hast destroyed?—Or didst thou seek me, the sole protectress of thy youth, the only parent whom thou hast known, that thou mayest trample on my grey hairs, even as thou hast already trampled on the best wishes of my heart?"

"Pardon me, mother," said Roland Græme; "but, in truth and reason, I deserve not your blame—I have been treated amongst you—even by yourself, my reverend parent, as well as by others, as one who lacked the common attributes of free-will and human reason, or was at least deemed unfit to exercise them. A land of enchantment have I been led into, and spells have been cast around me—every one has met me in disguise—every one has spoke to me in parables—I have been like one who walks in a weary and bewildering dream, and now you blame me that I have not the sense, and judgment, and steadiness of a waking, and a disenchanted, and a reasonable man, who knows what he is doing, and wherefore he does it. If one must walk with masks and spectres, who waft themselves from place to place as it were in vision rather than reality, it might shake the soundest faith and turn the wisest head. I sought, since I must needs avow my folly, the same Catherine Seyton with whom you made me first acquainted, and whom I most strangely find in this village of Kinross, gayest among the revelers, when I had but just left her in the well-guarded Castle of Lochleven, the sad attendant of an imprisoned queen—I sought her, and in her place I find you, my mother, more strangely disguised than even she is."

"And what hadst thou to do with Catherine Seyton?" said the matron, sternly; "is this a time or a world to follow maidens, or to dance around a may-pole? When the trumpet summons every true-hearted Scotchman around the standard of the true sovereign, shalt thou be found loitering in a lady's bower?"

"No, by Heaven, nor imprisoned in the rugged walls of an island castle!" answered Roland Græme; "I would the blast were to sound even now, for I fear that nothing less loud will dispel the chimerical visions by which I am surrounded."

"Doubt not that it will be winded," said the matron, "and that so fearfully loud, that Scotland will never hear the like until the last and loudest blast of all shall announce to mountain and to valley that time is no more. Meanwhile, be thou but brave and constant—Serve God and honour thy sovereign—Abide by thy religion.—I cannot—I will not—I dare not ask thee the truth of the terrible surmises I have heard touching thy falling away—perfect not that accursed sacrifice—and yet, even at this late hour, thou mayst be what I have hoped for the son of my dearest hope—what say I? the son of *my* hope—thou shalt be the hope of Scotland, her boast and her honour!—Even thy wildest and most foolish wishes may perchance be fulfilled—I shame to mingle meaner motives with the noble guerdon I hold out to thee—It shames me, being such as I am, to

mention the idle passions of youth save with contempt and the purpose of censure. But we must bribe children to wholesome medicine by the offer of cates, and youth to honourable achievement with the promise of pleasure. Mark me, therefore, Roland. The love of Catherine Seyton will follow him only who shall achieve the freedom of her mistress; and believe, it may be one day in thine own power to be that happy lover. Cast, therefore, away doubt and fear, and prepare to do what religion calls for, what thy country demands of thee, what thy duty as a subject and as a servant alike require at your hand; and be assured even the idlest wishes of thy heart will be most readily attained by following the call of thy duty."

As she ceased speaking, a double knock was heard against the inner door. The matron hastily adjusting her muffler, and resuming her chair by the hearth, demanded who was there.

"*Salve in nomine sancto,*" was answered from without.

"*Salvete et vos,*" answered Magdalen Græme.

And a man entered in the ordinary dress of a nobleman's retainer, wearing at his girdle a sword and buckler—"I sought you," said he, "my mother, and him whom I see with you." Then addressing himself to Roland Græme, he said to him, "Hast thou not a packet from George Douglas?"

"I have," said the page, suddenly recollecting that which had been committed to his charge in the morning; "but I may not deliver it to any one without some token that they have right to ask it."

"You say well," replied the serving-man, and whispered into his ear, "The packet which I ask is the report to his father—will this token suffice?"

"It will," replied the page, and taking the packet from his bosom, gave it to the man.

"I will return presently," said the serving-man, and left the cottage.

Roland had now sufficiently recovered his surprise to accost his relative in turn, and request to know the reason why he found her in so precarious a disguise, and a place so dangerous—"You cannot be ignorant," he said, "of the hatred that the Lady of Lochleven bears to those of your—that is of our religion—your present disguise lays you open to suspicions of a different kind, but inferring no less hazard; and whether as a catholic or as a sorceress, or as a friend to the unfortunate queen, you are in equal danger, if apprehended within the bounds of the Douglas; and in the chamberlain, who administers their authority, you have, for his own reasons, an enemy, and a bitter one."

"I know it," said the matron, her eyes kindling with triumph; "I know that, vain of his schoolcraft and carnal wisdom, Luke Lundin views with jealousy and hatred the blessings which the saints have conferred on my prayers, and on the holy relics, before the touch, nay, before the bare presence of which, disease and death have so often been known to retreat—I know he would rend and tear me; but there is a chain and a muzzle on the bandog that shall restrain his fury, and the master's servant shall not be offended by him until the master's work is wrought. When that hour comes, let the shadows of the evening descend on me in

thunder and in tempest; the time shall be welcome that relieves my eyes from seeing guilt, and my ears from listening to blasphemy. Do thou but be constant—play thy part as I have played and will play mine, and my release shall be like that of a blessed martyr which angels hail with psalm and song, while earth pursues him with hiss and with execration.”

As she concluded, the serving-man again entered the cottage, and said, “All is well! the time holds for to-morrow night.”

“What time? what holds?” exclaimed Roland Græme; “I trust I have given the Douglas’s packet to no wrong—”

“Content yourself, young man,” answered the serving-man; “thou hast my word and token.”

“I know not if the token be right,” said the page; “and I care not much for the word of a stranger.”

“What,” said the matron, “although thou mayst have given a packet delivered to thy charge by one of the queen’s rebels into the hand of a loyal subject—there were no great mistake in that, thou hot-brained boy.”

“By St Andrew, there were foul mistake though,” answered the page; “it is the very spirit of my duty, in this first stage of chivalry, to be faithful to my trust; and had the devil given me a message to discharge, I would not (so I had plighted my faith to the contrary) betray his counsel to an angel of light.”

“Now, by the love I once bore thee,” said the matron, “I could slay thee with mine own hand, when I hear thee talk of a dearer faith being due to rebels and heretics, than thou owest to thy church and thy prince.”

“Be patient, my good sister,” said the serving-man, “I will give him such reasons as shall counterbalance the scruples which beset him—the spirit is honourable, though now it may be mistimed and misplaced—Follow me, young man.”

“Ere I go to call this stranger to a reckoning,” said the page to the matron, “is there nothing I can do for your comfort and safety?”

“Nothing,” she replied, “nothing, save what will lead more to thy own honour—the saints who have protected me thus far, will lend me succour as I need it. Tread the path of glory that is before thee, and only think of me as the creature on earth who will be most delighted to hear of thy fame.—Follow the stranger—he hath tidings for you that you little expect.”

The stranger remained on the threshold as if waiting for Roland, and whenever he saw him put himself in motion, he moved on before him at a quick pace. Diving still deeper down the lane, Roland perceived that it was now bordered by buildings upon the one side only, and that the other was fenced by a high old wall, over which some trees extended their branches. Descending a good way farther, they came to a small door in the wall. Roland’s guide paused, looked around for an instant to see if any one were within sight, then taking a key from his pocket, opened the door and entered, making a sign to Roland Græme to follow him. The guided did so, and the stranger locked the door carefully on the inside. During this operation the page had a moment

to look around, and perceived that he was in a small orchard very trimly kept.

The stranger led him through an alley or two, shaded by trees loaded with summer-fruit, into a pleached arbour, where, taking the turf seat which was on the one side, he motioned to Roland to occupy that which was opposite to him, and after a momentary silence, opened the conversation as follows: “You have asked a better warrant than the word of a mere stranger, to satisfy you that I have the authority of George of Douglas for possessing myself of the packet entrusted to your charge?”

“It is precisely the point on which I demand reckoning of you,” said Roland. “I fear I have acted hastily; if so, I must redeem my error as I best may.”

“You hold me then as a perfect stranger?” said the man. “Look at my face more attentively, and see if the features do not resemble those of a man much known to you formerly.”

Roland gazed attentively, but the ideas recalled to his mind were so inconsistent with the mean and servile dress of the person before him, that he did not venture to express the opinion which he was irresistibly induced to form.

“Yes! my son,” said the stranger, observing his embarrassment, “you do indeed see before you the unfortunate Father Ambrose, who once accounted his ministry crowned in your preservation from the snares of heresy, but who is now condemned to lament thee as a cast-away!”

Roland Græme’s kindness of heart was at least equal to his vivacity of temper—he could not bear to see his ancient and honoured master and spiritual guide in a situation which inferred a change of fortune so melancholy, but throwing himself at his feet, grasped his knees and wept aloud.

“What mean these tears, my son?” said the abbot; “if they are shed for your own sins and follies, surely they are gracious showers, and may avail thee much—but weep not, if they fall on my account. You indeed see the Superior of the Community of Saint Mary’s, in the dress of a poor sworder, who gives his master the use of his blade and buckler, and, if needful, of his life, for a coarse livery coat, and four marks by the year. But such a garb suits the time, and, in the period of the church militant, as well becomes her prelates, as staff, mitre, and crosier, in the days of the church’s triumph.

“By what fate,” said the page,—“and yet why,” added he, checking himself, “need I ask? Catherine Seyton in some sort prepared me for this. But that the change should be so absolute—the destruction so complete!”—

“Yes, my son,” said the Abbot Ambrosius, “thine own eyes beheld, in my unworthy elevation to the abbot’s stall, the last especial act of holy solemnity which shall be seen in the Church of Saint Mary’s, until it shall please Heaven to turn back the captivity of the church. For the present, the shepherd is smitten—ay, well nigh to the earth—the flock are scattered, and the shrines of saints and martyrs, and pious benefactors to the church, are given to the owls of night and the satyrs of the desert.”

“And your brother the Knight of Avenel—could he do nothing for your protection?”

"He himself hath fallen under the suspicion of the ruling powers," said the abbot, "who are as unjust to their friends as they are cruel to their enemies. I could not grieve at it, did I hope it might estrange him from his course; but I know the soul of Halbert, and I rather fear it will drive him to prove his fidelity to their unhappy cause, by some deed which may be yet more destructive to the church, and more offensive to Heaven. Enough of this, and now to the business of our meeting—I trust you will hold it sufficient if I pass my word to you that the packet of which you were lately the bearer, was designed for my hands by George of Douglas?"

"Then," said the page, "is George of Douglas—"

"A true friend to his queen, Roland; and will soon, I trust, have his eyes opened to the errors of his (miscalled) church."

"But what is he to his father, and what to the Lady of Lochleven, who has been as a mother to him?" said the page, impatiently.

"The best friend to both, in time and through eternity," said the abbot, "if he shall prove the happy instrument for redeeming the evil they have wrought, and are still working."

"Still," said the page, "I like not that good service which begins in breach of trust."

"I blame not thy scruples, my son," said the abbot; "but the time which has wrenched asunder the allegiance of christians to the church, and of subjects to their king, has dissolved all the lesser bonds of society; and, in such days, mere human ties must no more restrain our progress, than the brambles and briars, which catch hold of his garments, should delay the path of a pilgrim who travels to pay his vows."

"But, my father," said the youth, and then stopped short in a hesitating manner.

"Speak on my son," said the abbot; "speak without fear."

"Let me not offend you then," said Roland, "when I say that it is even this which our adversaries charge against us; that, shaping the means according to the end, we are willing to commit great moral evil in order that we may work out eventual good."

"The heretics have played their usual arts on you, my son," said the abbot; "they would willingly deprive us of the power of acting wisely and secretly, though their possession of superior force forbids our contending with them on the terms of equality. They have reduced us to a state of exhausted weakness, and now would fain proscribe the means by which weakness, through all the range of nature, supplies the lack of strength, and defends itself against its potent enemies. As well might the hound say to the hare, Use not these wily turns to escape me, but contend with me in pitched battle, as the armed and powerful heretic demand of the down-trodden and oppressed catholic to lay aside the wisdom of the serpent, by which alone they may again hope to raise up the Jerusalem over which they weep, and which it is their duty to rebuild. But more of this hereafter. And now, my son, I command thee on thy faith to tell me truly and particu-

VOL. III.

larly what has chanced to thee since we parted, and what is the present state of thy conscience. Thy relation, our sister Magdalen, is a woman of excellent gifts, blessed with a zeal which neither doubt nor danger can quench; but yet it is not a zeal altogether according to knowledge; wherefore, my son, I would willingly be myself thy interrogator and thy counsellor, in these days of darkness and stratagem."

With the respect which he owed to his first instructor, Roland Græme went rapidly through the events which the reader is acquainted with; and while he disguised not from the prelate the impression which had been made on his mind by the arguments of the preacher Henderson, he accidentally, and almost involuntarily, gave his father confessor to understand the influence which Catherine Seyton had acquired over his mind.

"It is with joy I discover, my dearest son," replied the abbot, "that I have arrived in time to arrest thee on the verge of the precipice to which thou wert approaching. These doubts of which you complain, are the weeds which naturally grow up in a strong soil, and require the careful hand of the husbandman to eradicate them. Thou must study a little volume, which I will impart to thee in fitting time, in which, by Our Lady's grace, I have placed in somewhat a clearer light than heretofore, the points debated betwixt us and these heretics, who sow among the wheat the same tares which were formerly privily mingled with the good seed by the Albigenses and the Lollards. But it is not by reason alone that you must hope to conquer these insinuations of the enemy: it is sometimes by timely resistance, but oftener by timely flight. You must shut your ears against the arguments of the heresiarch, when circumstances permit you not to withdraw the foot from his company. Anchor your thoughts upon the service of Our Lady, while he is expending in vain his heretical sophistry. Are you unable to maintain your attention on heavenly objects, think rather on thine own earthly pleasures, than tempt Providence and the saints, by giving an attentive ear to the erring doctrine—think of thy hawk, thy hound, thine angling-rod, thy sword and buckler—think even of Catherine Seyton, rather than give thy soul to the lessons of the tempter. Alas! my son, believe not that, worn out with woes, and bent more by affliction than by years, I have forgotten the effect of beauty over the heart of youth. Even in the watches of the night, broken by thoughts of an imprisoned queen, a distracted kingdom, a church laid waste and ruinous, come other thoughts than these suggest, and feelings which belonged to an earlier and happier course of life. Be it so—we must bear our load as we may; and not in vain are these passions implanted in our breast, since, as now in thy case, they may come in aid of resolutions founded upon higher grounds. Yet beware, my son—this Catherine Seyton is the daughter of one of Scotland's proudest, as well as most worthy barons; and thy state may not suffer thee, as yet, to aspire so high. But thus it is—Heaven works its purposes through human folly; and Douglas's ambitious affection, as well as thine, shall contribute alike to the desired end."

"How, my father," said the page, "my suspicions are then true!—Douglas loves——"

"He does, and with a love as much misplaced as thine own; but beware of him—cross him not—thwart him not."

"Let him not cross or thwart me," said the page; "for I will not yield him an inch of way, had he in his body the soul of every Douglas that has lived since the time of the Dark Grey Man."

"Nay, have patience, idle boy, and reflect that your suit can never interfere with his—a truce with these vanities, and let us better employ the little space which it still remains to us to spend together. To thy knees, my son, and resume the long-interrupted duty of confession; that, happen what may, the hour may find in thee a faithful catholic, relieved from the guilt of his sins by authority of the holy church. Could I but tell thee, Roland, the joy with which I see thee once more put thy knee to its best and fittest use! *Quid dicis, mi fili?*"

"*Culpas meas,*" answered the youth; and according to the ritual of the catholic church, he confessed and received absolution, to which was annexed the condition of performing certain enjoined penances.

When this religious ceremony was ended, an old man, in the dress of a peasant of the better order, approached the arbour and greeted the abbot—"I waited the conclusion of your devotions," he said, "to tell you the youth is sought after by the chamberlain, and it were well he were to appear without delay. Holy Saint Francis! if the halberdiers were to seek him here, they might sorely wrong my garden-plot—they are in office, and reck not where they tread, were each step on jessamine and clove-jilliflowers."

"We will speed him forth, my brother," said the abbot; "but alas! is it possible that such trifles should live in your mind at a crisis so awful as that which is now impending?"

"Reverend father," answered the proprietor of the garden, for such he was, "how oft shall I pray you to keep your high counsel for high minds like your own? What have you required of me that I have not granted unresistingly, though with a sore heart?"

"I would require of you to be yourself, my brother," said the Abbot Ambrosius; "to remember what you were, and to what your early vows have bound you."

"I tell thee, Father Ambrosius," replied the gardener, "the patience of the best saint that ever said pater-noster, would be exhausted by the trials to which you have put mine—What I have been, it skills not to speak at present—no one knows better than yourself, father, what I renounced, in hopes to find ease and quiet during the remainder of my days—and no one better knows how my retreat has been invaded, my fruit-trees broken, my flower-beds trodden down, my quiet frightened away, and my very sleep driven from my bed, since ever this poor queen, God bless her, hath been sent to Lochleven.—I blame her not; being a prisoner, it is natural she should wish to get out from so vile a hold, where there is scarce any place even for a tolerable garden, and where the water-mists, as I am told, blight all

the early blossoms—I say, I cannot blame her for endeavouring for her freedom; but why I should be drawn into the scheme—why my harmless arbours that I planted with my own hands, should become places of privy conspiracy—why my little quay, which I built for my own fishing-boat, should have become a haven for secret embarkations—in short, why I should be dragged into matters where both heading and hanging are like to be the issue, I profess to you, reverend father, I am totally ignorant."

"My brother," answered the abbot, "you are wise, and ought to know——"

"I am not—I am not—I am not wise," replied the horticulturist, pettishly, and stopping his ears with his fingers—"I was never called wise, but when men wanted to engage me in some action of notorious folly."

"But, my good brother," said the abbot —

"I am not good neither," said the gardener; "I am neither good nor wise—Had I been wise, you would not have been admitted here; and were I good, methinks I would send you elsewhere, to hatch plots for destroying the quiet of the country. What signifies disputing about queen or king, when men may sit at peace—*sub umbra vitis suæ*; and so would I do, after the precept of holy writ, were I, as you term me, wise or good. But such as I am, my neck is in the yoke, and you make me draw what weight you list.—Follow me, youngster. This reverend father, who makes in his jack-man's dress nearly as reverend a figure as I myself, will agree with me in one thing at least, and that is, that you have been long enough here."

"Follow the good father, Roland," said the abbot, "and remember my words—a day is approaching that will try the temper of all true Scotsmen—may thy heart prove faithful as the steel of thy blade!"

The page bowed in silence, and they parted; the gardener, notwithstanding his advanced age, walking on before him very briskly, and muttering as he went, partly to himself, partly to his companion, after the manner of old men of weakened intellects—"When I was great," thus ran his maundering, "and had my mule and my ambling palfrey at command, I warrant you I could have as well flown through the air as have walked at this pace. I had my gout and my rheumatics, and an hundred things beside, that hung fetters on my heels; and now, thanks to Our Lady and honest labour, I can walk with any good man of my age in the kingdom of Fife—Fie upon it, that experience should be so long in coming."

As he was thus muttering, his eye fell upon the branch of a pear-tree, which drooped down for want of support, and at once forgetting his haste, the old man stopped, and set seriously about binding it up. Roland Græme had both readiness, neatness of hand, and good nature in abundance; he immediately lent his aid, and in a minute or two the bough was supported, and tied up in a way perfectly satisfactory to the old man, who looked at it with great complaisance. "They are bargamots," he said, "and if you will come ashore in autumn, you shall taste of them—the like are not in Lochleven Castle—the garden there is a poor pin-fold, and the gardener, Hugh Houkham, hath little skill of his craft—so come

ashore, Master Page, in autumn, when you would eat pears. But what am I thinking of—ere that time come, they may have given thee sour pears for plums. Take an old man's advice, youth, one who hath seen many days, and sat in higher places than thou canst hope for—bend thy sword into a pruning-hook, and make a dibble of thy dagger—thy days shall be the longer, and thy health the better for it, and come to aid me in my garden, and I will teach thee the real French fashion of *imping*, which the southrons call grafting. Do this, and do it without loss of time, for there is a whirlwind coming over the land, and only those shall escape who lie too much beneath the storm to have their boughs broken by it."

So saying, he dismissed Roland Græme through a door different from that by which he had entered, signed a cross, and pronounced a benedicite, as they parted, and then, still muttering to himself, retired into the garden, and locked the door on the inside.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long!

King Henry VI.

DISMISSED from the old man's garden, Roland Græme found that a grassy paddock, in which sauntered two cows, the property of the gardener, still separated him from the village. He paced through it, lost in meditation upon the words of the abbot. Father Ambrosius had, with success enough, exerted over him that reverential influence which the guardians and instructors of our childhood possess over our more mature youth. And yet, when Roland looked back upon what the father had said, he could not but suspect that he had rather sought to evade entering into the controversy betwixt the churches, than to repel the objections and satisfy the doubts which the lectures of Henderson had excited. "For this he had no time," said the page to himself, "neither have I now calmness and learning sufficient to judge upon points of such magnitude. Besides, it were base to quit my faith while the wind of fortune sets against it, unless I were so placed that my conversion, should it take place, were free as light from the imputation of self-interest. I was bred a catholic—bred in the faith of Bruce and Wallace—I will hold that faith till time and reason shall convince me that it errs. I will serve this poor queen as a subject should serve an imprisoned and wronged sovereign—they who placed me in her service have to blame themselves—they sent me hither, a gentleman, trained in the paths of loyalty and honour, when they should have sought out some truckling, cogging, double-dealing knave, who would have been at once the observant page of the queen, and the obsequious spy of her enemies. Since I must chuse betwixt aiding and betraying her, I will decide as becomes her servant and her subject; but Catherine Seyton—Catherine Seyton, beloved by Douglas, and holding me on or off as the intervals of her leisure or caprice will permit—how shall I deal with the coquette?—By Heaven, when I next have an opportunity, she shall render me some reason for her conduct, or I will break with her for ever."

As he formed this doughty resolution, he crossed

the stile which led out of the little enclosure, and was almost immediately greeted by Dr Luke Lundin.

"Ha! my most excellent young friend," said the doctor, "from whence come you? but I note the place.—Yes, neighbour Blinkhoolie's garden is a pleasant rendezvous, and you are of the age when lads look after a bonnie lass with one eye, and a dainty plum with another. But hey! you look subtrist and melancholic—I fear the maiden has proved cruel, or the plums unripe; and surely, I think neighbour Blinkhoolie's damsons can scarce have been well preserved throughout the winter—he spares the saccharine juice on his confects. But courage, man, there are more Kates in Kinross; and for the immature fruit, a glass of my double distilled *aqua mirabilis*—*probatum est*."

The page darted an ireful glance at the facetious physician; but presently recollecting that the name Kate, which had provoked his displeasure, was probably but introduced for the sake of alliteration, he suppressed his wrath, and only asked if the wains had been heard of?

"Why, I have been seeking for you this hour, to tell you that the stuff is in your boat, and that the boat waits your pleasure. Auchtermuchty had only fallen into company with an idle knave like himself, and a stoup of aqua-vitæ between them. Your boatmen lie on their oars, and there have already been made two wefts from the warder's turret, to intimate that those in the castle are impatient for your return. Yet there is time for you to take a slight repast; and, as your friend and physician, I hold it unfit you should face the water-breeze with an empty stomach."

Roland Græme had nothing for it but to return, with such cheer as he might, to the place where his boat was moored on the beach, and resisted all offer of refreshment, although the doctor promised that he should prelude the collation with a gentle appetizer—a decoction of herbs, gathered and distilled by himself. Indeed, as Roland had not forgotten the contents of his morning cup, it is possible that the recollection induced him to stand firm in his refusal of all food, to which such an unpalatable preface was to be annexed. As they passed towards the boat (for the ceremonious politeness of the worthy chamberlain would not permit the page to go thither without attendance), Roland Græme, amidst a group who seemed to be assembled around a party of wandering musicians, distinguished, as he thought, the dress of Catherine Seyton. He shook himself clear from his attendant, and at one spring was in the midst of the crowd, and at the side of the damsel. "Catherine," he whispered, "is it well for you to be still here?—will you not return to the castle?"

"To the devil with your Catherines and your castles!" answered the maiden, snappishly; "have you not had time enough already to get rid of your follies? Begone! I desire not your farther company, and there will be danger in thrusting it upon me."

"Nay—but if there be danger, fairest Catherine," replied Roland, "why will you not allow me to stay and share it with you?"

"Intruding fool," said the maiden, "the danger is all on thine own side—the risk is, in plain terms, that I strike thee on the mouth with the hilt of my dagger." So saying, she turned haughtily from him, and moved through the crowd, who gave way in some astonishment at the masculine activity with which she forced her way among them.

As Roland, though much irritated, prepared to follow, he was grappled on the other side by Doctor Luke Lundin, who reminded him of the loaded boat, of the two wefts, or signals with the flag, which had been made from the tower, of the danger of the cold breeze to an empty stomach, and of the vanity of spending more time upon coy wenches and sour plums. Roland was thus in a manner dragged back to his boat, and obliged to launch her forth upon his return to Lochleven Castle.

This little voyage was speedily accomplished, and the page was greeted at the landing-place by the severe and caustic welcome of old Dryfesdale. "So, young gallant, you are come at last, after a delay of six hours, and after two signals from the castle. But, I warrant, some idle junketting hath occupied you too deeply to think of your service or duty. Where is the note of the plate and household stuff?—Pray Heaven it hath not been diminished under the sleeveless care of so young a gad-about."

"Diminished under my care, Sir Steward?" retorted the page, angrily; "say so in earnest, and by Heaven your grey hair shall hardly protect your saucy tongue!"

"A truce with your swaggering, young esquire," returned the steward; "we have bolts and dungeons for brawlers. Go to my lady, and swagger before her, if thou darest—she will give thee proper cause of offence, for she has waited thee long and impatiently."

"And where then is the Lady of Lochleven?" said the page; "for I conceive it is of her thou speakest?"

"Ay—of whom else?" replied Dryfesdale; "or who besides the Lady of Lochleven hath a right to command in this castle?"

"The Lady of Lochleven is thy mistress," said Roland Græme; "but mine is the Queen of Scotland."

The steward looked at him fixedly for a moment, with an air in which suspicion and dislike were ill concealed by an affectation of contempt. "The bragging cock-chicken," he said, "will betray himself by his rath crowing. I have marked thy changed manner in the chapel of late—ay, and your changing of glances at meal-time with a certain idle damsel, who, like thyself, laughs at all gravity and goodness. There is something about you, my master, which should be looked to. But, if you would know whether the Lady of Lochleven or that other lady hath right to command thy service, thou wilt find them together in the Lady Mary's ante-room."

Roland hastened thither, not unwilling to escape from the ill-natured penetration of the old man, and marveling at the same time what peculiarity could have occasioned the Lady of Lochleven's being in the queen's apartment at this time of the afternoon, so much contrary to her usual wont. His acuteness

instantly penetrated the meaning. "She wishes," he concluded, "to see the meeting betwixt the queen and me on my return, that she may form a guess whether there is any private intelligence or understanding betwixt us—I must be guarded."

With this resolution he entered the parlour, where the queen, seated in her chair, with the Lady Fleming leaning upon the back of it, had already kept the Lady of Lochleven standing in her presence for the space of nearly an hour, to the manifest increase of her very visible bad humour. Roland Græme, on entering the apartment, made a deep obeisance to the queen and another to the lady, and then stood still as if to await their further question. Speaking almost together, the Lady Lochleven said, "So, young man, you are returned at length?"

And then stopped indignantly short, while the queen went on without regarding her—"Roland, you are welcome home to us—you have proved the true dove, and not the raven—Yet I am sure I could have forgiven you, if, once dismissed from this water-circled ark of ours, you had never again returned to us. I trust you have brought back an olive branch, for our kind and worthy hostess has chafed herself much on account of your long absence, and we never needed more some symbol of peace and reconciliation."

"I grieve I should have been detained, madam," answered the page; "but from the delay of the person entrusted with the matters for which I was sent, I did not receive them till late in the day."

"See you there now?" said the queen to the Lady Lochleven; "we could not persuade you, our dearest hostess, that your household goods were in all safe keeping and surety. True it is, that we can excuse your anxiety, considering that these august apartments are so scantily furnished, that we have not been able to offer you even the relief of a stool during the long time you have afforded us the pleasure of your society."

"The will, madam," said the lady; "the will to offer such accommodation was more wanting than the means."

"What!" said the queen, looking round and affecting surprise, "there are then stools in this apartment—one, two—no less than four, including the broken one—a royal garniture!—We observed them not—will it please your ladyship to sit?"

"No, madam, I will soon relieve you of my presence," replied the Lady Lochleven; "and, while with you, my aged limbs can still better brook fatigue, than my mind stoop to accept of constrained courtesy."

"Nay, Lady of Lochleven, if you take it so deeply," said the queen, rising and motioning to her own vacant chair, "I would rather you assumed my seat—you are not the first of your family who has done so."

The Lady of Lochleven curtsied a negative, but seemed with much difficulty to suppress the angry answer which rose to her lips.

During this sharp conversation, the page's attention had been almost entirely occupied by the entrance of Catherine Seyton, who came from the inner apartment, in the usual dress in which she attended upon the queen, and with nothing in her

manner which marked either the hurry or confusion incident to a hasty change of disguise, or the conscious fear of detection in a perilous enterprise. Roland Græme ventured to make her an obeisance as she entered, but she returned it with an air of the utmost indifference, which, in his opinion, was extremely inconsistent with the circumstances in which they stood towards each other.—Surely, he thought, she cannot in reason expect to bully me out of the belief due to mine own eyes, as she tried to do concerning the apparition in the hostelry of Saint Michael's—I will try if I cannot make her feel that this will be but a vain task, and that confidence in me is the wiser and safer course to pursue.

These thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, when the queen, having finished her altercation with the Lady of the Castle, again addressed him—"What of the revels at Kinross, Roland Græme? Methought they were gay, if I may judge from some faint sounds of mirth and distant music, which found their way so far as these grated windows, and died when they entered them, as all that is mirthful must—But thou lookest as sad as if thou hadst come from a conventicle of the huguenots!"

"And so perchance he hath, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, at whom this side-shaft was launched. "I trust, amid yonder idle fooleries, there wanted not some pouring forth of doctrine to a better purpose than that vain mirth, which, blazing and vanishing like the crackling of dry thorns, leaves to the fools who love it nothing but dust and ashes."

"Mary Fleming," said the queen, turning round and drawing her mantle around her, "I would that we had the chimney-grate supplied with a fagot or two of these same thorns, which the Lady of Lochleven describes so well. Methinks the damp air from the lake, which stagnates in these vaulted rooms, renders them deadly cold."

"Your grace's pleasure shall be obeyed," said the Lady of Lochleven; "yet may I presume to remind you that we are now in summer?"

"I thank you for the information, my good lady," said the queen; "for prisoners better learn their calendar from the mouth of their jailer than from any change they themselves feel in the seasons.—Once more, Roland Græme, what of the revels?"

"They were gay, madam," said the page, "but of the usual sort, and little worth your highness's ear."

"Oh, you know not," said the queen, "how very indulgent my ear has become to all that speaks of freedom and the pleasures of the free. Methinks I would rather have seen the gay villagers dance their ring round the may-pole, than have witnessed the most stately masques within the walls of a palace. The absence of stone walls—the sense that the green turf is under the foot which may tread it free and unrestrained, is worth all that art or splendour can add to more courtly revels."

"I trust," said the Lady Lochleven, addressing the page in her turn, "there were amongst these follies none of the riots or disturbances to which they so naturally lead."

Roland gave a slight glance to Catherine Seyton, as if to bespeak her attention as he replied,—“I witnessed no offence, madam, worthy of marking—none indeed of any kind, save that a bold damsel

made her hand somewhat too familiar with the cheek of a player-man, and ran some hazard of being ducked in the lake.”

As he uttered these words he cast a hasty glance at Catherine; but she sustained, with the utmost serenity of manner and countenance, the hint which he had deemed could not have been thrown out before her without exciting some fear and confusion.

"I will cumber your grace no longer with my presence," said the Lady Lochleven, "unless you have aught to command me."

"Nought, our good hostess," answered the queen, "unless it be to pray you, that on another occasion you deem it not needful to postpone your better employment to wait so long upon us."

"May it please you," added the Lady Lochleven, "to command this your gentleman to attend us, that I may receive some account of these matters which have been sent hither for your grace's use."

"We may not refuse what you are pleased to require, madam," answered the queen. "Go with the lady, Roland, if our commands be indeed necessary to thy doing so. We will hear to-morrow the history of thy Kinross pleasures. For this night we dismiss thy attendance."

Roland Græme went with the Lady of Lochleven, who failed not to ask him many questions concerning what had passed at the sports, to which he rendered such answers as were most likely to lull asleep any suspicions which she might entertain of his disposition to favour Queen Mary, taking especial care to avoid all allusion to the apparition of Magdalen Græme, and of the Abbot Ambrosius. At length, after undergoing a long and somewhat close examination, he was dismissed with such expressions, as, coming from the reserved and stern Lady of Lochleven, might seem to express a degree of favour and countenance.

His first care was to obtain some refreshment, which was more cheerfully afforded him by a good-natured pantler than by Dryfesdale, who was, on this occasion, much disposed to abide by the fashion of Puddingburn House, where

They who came not the first call,
Gat no more meat till the next meal.

When Roland Græme had finished his repast, having his dismissal from the queen for the evening, and being little inclined for such society as the castle afforded, he stole into the garden, in which he had permission to spend his leisure time, when it pleased him. In this place, the ingenuity of the contriver and disposer of the walks had exerted itself to make the most of little space, and by screens, both of stone ornamented with rude sculpture, and hedges of living green, had endeavoured to give as much intricacy and variety as the confined limits of the garden would admit.

Here the young man walked sadly, considering the events of the day, and comparing what had dropped from the abbot with what he had himself noticed of the demeanour of George Douglas. It must be so, was the painful but inevitable conclusion at which he arrived. It must be by his aid that she is thus enabled, like a phantom, to transport herself from

place to place, and to appear at pleasure on the mainland or on the islet. It must be so, he repeated once more; with him she holds a close, secret, and intimate correspondence, altogether inconsistent with the eye of favour which she has sometimes cast upon me, and destructive to the hopes which she must have known these glances have necessarily inspired. And yet (for love will hope where reason despairs) the thought rushed on his mind, that it was possible she only encouraged Douglas's passion so far as might serve her mistress's interest, and that she was of too frank, noble, and candid a nature, to hold out to himself hopes which she meant not to fulfil. Lost in these various conjectures, he seated himself upon a bank of turf, which commanded a view of the lake on the one side, and on the other of that front of the castle, amongst which the queen's apartments were situated.

The sun had now for some time set, and the twilight of May was rapidly fading into a serene night. On the lake, the expanded water rose and fell, with the slightest and softest influence of a southern breeze, which scarcely dimpled the surface over which it passed. In the distance was still seen the dim outline of the island of Saint Serf, once visited by many a sandaled pilgrim, as the blessed spot trodden by a man of God—now neglected, or violated, as the refuge of lazy priests, who had with justice been compelled to give place to the sheep and the heifers of a protestant baron.

As Roland gazed on the dark speck, amid the lighter blue of the waters which surrounded it, the mazes of polemical discussion again stretched themselves before the eye of his mind. Had these men justly suffered their exile as licentious drones, the robbers, at once, and disgrace of the busy hive; or, had the hand of avarice and rapine expelled from the temple, not the ribalds who polluted, but the faithful priests who served the shrine in honour and fidelity? The arguments of Henderson, in this contemplative hour, rose with double force before him, and could scarce be parried by the appeal which the Abbot Ambrosius had made from his understanding to his feelings,—an appeal which he had felt more forcibly amid the bustle of stirring life, than it now seemed to his more undisturbed reflection. It required an effort to divert his mind from this embarrassing topic; and he found that he best succeeded by turning his eyes to the front of the tower, watching where a twinkling light still streamed from the casement of Catherine Seyton's apartment, obscured by times for a moment, as the shadow of the fair inhabitant passed betwixt the taper and the window. At length the light was removed or extinguished, and that object of speculation was also withdrawn from the eyes of the meditative lover. Dare I confess the fact without injuring his character for ever as a hero of romance? These eyes gradually became heavy; speculative doubts on the subject of religious controversy, and anxious conjectures concerning the state of his mistress's affections, became confusedly blended together in his musings; the fatigues of a busy day prevailed over the harassing subjects of contemplation which occupied his mind, and he fell fast asleep.

Sound were his slumbers, until they were sud-

denly dispelled by the iron tongue of the castle bell, which sent its deep and sullen sounds wide over the bosom of the lake, and awakened the echoes of Bennarty, the hill which descends steeply on its southern bank. Roland started up, for this bell was always tolled at ten o'clock, as the signal for locking the castle gates and placing the keys under the charge of the seneschal. He therefore hastened to the wicket, by which the garden communicated with the building, and had the mortification, just as he reached it, to hear the bolt leave its sheath with a discordant crash, and enter the stone groove of the door-lintel.

"Hold, hold!" cried the page, "and let me in ere you lock the wicket."

The voice of Dryfesdale replied from within, in his usual tone of embittered sullenness—"The hour is past, fair master—you like not the inside of these walls—even make it a complete holiday, and pass the night as well as the day out of bounds."

"Open the door," exclaimed the indignant page, "or by Saint Giles I will make thy gold chain smoke for it!"

"Make no alarm here," retorted the impenetrable Dryfesdale, "but keep thy sinful oaths and silly threats for those that regard them—I do mine office, and carry the keys to the seneschal.—Adieu, my young master; the cool night air will advantage your hot blood."

The steward was right in what he said; for the cooling breeze was very necessary to appease the feverish fit of anger which Roland experienced, nor did the remedy succeed for some time. At length, after some hasty turns made through the garden, exhausting his passion in vain vows of vengeance, Roland Græme began to be sensible that his situation ought rather to be held as matter of laughter, than of serious resentment. To one bred a sportsman, a night spent in the open air had in it little of hardship, and the poor malice of the steward seemed more worthy of his contempt than his anger. I would to God, he said, that the grim old man may always have contented himself with such sportive revenge. He often looks as he were capable of doing us a darker turn. Returning, therefore, to the turf seat which he had formerly occupied, and which was partially sheltered by a trim fence of green holly, he drew his mantle around him, stretched himself at length on the verdant settle, and endeavoured to resume that sleep which the castle bell had interrupted to so little purpose.

Sleep, like other earthly blessings, is niggard of its favours when most courted. The more Roland invoked her aid, the farther she fled from his eyelids. He had been completely awakened, first by the sounds of the bell, and then by his own aroused vivacity of temper, and he found it difficult again to compose himself to slumber. At length, when his mind was wearied out with a maze of unpleasing meditation, he succeeded in coaxing himself into a broken slumber. This was again dispelled by the voices of two persons who were walking in the garden, the sound of whose conversation, after mingling for some time in the page's dreams, at length succeeded in awaking him thoroughly. He raised himself from his reclining posture in the ut-

most astonishment, which the circumstance of hearing two persons at that late hour conversing on the outside of the watchfully guarded Castle of Lochleven, was so well calculated to excite. His first thought was upon supernatural beings; his next, upon some attempt on the part of Queen Mary's friends and followers; his last was, that George of Douglas, possessed of the keys, and having the means of ingress and egress at pleasure, was availing himself of his office to hold a rendezvous with Catherine Seyton in the castle garden. He was confirmed in this opinion by the tone of the voice, which asked in a low whisper whether all was ready.

CHAPTER XXX.

In some breasts passion lies conceal'd and silent,
Like war's swart powder in a castle vault,
Until occasion, like the linstock, lights it:
Then comes at once the lightning and the thunder,
And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.

Old Play.

ROLAND GRÆME, availing himself of a breach in the holly screen, and of the assistance of the full moon, which was now arisen, had a perfect opportunity, himself unobserved, to reconnoitre the persons and the motions of those by whom his rest had been thus unexpectedly disturbed, and his observations confirmed his jealous apprehensions. They stood together in close and earnest conversation within four yards of the place of his retreat, and he could easily recognize the tall form and deep voice of Douglas, and the no less remarkable dress and tone of the page at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

"I have been at the door of the page's apartment," said Douglas, "but he is not there, or he will not answer. It is fast bolted on the inside, as is the custom, and we cannot pass through it—and what his silence may bode I know not."

"You have trusted him too far," said the other; "a feather-headed coxcomb, upon whose changeable mind and hot brain there is no making any abiding impression."

"It was not I who was willing to trust him," said Douglas; "but I was assured he would prove friendly when called upon—for"—Here he spoke so low that Roland lost the tenor of his words, which was the more provoking, as he was fully aware that he was himself the subject of their conversation.

"Nay," replied the stranger, more aloud, "I have on my side put him off with fair words, which make fools fain—but now, if you distrust him at the push, deal with him with your dagger, and so make open passage."

"That were too rash," said Douglas; "and, besides, as I told you, the door of his apartment is shut and bolted. I will essay again to waken him."

Græme instantly comprehended, that the ladies, having been somehow made aware of his being in the garden, had secured the door of the outer room in which he usually slept, as a sort of sentinel upon that only access to the queen's apartments. But then how came Catherine Seyton to be abroad, if the queen and the other lady were still within their chambers, and the access to them locked and bolted?

"I will be instantly at the bottom of these mysteries," he said, "and then thank Mrs Catherine, if this be really she, for the kind use which she exhorted Douglas to make of his dagger—they seek me, as I comprehend, and they shall not seek me in vain."

Douglas had by this time re-entered the castle by the wicket, which was now open. The stranger stood alone in the garden walk, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes cast impatiently up to the moon, as if accusing her of betraying him by the magnificence of her lustre. In a moment Roland Græme stood before him—"A goodly night," he said, "Mrs Catherine, for a young lady to stray forth in disguise, and to meet with men in an orchard."

"Hush!" said the stranger page, "hush, thou foolish patch, and tell us in a word if thou art friend or foe."

"How should I be friend to one who deceives me by fair words, and who would have Douglas deal with me with his poniard?" replied Roland.

"The fiend receive George of Douglas and thee too, thou born madcap and sworn marplot," said the other; "we shall be discovered and then death is the word."

"Catherine," said the page, "you have dealt falsely and cruelly with me, and the moment of explanation is now come—neither it nor you shall escape me."

"Madman!" said the stranger, "I am neither Kate nor Catherine—the moon shines bright enough surely to know the hart from the hind."

"That shift shall not serve you, fair mistress," said the page, laying hold on the lap of the stranger's cloak; "this time, at least, I will know with whom I deal."

"Unhand me," said she, endeavouring to extricate herself from his grasp, and in a tone where anger seemed to contend with a desire to laugh; "use you so little discretion towards a daughter of Seyton?"

But as Roland, encouraged perhaps by her risibility to suppose his violence was not unpardonably offensive, kept hold on her mantle, she said in a sterner tone of unmingled resentment, "Madman, let me go!—there is life and death in this moment—I would not willingly hurt thee, and yet beware!"

As she spoke she made a sudden effort to escape, and in doing so, a pistol, which she carried in her hand or about her person, went off.

This warlike sound instantly awakened the well-warded castle. The warder blew his horn, and began to toll the castle bell, crying out at the same time, "Fie, treason! treason! cry all! cry all!"

The apparition of Catherine Seyton, which the page had let loose in the first moment of astonishment, vanished in darkness; but the plash of oars was heard, and in a second or two, five or six harquebusses and a falconet were fired from the battlements of the castle successively, as if leveled at some object on the water. Confounded with these incidents, no way for Catherine's protection (supposing her to be in the boat which he had heard put from the shore) occurred to Roland, save to have recourse to George of Douglas. He hastened for this purpose towards the apartment of the queen, whence

he heard loud voices and much trampling of feet. When he entered, he found himself added to a confused and astonished group, which, assembled in that apartment, stood gazing upon each other. At the upper end of the room stood the queen, equipped as for a journey, and attended not only by the Lady Fleming, but by the omnipresent Catherine Seyton, dressed in the habit of her own sex, and bearing in her hand the casket in which Mary kept such jewels as she had been permitted to retain. At the other end of the hall was the Lady of Lochleven, hastily dressed, as one startled from slumber by the sudden alarm, and surrounded by domestics, some bearing torches, others holding naked swords, partisans, pistols, or such other weapons as they had caught up in the hurry of a night alarm. Betwixt these two parties stood George of Douglas, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent on the ground, like a criminal who knows not how to deny, yet continues unwilling to avow, the guilt in which he has been detected.

"Speak, George of Douglas," said the Lady of Lochleven; "speak, and clear the horrid suspicion which rests on thy name. Say, 'A Douglas was never faithless to his trust, and I am a Douglas.' Say this, my dearest son, and it is all I ask thee to say to clear thy name, even under such a foul charge. Say it was but the wile of these unhappy women, and this false boy, which plotted an escape so fatal to Scotland—so destructive to thy father's house."

"Madam," said old Dryfesdale the steward, "this much do I say for this silly page, that he could not be accessory to unlocking the doors, since I myself this night bolted him out of the castle. Whoever limned this night-piece, the lad's share in it seems to have been small."

"Thou liest, Dryfesdale," said the lady, "and wouldst throw the blame on thy master's house, to save the worthless life of a gipsy boy."

"His death were more desirable to me than his life," answered the steward, sullenly; "but the truth is the truth"—

At these words Douglas raised his head, drew up his figure to its full height, and spoke boldly and sedately as one whose resolution was taken. "Let no life be endangered for me. I alone"—

"Douglas," said the queen, interrupting him, "art thou mad? Speak not, I charge you."

"Madam," he replied, bowing with the deepest respect, "gladly would I obey your commands, but they must have a victim, and let it be the true one.—Yes, madam," he continued, addressing the Lady of Lochleven, "I alone am guilty in this matter. If the word of a Douglas has yet any weight with you, believe me that this boy is innocent; and on your conscience, I charge you do him no wrong; nor let the queen suffer hardship for embracing the opportunity of freedom which sincere loyalty—which a sentiment yet deeper—offered to her acceptance. Yes! I had planned the escape of the most beautiful, the most persecuted of women; and far from regretting that I for a while deceived the malice of her enemies, I glory in it, and am most willing to yield up life itself in her cause."

"Now, may God have comfort on my age," said the Lady of Lochleven, "and enable me to bear

this load of affliction! O princess, born in a luckless hour, when will you cease to be the instrument of seduction and of ruin to all who approach you! O ancient house of Lochleven, famed so long for birth and honour, evil was the hour brought the deceiver under thy roof!"

"Say not so, madam," replied her grandson; "the old honours of the Douglas line will be outshone, when one of its descendants dies for the most injured of queens—for the most lovely of women."

"Douglas," said the queen, "must I at this moment—ay, even at this moment, when I may lose a faithful subject for ever, chide thee for forgetting what is due to me as thy queen?"

"Wretched boy," said the distracted Lady of Lochleven, "hast thou fallen even thus far into the snare of this Moabitish woman?—hast thou bartered thy name, thy allegiance, thy knightly oath, thy duty to thy parents, thy country, and thy God, for a feigned tear, or a sickly smile, from lips which flattered the infirm Francis—lured to death the idiot Darnley—read luscious poetry with the minion Chatelet—mingled in the lays of love which were sung by the beggar Rizzio—and which were joined in rapture to those of the foul and licentious Bothwell?"

"Blaspheme not, madam!" said Douglas; "nor you, fair queen, and virtuous as fair, chide at this moment the presumption of thy vassal!—Think not that the mere devotion of a subject could have moved me to the part I have been performing. Well you deserve that each of your lieges should die for you; but I have done more—have done that to which love alone could compel a Douglas—I have dissembled.—Farewell, then, queen of all hearts, and empress of that of Douglas!—When you are freed from this vile bondage—as freed you shall be, if justice remains in heaven—and when you load with honours and titles the happy man who shall deliver you, cast one thought on him whose heart would have despised every reward for a kiss of your hand—cast one thought on his fidelity, and drop one tear on his grave." And throwing himself at her feet, he seized her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"This before my face!" said the Lady of Lochleven—"wilt thou court thy adulterous paramour before the eyes of a parent?—Tear them asunder, and put him under strict ward! Seize him, upon your lives!" she added, seeing that her attendants looked on each other with hesitation.

"They are doubtful," said Mary. "Save thyself, Douglas, I command thee!"

He started up from the floor, and only exclaiming, "My life or death are yours, and at your disposal,"—drew his sword, and broke through those who stood betwixt him and the door. The enthusiasm of his onset was too sudden and too lively to have been opposed by any thing short of the most decided opposition; and as he was both loved and feared by his father's vassals, none of them would offer him actual injury.

The Lady of Lochleven stood astonished at his sudden escape—"Am I surrounded," she said, "by traitors? Upon him, villains!—pursue, stab, cut him down."

"He cannot leave the island, madam," said

Dryfesdale, interfering; "I have the key of the boat-chain."

But two or three voices of those who pursued from curiosity, or command of their mistress, exclaimed from below, that he had cast himself into the lake.

"Brave Douglas still!" exclaimed the queen—"O, true and noble heart, that prefers death to imprisonment!"

"Fire upon him," said the Lady of Lochleven; "if there be here a true servant of his father, let him shoot the runagate dead, and let the lake cover our shame!"

The report of a gun or two was heard, but they were probably shot rather to obey the lady, than with any purpose of hitting the mark; and Randal immediately entering, said, that Master George had been taken up by a boat from the castle, which lay at a little distance.

"Man a barge, and pursue them!" said the lady.

"It were quite vain," said Randal; "by this time they are half way to shore, and a cloud has come over the moon."

"And has the traitor then escaped?" said the lady, pressing her hands against her forehead with a gesture of despair; "the honour of our house is for ever gone, and all will be deemed accomplices in this base treachery."

"Lady of Lochleven," said Mary, advancing towards her, "you have this night cut off my fairest hopes—You have turned my expected freedom into bondage, and dashed away the cup of joy in the very instant I was advancing it to my lips—and yet I feel for your sorrow the pity that you deny to mine—Gladly would I comfort you if I might: but as I may not, I would at least part from you in charity."

"Away, proud woman!" said the lady; "who ever knew so well as thou to deal the deepest wounds under the pretence of kindness and courtesy?—Who, since the great traitor, could ever so betray with a kiss?"

"Lady Douglas of Lochleven," said the queen, "in this moment thou canst not offend me—no, not even by thy coarse and unwomanly language, held to me in the presence of menials and armed retainers. I have this night owed so much to one member of the house of Lochleven, as to cancel whatever its mistress can do or say in the wildness of her passion."

"We are bounden to you, princess," said Lady Lochleven, putting a strong constraint on herself, and passing from her tone of violence to that of bitter irony; "our poor house hath been but seldom graced with royal smiles, and will hardly, with my choice, exchange their rough honesty for such court-honour as Mary of Scotland has now to bestow."

"They," replied Mary, "who knew so well how to *take*, may think themselves excused from the obligation implied in receiving. And that I have now little to offer, is the fault of the Douglasses and their allies."

"Fear nothing, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, in the same bitter tone; "you retain an exchequer which neither your own prodigality can drain, nor your offended country deprive you of."

VOL. III.

While you have fair words and delusive smiles at command, you need no other bribes to lure youth to folly."

The queen cast a not ungratified glance on a large mirror, which, hanging on one side of the apartment, and illuminated by the torch-light, reflected her beautiful face and person. "Our hostess grows complaisant," she said, "my Fleming; we had not thought that grief and captivity had left us so well stored with that sort of wealth which ladies prize most dearly."

"Your grace will drive this severe woman frantic," said Fleming, in a low tone. "On my knees I implore you to remember she is already dreadfully offended, and that we are in her power."

"I will not spare her, Fleming," answered the queen; "it is against my nature. She returned my honest sympathy with insult and abuse, and I will gall her in return—If her words are too blunt for answer, let her use her poniard if she dare."

"The Lady Lochleven," said the Lady Fleming aloud, "would surely do well now to withdraw, and to leave her grace to repose."

"Ay," replied the lady, "or to leave her grace, and her grace's minions, to think what silly fly they may next wrap their meshes about. My eldest son is a widower—were he not more worthy the flattering hopes with which you have seduced his brother?—True, the yoke of marriage has been already thrice fitted on—but the Church of Rome calls it a sacrament, and its votaries may deem it one in which they cannot too often participate."

"And the votaries of the Church of Geneva," replied Mary, colouring with indignation, "as they deem marriage *no* sacrament, are said at times to dispense with the holy ceremony."—Then, as if afraid of the consequence of this home allusion to the errors of Lady Lochleven's early life, the queen added, "Come, my Fleming, we grace her too much by this altercation, we will to our sleeping apartment. If she would disturb us again to-night, she must cause the door to be forced." So saying, she retired to her bed-room, followed by her two women.

Lady Lochleven, stunned as it were by this last sarcasm, and not the less deeply incensed that she had drawn it upon herself, remained like a statue on the spot which she had occupied when she received an affront so flagrant. Dryfesdale and Randal endeavoured to rouse her to recollection by questions.

"What is your honourable ladyship's pleasure in the premises?"

"Shall we not double the sentinels, and place one upon the boats and another in the garden?" said Randal.

"Would you that dispatches were sent to Sir William at Edinburgh, to acquaint him with what has happened?" demanded Dryfesdale; "and ought not the place of Kinross to be alarmed, lest there be force upon the shores of the lake?"

"Do all as thou wilt," said the lady, collecting herself, and about to depart. "Thou hast the name of a good soldier, Dryfesdale; take all precautions.—Sacred Heaven! that I should be thus openly upbraided!"

"Would it be your pleasure," said Dryfesdale,

hesitating, "that this person—this lady—be more severely restrained?"

"No, vassal!" answered the lady, indignantly, "my revenge stoops not to such a low gratification. But I will have more worthy vengeance, or the tomb of my ancestors shall cover my shame."

"And you shall have it, madam," replied Dryfesdale—"Ere two suns go down, you shall term yourself amply revenged."

The lady made no answer—perhaps did not hear his words, as she presently left the apartment. By the commandment of Dryfesdale, the rest of the attendants were dismissed, some to do the duty of guard, others to their repose. The steward himself remained after they had all departed; and Roland Græme, who was alone in the apartment, was surprised to see the old soldier advance towards him with an air of greater cordiality than he had ever before assumed towards him, but which sat ill on his scowling features.

"Youth," he said, "I have done thee some wrong—it is thine own fault, for thy behaviour hath seemed as light to me as the feather thou wearest in thy hat; and surely thy fantastic apparel, and idle humour of mirth and folly, have made me construe thee something harshly. But I saw this night from my casement (as I looked out to see how thou hadst disposed of thyself in the garden), I saw, I say, the true efforts which thou didst make to detain the companion of the perfidy of him who is no longer worthy to be called by his father's name, but must be cut off from his house like a rotten branch. I was just about to come to thy assistance when the pistol went off; and the warder (a false knave, whom I suspect to be bribed for the nonce) saw himself forced to give the alarm, which, perchance, till then he had wilfully withheld. To atone, therefore, for my injustice towards you, I would willingly render you a courtesy, if you would accept of it from my hands."

"May I first crave to know what it is?" replied the page.

"Simply to carry the news of this discovery to Holyrood, where thou mayest do thyself much grace, as well with the Earl of Morton and the regent himself, as with Sir William Douglas, seeing thou hast seen the matter from end to end, and borne faithful part therein. The making thine own fortune will be thus lodged in thine own hand, when I trust thou wilt estrange thyself from foolish vanities, and learn to walk in this world as one who thinks upon the next."

"Sir Steward," said Roland Græme, "I thank you for your courtesy, but I may not do your errand. I pass that I am the queen's sworn servant, and may not be of counsel against her. But, setting this apart, methinks it were a bad road to Sir William of Lochleven's favour, to be the first to tell him of his son's defection—neither would the regent be over well pleased to hear the infidelity of his vassal, nor Morton to learn the falsehood of his kinsman."

"Um!" said the steward, making that inarticulate sound which expresses surprise mingled with displeasure. "Nay then, even fly where ye list; for, giddy-pated as ye may be, you know how to bear you in the world."

"I will show you my system is less selfish than ye think for," said the page; "for I hold truth and mirth to be better than gravity and cunning—ay, and in the end to be a match for them.—You never loved me less, Sir Steward, than you do at this moment. I know you will give me no real confidence, and I am resolved to accept no false protestations as current coin. Resume your old course—suspect me as much and watch me as close as you will, I bid you defiance—you have met with your match."

"By Heaven, young man," said the steward, with a look of bitter malignity, "if thou darest to attempt any treachery towards the house of Lochleven, thy head shall blacken in the sun from the warder's turret!"

"He cannot commit treachery who refuses trust," said the page; "and for my head, it stands as securely on mine own shoulders, as on any turret that ever mason built."

"Farewell, thou prating and speckled pie," said Dryfesdale, "that art so vain of thine idle tongue and variegated coat. Beware trap and lime-twigg."

"And fare thee well, thou hoarse old raven," answered the page; "thy solemn flight, sable hue, and deep croak, are no charms against bird-bolt or hail-shot, and that thou mayest find—It is open war betwixt us, each for the cause of our mistress, and God show the right!"

"Amen, and defend his own people!" said the steward. "I will let my mistress know what addition thou hast made to this mess of traitors. Good night, Monsieur Feather-pate."

"Good night, Seignior Sowersby," replied the page; and when the old man departed, he betook himself to rest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Poison'd—ill fare—dead, forsooth, cast off.

King John.

HOWSOEVER weary Roland Græme might be of the Castle of Lochleven—however much he might wish that the plan for Mary's escape had been perfected, I question, if he ever awoke with more pleasing feelings than on the morning after George Douglas's plan for accomplishing her deliverance had been frustrated. In the first place, he had the clearest conviction that he had misunderstood the innuendo of the abbot, and that the affections of Douglas were fixed, not on Catherine Seyton, but on the queen; and in the second place, from the sort of explanation which had taken place betwixt the steward and him, he felt himself at liberty, without any breach of honour towards the family of Lochleven, to contribute his best aid to any scheme which should in future be formed for the queen's escape; and, independently of the good will which he himself had to the enterprise, he knew he could find no surer road to the favour of Catherine Seyton. He now sought but an opportunity to inform her that he had dedicated himself to this task, and fortune was propitious in affording him one which was unusually favourable.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast, it was intro-

duced by the steward with the usual forms, who, as soon as it was placed on the board in the inner apartment, said to Roland Græme, with a glance of sarcastic import, "I leave you, my young sir, to do the office of sewer—it has been too long rendered to the Lady Mary by one belonging to the house of Douglas."

"Were it the prime and principal who ever bore the name," said Roland, "the office were an honour to him."

The steward departed without replying to this bravade, otherwise than by a dark look of scorn. Græme, thus left alone, busied himself as one engaged in a labour of love, to imitate, as well as he could, the grace and courtesy with which George of Douglas was wont to render his ceremonial service at meals to the Queen of Scotland. There was more than youthful vanity,—there was a generous devotion in the feeling with which he took up the task, as a brave soldier assumes the place of a comrade who has fallen in the front of battle. "I am now," he said, "their only champion; and, come weal, come woe, I will be, to the best of my skill and power, as faithful, as trust-worthy, as brave as any Douglas of them all could have been."

At this moment Catherine Seyton entered alone, contrary to her custom; and not less contrary to her custom, she entered with her kerchief at her eyes. Roland Græme approached her with beating heart and with downcast eyes, and asked her in a low and hesitating voice, whether the queen were well?

"Can you suppose it?" said Catherine; "think you her heart and body are framed of steel and iron, to endure the cruel disappointment of yester even, and the infamous taunts of yonder puritanic hag?—Would to God that I were a man, to aid her more effectually!"

"If those who carry pistols, and batons, and poniards," said the page, "are not men, they are at least Amazons, and that is as formidable."

"You are welcome to the flash of your wit, sir," replied the damsel; "I am neither in spirits to enjoy, or to reply to it."

"Well then," said the page, "list to me in all serious truth. And, first, let me say, that the gear last night had been smoother had you taken me into your counsels."

"And so we meant; but who could have guessed that Master Page should chuse to pass all night in the garden, like some moon-stricken knight in a Spanish romance—instead of being in his bed-room, when Douglas came to hold communication with him on our project?"

"And why," said the page, "defer to so late a moment so important a confidence?"

"Because your communications with Henderson, and—with pardon—the natural impetuosity and fickleness of your disposition, made us dread to entrust you with a secret of such consequence, till the last moment."

"And why at the last moment?" said the page, offended at this frank avowal; "why at that, or any other moment, since I had the misfortune to incur so much suspicion?"

"Nay—now you are angry again," said Catherine;

"and to serve you aright I should break off this talk; but I will be magnanimous, and answer your question. Know, then, our reason for trusting you was twofold. In the first place, we could scarce avoid it, since you slept in the room through which we had to pass. In the second place——"

"Nay," said the page, "you may dispense with a second reason, when the first makes your confidence in me a case of necessity."

"Good now, hold thy peace," said Catherine. "In the second place, as I said before, there is one foolish person among us, who believes that Roland Græme's heart is warm, though his head is giddy—that his blood is pure, though it boils too hastily—and that his faith and honour are true as the load-star, though his tongue sometimes is far less than discreet."

This avowal Catherine repeated in a low tone, with her eyes fixed on the floor, as if she shunned the glance of Roland while she suffered it to escape her lips—"And this single friend," exclaimed the youth in rapture; "this only one who would do justice to the poor Roland Græme, and whose own generous heart taught her to distinguish between follies of the brain and faults of the heart—Will you not tell me, dearest Catherine, to whom I owe my most grateful, my most heartfelt thanks?"

"Nay," said Catherine, with her eyes still fixed on the ground, "if your own heart tell you not——"

"Dearest Catherine," said the page, seizing upon her hand, and kneeling on one knee.

"If your own heart, I say, tell you not," said Catherine, gently disengaging her hand, "it is very ungrateful; for since the maternal kindness of the Lady Fleming——"

The page started on his feet. "By Heaven, Catherine, your tongue wears as many disguises as your person. But you only mock me, cruel girl. You know the Lady Fleming has no more regard for any one than hath the forlorn princess who is wrought into yonder piece of old figured court-tapestry."

"It may be so," said Catherine Seyton, "but you should not speak so loud."

"Pshaw!" answered the page, but at the same time lowering his voice, "she cares for no one but herself and the queen. And you know, besides, there is no one of you whose opinion I value, if I have not your own. No—not that of Queen Mary herself."

"The more shame for you, if it be so," said Catherine, with great composure.

"Nay, but, fair Catherine," said the page, "why will you thus damp my ardour, when I am devoting myself, body and soul, to the cause of your mistress?"

"It is because in doing so," said Catherine, "you debase a cause so noble, by naming along with it any baser or more selfish motive. Believe me," she said, with kindling eyes, and while the blood mantled on her cheek, "they think vilely and falsely of women—I mean of those who deserve the name—who deem that they love the gratification of their vanity, or the mean purpose of engrossing a lover's admiration and affection, better than they love the virtue and honour of the man they may be brought

to prefer. He that serves his religion, his prince, and his country, with ardour and devotion, need not plead his cause with the common-place rant of romantic passion—the woman whom he honours with his love becomes his debtor, and her corresponding affection is engaged to repay his glorious toil.”

“You hold a glorious prize for such toil,” said the youth, bending his eyes on her with enthusiasm.

“Only a heart which knows how to value it,” said Catherine. “He that should free this injured princess from these dungeons, and set her at freedom among her free and warlike nobles, whose hearts are burning to welcome her—where is the maiden in Scotland, whom the love of such a hero would not honour, were she sprung from the blood royal of the land, and he the offspring of the poorest cottager that ever held a plough?”

“I am determined,” said Roland, “to take the adventure. Tell me first, however, fair Catherine, and speak it as if you were confessing to the priest—this poor queen, I know she is unhappy,—but, Catherine, do you hold her innocent? She is accused of murder.”

“Do I hold the lamb guilty because it is assailed by the wolf?” answered Catherine; “do I hold yonder sun polluted, because an earth-damp sullies his beams?”

The page sighed and looked down. “Would my conviction were as deep as thine! But one thing is clear, that in this captivity she hath wrong—She rendered herself up on a capitulation, and the terms have been refused her—I will embrace her quarrel to the death.”

“Will you—will you, indeed?” said Catherine, taking his hand in her turn. “O be but firm in mind, as thou art bold in deed and quick in resolution; keep but thy plighted faith, and after ages shall honour thee as the saviour of Scotland.”

“But when I have toiled successfully to win that Leah, Honour, thou wilt not, my Catherine,” said the page, “condemn me to a new term of service for that Rachel, Love?”

“Of that,” said Catherine, again extricating her hand from his grasp, “we shall have full time to speak; but Honour is the elder sister, and must be won the first.”

“I may not win her,” answered the page; “but I will venture fairly for her, and man can do no more. And know, fair Catherine, for you shall see the very secret thought of my heart, that not Honour only—not only that other and fairer sister, whom you frown on me for so much as mentioning—but the stern commands of duty also, compel me to aid the queen’s deliverance.”

“Indeed!” said Catherine; “you were wont to have doubts on that matter.”

“Ay, but her life was not then threatened,” replied Roland.

“And is it now more endangered than heretofore?” asked Catherine Seyton, in anxious terror.

“Be not alarmed,” said the page; “but you heard the terms on which your royal mistress parted with the Lady of Lochleven?”

“Too well—but too well,” said Catherine; “alas! that she cannot rule her princely resentment, and refrain from encounters like these!”

“That hath passed betwixt them,” said Roland, “for which woman never forgives woman. I saw the lady’s brow turn pale, and then black, when, before all the menzie, and in her moment of power, the queen humbled her to the dust by taxing her with her shame. And I heard the oath of deadly resentment and revenge which she muttered in the ear of one, who by his answer will, I judge, be but too ready an executioner of her will.”

“You terrify me,” said Catherine.

“Do not so take it—call up the masculine part of your spirit—we will counteract and defeat her plans, be they dangerous as they may. Why do you look upon me thus and weep?”

“Alas!” said Catherine, “because you stand there before me a living and breathing man, in all the adventurous glow and enterprise of youth, yet still possessing the frolic spirits of childhood—there you stand, full alike of generous enterprise and childish recklessness; and if to-day, to-morrow, or some such brief space, you lie a mangled and lifeless corpse upon the floor of these hateful dungeons, who but Catherine Seyton will be the cause of your brave and gay career being broken short as you start from the goal? Alas! she whom you have chosen to twine your wreath, may too probably have to work your shroud.”

“And be it so, Catherine,” said the page, in the full glow of youthful enthusiasm; “and do thou work my shroud; and if thou grace it with such tears as fall now at the thought, it will honour my remains more than an earl’s mantle would my living body. But shame on this faintness of heart! the time craves a firmer mood—Be a woman, Catherine, or rather be a man—thou canst be a man if thou wilt.”

Catherine dried her tears, and endeavoured to smile.

“You must not ask me,” she said, “about that which so much disturbs your mind; you shall know all in time—nay, you should know all now, but that—Hush! here comes the queen.”

Mary entered from her apartment, paler than usual, and apparently exhausted by a sleepless night, and by the painful thoughts which had ill supplied the place of repose; yet the languor of her looks was so far from impairing her beauty, that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the queen. Contrary to her wont, her toilette had been very hastily dispatched, and her hair, which was usually dressed by Lady Fleming with great care, escaping from beneath the head-tire, which had been hastily adjusted, fell in long and luxuriant tresses of nature’s own curling, over a neck and bosom which were somewhat less carefully veiled than usual.

As she stepped over the threshold of her apartment, Catherine, hastily drying her tears, ran to meet her royal mistress; and having first kneeled at her feet, and kissed her hand, instantly rose, and placing herself on the other side of the queen, seemed anxious to divide with the Lady Fleming the honour of supporting and assisting her. The page, on his part, advanced and put in order the chair of state, which she usually occupied; and having placed the cushion and footstool for her accommodation,

stepped back, and stood ready for service in the place usually occupied by his predecessor, the young senechal. Mary's eye rested an instant on him, and could not but remark the change of persons. Hers was not the female heart which could refuse compassion, at least, to a gallant youth who had suffered in her cause, although he had been guided in his enterprise by a too presumptuous passion; and the words "Poor Douglas!" escaped from her lips, perhaps unconsciously, as she leant herself back in her chair, and put the kerchief to her eyes.

"Yes, gracious madam," said Catherine, assuming a cheerful manner, in order to cheer her sovereign, "our gallant knight is indeed banished—the adventure was not reserved for him; but he has left behind him a youthful esquire, as much devoted to your grace's service, and who, by me, makes you tender of his hand and sword."

"If they may in aught avail your grace," said Roland Græme, bowing profoundly.

"Alas!" said the queen, "what needs this, Catherine?—why prepare new victims to be involved in, and overwhelmed by my cruel fortune?—were we not better cease to struggle, and ourselves sink in the tide without further resistance, than thus drag into destruction with us every generous heart which makes an effort in our favour?—I have had but too much of plot and intrigue around me since I was stretched an orphan child in my very cradle, while contending nobles strove which should rule in the name of the unconscious innocent. Surely time it were that all this busy and most dangerous coil should end. Let me call my prison a convent, and my seclusion a voluntary sequestration of myself from the world and its ways."

"Speak not thus, madam, before your faithful servants," said Catherine, "to discourage their zeal at once, and to break their hearts. Daughter of kings, be not in this hour so unkingly—Come, Roland, and let us, the youngest of her followers, show ourselves worthy of her cause—let us kneel before her footstool, and implore her to be her own magnanimous self." And leading Roland Græme to the queen's seat, they both kneeled down before her. Mary raised herself in her chair, and sat erect, while extending one hand to be kissed by the page, she arranged with the other the clustering locks which shaded the bold yet lovely brow of the high-spirited Catherine.

"Alas! *ma mignonne*," she said, for so in fondness she often called her young attendant, "that you should thus desperately mix with my unhappy fate the fortunes of your own young lives!—Are they not a lovely couple, my Fleming? and is it not heart-rending to think that I must be their ruin?"

"Not so," said Roland Græme, "it is we, gracious sovereign, who will be your deliverers."

"*Ex oribus parvulorum!*" said the queen, looking upward; "if it is by the mouth of these children that Heaven calls me to resume the stately thoughts which become my birth and my rights, thou wilt grant them thy protection, and to me the power of rewarding their zeal."—Then turning to Fleming, she instantly added,—"Thou knowest, my friend, whether to make those who have served me happy, was not ever Mary's favourite pastime. When I

have been rebuked by the stern preachers of the calvinistic heresy—when I have seen the fierce countenances of my nobles averted from me, has it not been because I mixed in the harmless pleasures of the young and gay, and, rather for the sake of their happiness than my own, have mingled in the masque, the song, or the dance, with the youth of my household. Well, I repent not of it—though Knox termed it sin, and Morton degradation—I was happy, because I saw happiness around me; and woe betide the wretched jealousy that can extract guilt out of the overflowings of an unguarded gaiety!—Fleming, if we are restored to our throne, shall we not have one blithesome day at a blithesome bridal, of which we must now name neither the bride nor the bridegroom? but that bridegroom shall have the barony of Blairgowrie, a fair gift even for a queen to give, and that bride's chaplet shall be twined with the fairest pearls that ever were found in the depths of Loch Lomond; and thou thyself, Mary Fleming, the best dresser of tresses that ever busked the tresses of a queen, and who would scorn to touch those of any woman of lower rank,—thou thyself shalt for my love twine them into the bride's tresses.—Look, my Fleming, suppose them such clustered locks as those of our Catherine, they would not put shame upon thy skill."

So saying, she passed her hand fondly over the head of her youthful favourite, while her more aged attendant replied despondently, "Alas! madam, your thoughts stray far from home."

"They do, my Fleming," said the queen, "but is it well or kind in you to call them back?—God knows, they have kept the perch this night but too closely—Come, I will recal the gay vision, were it but to punish them. Yes, at that blithesome bridal, Mary herself shall forget the weight of sorrows, and the toil of state, and herself once more lead a measure.—At whose wedding was it that we last danced, my Fleming? I think care has troubled my memory—yet something of it I should remember—canst thou not aid me?—I know thou canst."

"Alas! madam," replied the lady—

"What!" said Mary, "wilt thou not help us so far? this is a peevish adherence to thine own graver opinion, which holds our talk as folly. But thou art court-bred, and wilt well understand me when I say, the queen commands Lady Fleming to tell her where she led the last *branle*."

With a face deadly pale, and a mien as if she were about to sink into the earth, the court-bred dame, no longer daring to refuse obedience, faltered out—"Gracious lady—if my memory err not—it was at a masque in Holyrood—at the marriage of Sebastian."

The unhappy queen, who had hitherto listened with a melancholy smile, provoked by the reluctance with which the Lady Fleming brought out her story, at this ill-fated word, interrupted her with a shriek so wild and loud that the vaulted apartment rang, and both Roland and Catherine sprung to their feet in the utmost terror and alarm. Meantime, Mary seemed by the train of horrible ideas thus suddenly excited, surprised not only beyond self-command, but for the moment beyond the verge of reason.

"Traitor!" she said to the Lady Fleming, "thou

wouldst slay thy sovereign—Call my French guards—*à moi! à moi! mes Français!*—I am beset with traitors in mine own palace—they have murdered my husband—Rescue! Rescue! for the Queen of Scotland!” She started up from her chair—her features, late so exquisitely lovely in their paleness, now inflamed with the fury of frenzy, and resembling those of a Bellona. “We will take the field ourself,” she said; “warn the city—warn Lothian and Fife—saddle our Spanish barb, and bid French Paris see our petronel be charged.—Better to die at the head of our brave Scotchmen, like our grandfather at Flodden, than of a broken heart, like our ill-starred father.”

“Be patient—be composed, dearest sovereign,” said Catherine; and then addressing Lady Fleming angrily, she added, “How could you say aught that reminded her of her husband?”

The word reached the ear of the unhappy princess, who caught it up, speaking with great rapidity. “Husband!—what husband?—Not his most christian majesty—he is ill at ease—he cannot mount on horseback.—Not him of the Lennox—but it was the Duke of Orkney thou wouldst say.”

“For God’s love, madam, be patient!” said the Lady Fleming.

But the queen’s excited imagination could by no entreaty be diverted from its course. “Bid him come hither to our aid,” she said, “and bring with him his lambs, as he calls them—Bowton, Hay of Talla, Black Ormiston, and his kinsman Hob—Fie! how swart they are, and how they smell of sulphur! What! closeted with Morton? Nay, if the Douglas and the Hepburn hatch the complot together, the bird, when it breaks the shell, will scare Scotland. Will it not, my Fleming?”

“She grows wilder and wilder,” said Fleming; “we have too many hearers for these strange words.”

“Roland,” said Catherine, “in the name of God, begone! You cannot aid us here—Leave us to deal with her alone—Away—away!”

She thrust him to the door of the ante-room; yet even when he had entered that apartment, and shut the door, he could still hear the queen talk in a loud and determined tone, as if giving forth orders, until at length the voice died away in a feeble and continued lamentation.

At this crisis, Catherine entered the ante-room. “Be not too anxious,” she said, “the crisis is now over; but keep the door fast—let no one enter until she is more composed.”

“In the name of God, what does this mean?” said the page; “or what was there in the Lady Fleming’s words to excite so wild a transport?”

“Oh, the Lady Fleming, the Lady Fleming,” said Catherine, repeating the words impatiently, “the Lady Fleming is a fool!—she loves her mistress, yet knows so little how to express her love, that were the queen to ask her for very poison, she would deem it a point of duty not to resist her commands. I could have torn her starched head-tire from her formal head—The queen should have as soon had the heart out of my body, as the word Sebastian out of my lips—That that piece of weaved tapestry should be a woman, and yet not have wit enough to tell a lie!”

“And what was this story of Sebastian?” said the page. “By Heaven, Catherine, you are all riddles alike!”

“You are as great a fool as Fleming,” returned the impatient maiden; “know ye not, that on the night of Henry Darnley’s murder, and at the blowing-up of the Kirk of Field, the queen’s absence was owing to her attending on a masque at Holyrood, given by her to grace the marriage of this same Sebastian, who, himself a favoured servant, married one of her female attendants who was near to her person?”

“By Saint Giles,” said the page, “I wonder not at her passion, but only marvel by what forgetfulness it was that she could urge the Lady Fleming with such a question.”

“I cannot account for it,” said Catherine; “but it seems as if great and violent grief or horror sometimes obscure the memory, and spread a cloud, like that of an exploding cannon, over the circumstances with which they are accompanied. But I may not stay here, where I came not to moralize with your wisdom, but simply to cool my resentment against that unwise Lady Fleming, which I think hath now somewhat abated, so that I shall endure her presence without any desire to damage either her curch or vasquine. Meanwhile, keep fast that door—I would not for my life that any of these heretics saw her in the unhappy state, which, brought on her as it has been by the success of their own diabolical plottings, they would not stick to call, in their snuffing cant, the judgment of Providence.”

She left the apartment just as the latch of the outward door was raised from without. But the bolt which Roland had drawn on the inside resisted the efforts of the person desirous to enter. “Who is there?” said Græme aloud.

“It is I,” replied the harsh and yet slow voice of the steward Dryfesdale.

“You cannot enter now,” returned the youth.

“And wherefore?” demanded Dryfesdale, “seeing I come but to do my duty, and inquire what mean the shrieks from the apartment of the Moabitish lady. Wherefore, I say, since such is mine errand, can I not enter?”

“Simply,” replied the youth, “because the bolt is drawn, and I have no fancy to undo it. I have the right side of the door to-day, as you had last night.”

“Thou art ill-advised, thou malapert boy,” replied the steward, “to speak to me in such fashion; but I shall inform my lady of thine insolence.”

“The insolence,” said the page, “is meant for thee only, in fair guerdon of thy constant discourtesy to me. For thy lady’s information, I have answer more courteous—you may say that the queen is ill at ease, and desires to be disturbed neither by visits nor messages.”

“I conjure you, in the name of God,” said the old man, with more solemnity in his tone than he had hitherto used, “to let me know if her malady really gains power on her!”

“She will have no aid at your hand, or at your lady’s—wherefore, begone, and trouble us no more—we neither want nor will accept of aid at your hands.”

With this positive reply, the steward, grumbling and dissatisfied, returned down stairs.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves, who take their humours for a warrant
To break into the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law.

King John.

THE Lady of Lochleven sate alone in her chamber, endeavouring, with sincere but imperfect zeal, to fix her eyes and her attention on the black-lettered bible which lay before her, bound in velvet and embroidery, and adorned with massive silver clasps and knosps. But she found her utmost efforts unable to withdraw her mind from the resentful recollection of what had last night passed betwixt her and the queen, in which the latter had with such bitter taunt reminded her of her early and long-repented transgression.

Why, she said, should I resent so deeply, that another reproaches me with that which I have never ceased to make matter of blushing to myself? and yet, why should this woman, who reaps—at least, has reaped, the fruits of my folly, and has jostled my son aside from the throne, why should she, in the face of all my domestics, and of her own, dare to upbraid me with my shame and folly? Is she not in my power? does she not fear me? Ha! wily tempter, I will wrestle with thee strongly, and with better suggestions than my own evil heart can supply.

She again took up the sacred volume, and was endeavouring to fix her attention on its contents, when she was disturbed by a tap at the door of the room. It opened at her command, and the steward Dryfesdale entered, and stood before her with a gloomy and perturbed expression on his brow.

"What has chanced, Dryfesdale, that thou lookest thus?" said his mistress—"Have there been evil tidings of my son, or of my grandchildren?"

"No, lady," replied Dryfesdale, "but you were deeply insulted last night, and I fear me thou art as deeply avenged this morning—Where is the chaplain?"

"What mean you by hints so dark, and a question so sudden? The chaplain, as you well know, is absent at Perth upon an assembly of the brethren."

"I care not," answered the steward, "he is but a priest of Baal."

"Dryfesdale," said the lady, sternly, "what meanest thou? I have ever heard, that in the Low Countries thou didst herd with the anabaptist preachers, those boars which tear up the vintage—But the ministry which suits me and my house must content my retainers."

"I would I had good ghostly counsel though," replied the steward, not attending to his mistress's rebuke, and seeming to speak to himself; "this woman of Moab——"

"Speak of her with reverence," said the lady; "she is a king's daughter."

"Be it so," replied Dryfesdale; "she goes where there is little difference betwixt her and a beggar's child—Mary of Scotland is dying."

"Dying, and in my castle!" said the lady, starting up in alarm; "of what disease, or by what accident?"

"Bear patience, lady. The ministry was mine."

"Thine, villain and traitor!—how didst thou dare?"

"I heard you insulted, lady—I heard you demand vengeance—I promised it you, and I now bring tidings of it."

"Dryfesdale, I trust thou ravest," said the lady.

"I rave not," replied the steward; "that which was written of me a million of years ere I saw the light, must be executed by me. She hath that in her veins that, I fear me, will soon stop the springs of life."

"Cruel villain!" exclaimed the lady, "thou hast not poisoned her?"

"And if I had," said Dryfesdale, "what does it so greatly merit? Men bane vermin—why not rid them of their enemies so? in Italy they will do it for a cruizedor."

"Cowardly ruffian, begone from my sight!"

"Think better of my zeal, lady," said the steward, "and judge not without looking around you. Lindsay, Ruthven, and your kinsman Morton, poniarded Rizzio, and yet you now see no blood on their embroidery—the Lord Semple stabbed the Lord of Sanquhar—does his bonnet sit a jot more awry on his brow? What noble lives in Scotland who has not had a share, for policy or revenge, in some such dealing?—and who imputes it to them? Be not cheated with names—a dagger or a draught work to the same end, and are little unlike—a glass vial imprisons the one, and a leathern sheath the other—one deals with the brain, the other sluices the blood—Yet, I say not I gave aught to this lady."

"What dost thou mean by thus dallying with me?" said the lady; "as thou wouldst save thy neck from the rope it merits, tell me the whole truth of this story—thou hast long been known a dangerous man."

"Ay, in my master's service, I can be cold and sharp as my sword. Be it known to you, that when last on shore, I consulted with a woman of skill and power, called Nicneven, of whom the country has rung for this some brief time past. Fools asked her for charms to make them beloved, misers for means to increase their store; some demanded to know the future—an idle wish, since it cannot be altered; others would have an explanation of the past—idler still, since it cannot be recalled—I heard their queries with scorn, and demanded the means of avenging myself of a deadly enemy, for I grow old, and may trust no longer to Bilboa blade. She gave me a packet—Mix that, said she, with any liquid, and thy vengeance is complete."

"Villain! and you mixed it with the food of this imprisoned lady, to the dishonour of thy master's house?"

"To redeem the insulted honour of my master's house, I mixed the contents of the packet with the jar of succory-water; they seldom fail to drain it, and the woman loves it over all."

"It was a work of hell," said the Lady Lochleven, "both the asking and the granting.—Away, wretched man, let us see if aid be yet too late!"

"They will not admit us, madam, save we enter

by force—I have been twice at the door, but can obtain no entrance.”

“We will beat it level with the ground, if needful—And, hold—summon Randal hither instantly.—Randal, here is a foul and evil chance befallen—send off a boat instantly to Kinross, the chamberlain Luke Lundin is said to have skill—Fetch off, too, that foul witch Nicneven; she shall first counteract her own spell, and then be burnt to ashes in the island of Saint Serf. Away, away—Tell them to hoist sail and ply oar, as ever they would have good of the Douglas’s hand.”

“Mother Nicneven will not be lightly found or fetched hither on these conditions,” answered Dryfesdale.

“Then grant her full assurance of safety—Look to it, for thine own life must answer for this lady’s recovery.”

“I might have guessed that,” said Dryfesdale, sullenly; “but it is my comfort I have avenged mine own cause, as well as yours. She hath scoffed and scripped at me, and encouraged her saucy minion of a page to ridicule my stiff gait and slow speech. I felt it borne in upon me that I was to be avenged on them.”

“Go to the western turret,” said the lady, “and remain there in ward until we see how this gear will terminate. I know thy resolved disposition—thou wilt not attempt escape.”

“Not were the walls of the turret of egg-shells, and the lake sheeted with ice,” said Dryfesdale. “I am well taught, and strong in belief that man does nought of himself; he is but the foam on the billow, which rises, bubbles, and bursts, not by its own effort, but by the mightier impulse of fate, which urges him. Yet, lady, if I may advise, amid this zeal for the life of the Jezabel of Scotland, forget not what is due to thine own honour, and keep the matter secret as you may.”

So saying, the gloomy fatalist turned from her, and stalked off with sullen composure to the place of confinement allotted to him.

His lady caught at his last hint, and only expressed her fear that the prisoner had partaken of some unwholesome food, and was dangerously ill. The castle was soon alarmed and in confusion. Randal was dispatched to the shore to fetch off Lundin, with such remedies as could counteract poison; and with farther instructions to bring Mother Nicneven, if she could be found, with full power to pledge the Lady of Lochleven’s word for her safety.

Meanwhile the Lady of Lochleven herself held parley at the door of the queen’s apartment, and in vain urged the page to undo it.

“Foolish boy!” she said, “thine own life, and thy lady’s, are at stake—Open, I say, or we will cause the door to be broken down.”

“I may not open the door without my royal mistress’s orders,” answered Roland; “she has been very ill, and now she slumbers—if you wake her by using violence, let the consequence be on you and your followers.”

“Was ever woman in a strait so fearful?” said the Lady of Lochleven—“At least, thou rash boy, beware that no one tastes the food, but especially the jar of succory-water.”

She then hastened to the turret, where Dryfesdale had composedly resigned himself to imprisonment. She found him reading, and demanded of him, “Was thy fell potion of speedy operation?”

“Slow!” answered the steward. “The hag asked me which I chose—I told her I loved a slow and sure revenge. Revenge, said I, is the highest-flavoured draught which man tastes upon earth, and he should sip it by little and little—not drain it up greedily at once.”

“Against whom, unhappy man, couldst thou nourish so fell a revenge?”

“I had many objects, but the chief was that insolent page.”

“The boy!—thou inhuman man,” exclaimed the lady; “what could he do to deserve thy malice?”

“He rose in your favour, and you graced him with your commissions—that was one thing. He rose in that of George Douglas’s also—that was another. He was the favourite of the calvinistic Henderson, who hated me because my spirit disowns a separated priesthood. The Moabitish queen held him dear—winds from each opposing point blew in his favour—the old servitor of your house was held lightly among ye—above all, from the first time I saw his face, I longed to destroy him.”

“What fiend have I nurtured in my house?” replied the lady. “May God forgive me the sin of having given thee food and raiment!”

“You might not chuse, lady,” answered the steward. “Long ere this castle was builded—ay, long ere the islet which sustains it reared its head above the blue water, I was destined to be your faithful slave, and you to be my ungrateful mistress. Remember you not when I plunged amid the victorious French, in the time of this lady’s mother, and brought off your husband, when those who had hung at the same breasts with him dared not attempt the rescue?—Remember how I plunged into the lake when your grandson’s skiff was overtaken by the tempest, boarded and steered her safe to the land. Lady—the servant of a Scottish baron is he who regards not his own life, or that of any other, save his master. And, for the death of the woman, I had tried the potion on her sooner, had not Master George been her taster. Her death—would it not be the happiest news that Scotland ever heard? Is she not of the bloody Guisian stock, whose sword was so often red with the blood of God’s saints? Is she not the daughter of the wretched tyrant James, whom Heaven cast down from his kingdom, and his pride, even as the king of Babylon was smitten?”

“Peace, villain!” said the lady—a thousand varied recollections thronging on her mind at the mention of her royal lover’s name; “Peace, and disturb not the ashes of the dead—of the royal, of the unhappy dead. Read thy bible; and may God grant thee to avail thyself better of its contents than thou hast yet done.” She departed hastily, and as she reached the next apartment, the tears rose to her eyes so hastily, that she was compelled to stop and use her kerchief to dry them. “I expected not this,” she said, “no more than to have drawn water from the dry flint, or sap from a withered tree. I saw with a dry eye the apostacy and shame of George Doug-

las, the hope of my son's house—the child of my love; and yet I now weep for him who has so long lain in his grave—for him to whom I owe it, that his daughter can make a scoffing and a jest of my name! But she is *his* daughter—my heart, hardened against her for so many causes, relents when a glance of her eye places her father unexpectedly before me—and as often her likeness to that true daughter of the house of Guise, her detested mother, has again confirmed my resolution. But she must not—must not die in my house, and by so foul a practice. Thank God, the operation of the potion is slow, and may be counteracted. I will to her apartment once more. But O! that hardened villain, whose fidelity we held in such esteem, and had such high proof of! What miracle can unite so much wickedness, and so much truth, in one bosom?"

The Lady of Lochleven was not aware how far minds of a certain gloomy and determined cast by nature, may be warped by a keen sense of petty injuries and insults, combining with the love of gain, and sense of self-interest, and amalgamated with the crude, wild, and undigested fanatical opinions which this man had gathered among the crazy sectaries of Germany; or how far the doctrines of fatalism, which he had embraced so decidedly, sear the human conscience, by representing our actions as the result of inevitable necessity.

During her visit to the prisoner, Roland had communicated to Catherine the tenor of the conversation he had had with her at the door of the apartment. The quick intelligence of that lively maiden instantly comprehended the outline of what was believed to have happened, but her prejudices hurried her beyond the truth.

"They meant to have poisoned us," she exclaimed in horror, "and there stands the fatal liquor which should have done the deed!—ay, as soon as Douglas ceased to be our taster, our food was like to be fatally seasoned. Thou, Roland, who shouldst have made the essay, wert readily doomed to die with us. O, dearest Lady Fleming, pardon, pardon, for the injuries I said to you in my anger—your words were prompted by Heaven to save our lives, and especially that of the injured queen. But what have we now to do? that old crocodile of the lake will be presently back to shed her hypocritical tears over our dying agonies.—Lady Fleming, what shall we do?"

"Our Lady help us in our need!" she replied; "how should I tell—unless we were to make our plaint to the regent."

"Make our plaint to the devil," said Catherine, impatiently, "and accuse his dam at the foot of his burning throne!—the queen still sleeps—we must gain time. The poisoning hag must not know her scheme has miscarried! the old envenomed spider has but too many ways of mending her broken web.—The jar of succory-water," said she—"Roland, if thou be'st a man, help me—empty the jar on the chimney or from the window—make such waste among the viands as if we had made our usual meal, and leave the fragments on cup and porringer, but taste nothing, as thou lovest thy life. I will sit by the queen, and tell her at her waking, in what a fearful pass we stand. Her sharp wit and ready

VOL. III.

spirit will teach us what is best to be done. Meanwhile, till farther notice, observe, Roland, that the queen is in a state of torpor—that Lady Fleming is indisposed—that character (speaking in a lower tone) will suit her best, and save her wits some labour in vain. I am not so much indisposed, thou understandest."

"And I?" said the page—

"You?" replied Catherine, "you are quite well—who thinks it worth while to poison puppy-dogs or pages?"

"Does this levity become the time?" said the page.

"It does, it does," answered Catherine Seyton; "if the queen approves, I see plainly how this disconcerted attempt may do us good service."

She went to work while she spoke, eagerly assisted by Roland. The breakfast table soon displayed the appearance as if the ladies had eaten their meal as usual, and the ladies retired as softly as possible into the queen's sleeping apartment. At a new summons of the Lady Lochleven, the page undid the door and admitted her into the ante-room, asking her pardon for having withstood her, alleging in excuse, that the queen had fallen into a heavy slumber since she had broken her fast.

"She has eaten and drunken then?" said the Lady of Lochleven.

"Surely," replied the page, "according to her grace's ordinary custom, unless upon the fasts of the church."

"The jar," she said, hastily examining it, "it is empty—drank the Lady Mary the whole of this water?"

"A large part, madam; and I heard the Lady Catherine Seyton jestingly upbraid the Lady Mary Fleming with having taken more than a just share of what remained, so that but little fell to her own lot."

"And are they well in health?" said the Lady of Lochleven.

"Lady Fleming," said the page, "complains of lethargy, and looks duller than usual; and the Lady Catherine of Seyton feels her head somewhat more giddy than is her wont."

He raised his voice a little as he said these words, to apprise the ladies of the part assigned to each of them, and not, perhaps, without the wish of conveying to the ears of Catherine the page-like jest which lurked in the allotment.

"I will enter the queen's chamber," said the Lady Lochleven; "my business is express."

As she advanced to the door, the voice of Catherine Seyton was heard from within—"No one can enter here—the queen sleeps."

"I will not be controled, young lady," replied the Lady of Lochleven; "there is, I wot, no inner bar, and I will enter in your despite."

"There is, indeed, no inner bar," answered Catherine, firmly, "but there are the staples where that bar should be; and into those staples have I thrust mine arm, like an ancestress of your own, when, better employed than the Douglasses of our days, she thus defended the bed-chamber of her sovereign against murderers. Try your force, then, and see whether a Seyton cannot rival in courage a maiden of the house of Douglas."

"I dare not attempt the pass at such risk," said the Lady of Lochleven; "strange, that this princess, with all that justly attaches to her as blame-worthy, should preserve such empire over the minds of her attendants.—Damsel, I give thee my honour that I come for the queen's safety and advantage. Awaken her, if thou lovest her, and pray her leave that I may enter—I will retire from the door the whilst."

"Thou wilt not awaken the queen?" said the Lady Fleming.

"What choice have we?" said the ready-witted maiden, "unless you deem it better to wait till the Lady Lochleven herself plays lady of the bed-chamber. Her fit of patience will not last long, and the queen must be prepared to meet her."

"But thou wilt bring back her grace's fit by thus disturbing her."

"Heaven forbid!" replied Catherine; "but if so, it must pass for an effect of the poison. I hope better things, and that the queen will be able when she wakes to form her own judgment in this terrible crisis. Meanwhile, do thou, dear Lady Fleming, practise to look as dull and heavy as the alertness of thy spirit will permit."

Catherine kneeled by the side of the queen's bed, and kissing her hand repeatedly, succeeded at last in awakening without alarming her. She seemed surprised to find that she was ready dressed, but sate up in her bed, and appeared so perfectly composed, that Catherine Seyton, without farther preamble, judged it safe to inform her of the predicament in which they were placed. Mary turned pale, and crossed herself again and again, when she heard the imminent danger in which she had stood. But, like the Ulysses of Homer,

—hardly waking, yet

Sprung in her mind the momentary wit,

and she at once understood her situation, with the dangers and advantages that attended it.

"We cannot do better," she said, after her hasty conference with Catherine, pressing her at the same time to her bosom, and kissing her forehead; "we cannot do better than to follow the scheme so happily devised by thy quick wit and bold affection. Undo the door to the Lady Lochleven—she shall meet her match in art, though not in perfidy. Fleming, draw close the curtain, and get thee behind it—thou art a better tire-woman than an actress; but do but breathe heavily, and, if thou wilt, groan slightly, and it will top thy part. Hark! they come. Now, Catherine of Medicis, may thy spirit inspire me, for a cold northern brain is too blunt for this scene!"

Ushered by Catherine Seyton, and stepping as light as she could, the Lady Lochleven was ushered into the twilight apartment, and conducted to the side of the couch, where Mary, pallid and exhausted from a sleepless night, and the subsequent agitation of the morning, lay extended so listlessly as might well confirm the worst fears of her hostess.

"Now, God forgive us our sins!" said the Lady of Lochleven, forgetting her pride, and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed; "it is too true—she is murdered."

"Who is in the chamber?" said Mary, as if

awaking from a heavy sleep; "Seyton, Fleming, where are you? I heard a strange voice. Who waits?—Call Courselles."

"Alas! her memory is at Holyrood, though her body is at Lochleven.—Forgive, madam," continued the lady, "if I call your attention to me—I am Margaret Erskine, of the house of Mar, by marriage Lady Douglas of Lochleven."

"O, our gentle hostess," answered the queen, "who hath such care of our lodgings and of our diet—We cumber you too much and too long, good Lady of Lochleven; but we now trust your task of hospitality is well nigh ended."

"Her words go like a knife through my heart," said the Lady of Lochleven—"With a breaking heart, I pray your grace to tell me what is your ailment, that aid may be had if there be yet time?"

"Nay, my ailment," replied the queen, "is nothing—nothing worth telling, or worth a leech's notice—my limbs feel heavy—my heart feels cold—a prisoner's limbs and heart are rarely otherwise—fresh air, methinks, and freedom, would soon revive me; but, as the estates have ordered it, death alone can break my prison-doors."

"Were it possible, madam," said the lady, "that your liberty could restore your perfect health, I would myself encounter the resentment of the regent—of my son, Sir William—of my whole friends, rather than you should meet your fate in this castle."

"Alas! madam," said the Lady Fleming, who conceived the time propitious to show that her own address had been held too lightly of; "it is but trying what good freedom may work upon us; for myself, I think a free walk on the green-sward would do me much good at heart."

The Lady of Lochleven rose from the bed-side, and darted a penetrating look at the elder valetudinary. "Are you so evil-disposed, Lady Fleming?"

"Evil-disposed indeed, madam," replied the court dame, "and more especially since breakfast."

"Help! help!" exclaimed Catherine, anxious to break off a conversation which boded her schemes no good; "Help! I say, help! the queen is about to pass away. Aid her, Lady Lochleven, if you be a woman."

The lady hastened to support the queen's head, who, turning her eyes towards her with an air of great languor, exclaimed, "Thanks, my dearest Lady of Lochleven—notwithstanding some passages of late, I have never misconstrued or misdoubted your affection to our house. It was proved, as I have heard, before I was born."

The Lady Lochleven sprang from the floor on which she had again knelt, and having paced the apartment in great disorder, flung open the lattice, as if to get air.

"Now, Our Lady forgive me!" said Catherine to herself. "How deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit." She then adventured, stooping over the queen's person, to press her arm with her hand, saying at the same time, "For God's sake, madam, restrain yourself."

"Thou art too forward, maiden," said the queen; but immediately added, in a low whisper, "Forgive

me, Catherine; but when I felt the hag's murderous hands busy about my head and neck, I felt such disgust and hatred, that I must have said something, or died. But I will be schooled to better haviour—only see that thou let her not touch me."

"Now, God be praised!" said the Lady Lochleven, withdrawing her head from the window, "the boat comes as fast as sail and oar can send wood through water—It brings the leech and a female—certainly, from the appearance, the very person I was in quest of. Were she but well out of this castle, with our honour safe, I would that she were on the top of the wildest mountain in Norway, or I would I had been there myself, ere I had undertaken this trust."

While she thus expressed herself, standing apart at one window, Roland Græme, from the other, watched the boat bursting through the waters of the lake, which glided from its side in ripple and in foam. He, too, became sensible, that at the stern was seated the medical chamberlain, clad in his black velvet cloak; and that his own relative, Magdalen Græme, in her assumed character of Mother Nicneven, stood in the bow, her hands clasped together, and pointed towards the castle, and her attitude, even at that distance, expressing enthusiastic eagerness to arrive at the landing-place. They arrived there accordingly; and while the supposed witch was detained in a room beneath, the physician was ushered to the queen's apartment, which he entered with all due professional solemnity. Catherine had, in the meanwhile, fallen back from the queen's bed, and taken an opportunity to whisper to Roland, "Methinks, from the information of the thread-bare velvet cloak and the solemn beard, there would be little trouble in haltering yonder ass. But thy grandmother, Roland—thy grandmother's zeal will ruin us, if she get not a hint to dissemble."

Roland, without reply, glided toward the door of the apartment, crossed the parlour, and safely entered the ante-chamber; but when he attempted to pass farther, the word "Back! Back!" echoed from one to the other, by two men armed with carabines, convinced him that the Lady of Lochleven's suspicions had not, even in the midst of her alarms, been so far lulled to sleep as to omit the precaution of stationing sentinels on her prisoners. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the parlour, or audience-chamber, in which he found the lady of the castle in conference with her learned leech.

"A truce with your cant phrase and your solemn foppery, Lundin," in such terms she accosted the man of art, "and let me know instantly, if thou canst tell, whether this lady hath swallowed aught that is less than wholesome."

"Nay, but, good lady—honoured patroness—to whom I am alike bondsman in my medical and official capacity, deal reasonably with me. If this, mine illustrious patient, will not answer a question, saving with sighs and moans—if that other honourable lady will do nought but yawn in my face when I inquire after the diagnostics—and if that other young damsel, who I profess is a comely maiden—"

"Talk not to me of comeliness or of damsels,"

said the Lady of Lochleven; "I say, are they evil-disposed?—In one word, man, have they taken poison, ay or no?"

"Poisons, madam," said the learned leech, "are of various sorts. There is your animal poison, as the *lepus marinus*, as mentioned by Dioscorides and Galen—there are mineral and semi-mineral poisons, as those compounded of sublimate regulus of antimony, vitriol, and the arsenical salts—there are your poisons from herbs and vegetables, as the aqua cymbalariae, opium, aconitum, cantharides, and the like—there are also—"

"Now, out upon thee for a learned fool! and I myself am no better for expecting an oracle from such a log," said the lady.

"Nay, but if your ladyship will have patience—if I knew what food they have partaken of, or could see but the remnants of what they have last eaten—for as to the external and internal symptoms, I can discover nought like; for, as Galen saith in his second book *de Antidotis*—"

"Away, fool!" said the lady; "send me that hag hither; she shall avouch what it was that she hath given to the wretch Dryfesdale, or the pilnie-winks and thumbikins shall wrench it out of her finger-joints."

"Art hath no enemy unless the ignorant," said the mortified doctor; veiling, however, his remark under the Latin version, and stepping apart into a corner to watch the result.

In a minute or two, Magdalen Græme entered the apartment, dressed as we have described her at the revel, but with her muffler thrown back, and all affectation of disguise. She was attended by two guards, of whose presence she did not seem even to be conscious, and who followed her with an air of embarrassment and timidity, which was probably owing to their belief in her supernatural power, coupled with the effect produced by her bold and undaunted demeanour. She confronted the Lady of Lochleven, who seemed to endure with high disdain the confidence of her look and manner.

"Wretched woman!" said the lady, after es-saying for a moment to bear her down, before she addressed her, by the stately severity of her look, "what was that powder which thou didst give to a servant of this house, by name Robert Dryfesdale, that he might work out with it some slow and secret vengeance?—Confess its nature and properties, or, by the honour of Douglas, I give thee to fire and stake before the sun is lower!"

"Alas!" said Magdalen Græme in reply, "and when became a Douglas or a Douglas's man so unfurnished of his means of revenge, that he should seek them at the hands of a poor and solitary woman? The towers in which your captives pine away into unpitied graves, yet stand fast on the foundation—the crimes wrought in them have not yet burst their vaults asunder—your men have still their cross-bows, pistolets, and daggers—why need you seek to herbs or charms for the execution of your revenges?"

"Hear me, foul hag!" said the Lady of Lochleven,—"but what avails speaking to thee?—Bring Dryfesdale hither, and let them be confronted together."

"You may spare your retainers the labour," replied Magdalen Græme. "I came not here to be confronted with a base groom, nor to answer the interrogatories of James's heretical leman—I came to speak with the Queen of Scotland—Give place there!"

And while the Lady of Lochleven stood confounded at her boldness, and at the reproach she had cast upon her, Magdalen Græme strode past her into the bed-chamber of the queen, and kneeling on the floor, made a salutation as if, in the Oriental fashion, she meant to touch the earth with her forehead.

"Hail, princess!" she said, "hail, daughter of many a king, but graced above them all in that thou art called to suffer for the true faith!—hail to thee, the pure gold of whose crown has been tried in the seven-times heated furnace of affliction—hear the comfort which God and Our Lady send thee by the mouth of thy unworthy servant.—But first," and stooping her head she crossed herself repeatedly, and, still upon her knees, appeared to be rapidly reciting some formula of devotion.

"Seize her and drag her to the Massymore!—to the deepest dungeon with the sorceress, whose master, the devil, could alone have inspired her with boldness enough to insult the mother of Douglas in his own castle."

Thus spoke the incensed Lady of Lochleven, but the physician presumed to interpose.

"I pray of you, honoured madam, she be permitted to take her course without interruption. Peradventure, we shall learn something concerning the nostrum she hath ventured, contrary to law and the rules of art, to adhibit to these ladies, through the medium of the steward Dryfesdale."

"For a fool," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "thou hast counseled wisely—I will bridle my resentment till their conference be over."

"God forbid, honoured lady," said Doctor Lundin, "that you should suppress it longer—nothing may more endanger the frame of your honoured body; and truly, if there be witchcraft in this matter, it is held by the vulgar, and even by solid authors on demonology, that three scruples of the ashes of the witch, when she hath been well and carefully burnt at a stake, is a grand catholicon in such matter, even as they prescribe *crinis canis rabidi*, a hair of the dog that bit the patient, in cases of hydrophobia. I warrant neither treatment, being out of the regular practice of the schools; but in the present case, there can be little harm in trying the conclusion upon this old necromancer and quack-salver—*fiat experimentum* (as we say) *in corpore vili*."

"Peace, fool!" said the lady, "she is about to speak."

At that moment Magdalen Græme arose from her knees, and turned her countenance on the queen, at the same time advancing her foot, extending her arm, and assuming the mien and attitude of a sibyl in frenzy. As her grey hair floated back from under her coif, and her eye gleamed fire from under its shaggy eye-brow, the effect of her expressive, though emaciated features, was heightened by an enthusiasm approaching to insanity, and her appearance struck with awe all who were present. Her eyes for a time glanced wildly around, as if seeking

for something to aid her in collecting her powers of expression; and her lips had a nervous and quivering motion, as those of one who would fain speak, yet rejects as inadequate the words which present themselves. Mary herself caught the infection, as if by a sort of magnetic influence, and raising herself from her bed, without being able to withdraw her eyes from those of Magdalen, waited as if for the oracle of a Pythoness. She waited not long; for no sooner had the enthusiast collected herself, than her gaze became intensely steady, her features assumed a determined energy, and no sooner did she begin to speak, than the words flowed from her with a profuse fluency, which might have passed for inspiration, and which, perhaps, she herself mistook for such.

"Arise," she said, "Queen of France and of England! Arise, lioness of Scotland, and be not dismayed, though the nets of the hunters have encircled thee! Stoop not to feign with the false ones, whom thou shalt soon meet in the field. The issue of battle is with the God of armies, but by battle thy cause shall be tried. Lay aside, then, the arts of lower mortals, and assume those which become a queen! True defender of the only true faith, the armory of Heaven is open to thee. Faithful daughter of the church, take the keys of St Peter, to bind and to loose!—Royal princess of the land, take the sword of St Paul, to smite and to shear! There is darkness in thy destiny;—but not in these towers, not under the rule of their haughty mistress shall that destiny be closed—In other lands the lioness may crouch to the power of the tigress, but not in her own—not in Scotland shall the Queen of Scotland long remain captive—nor is the fate of the royal Stuart in the hands of the traitor Douglas. Let the Lady of Lochleven double her bolts and deepen her dungeons, they shall not retain thee—each element shall give thee its assistance ere thou shalt continue captive—the land shall lend its earthquakes, the water its waves, the air its tempests, the fire its devouring flames, to desolate this house, rather than it shall continue the place of thy captivity.—Hear this and tremble, all ye who fight against the light, for she says it to whom it hath been assured!"

She was silent, and the astonished physician said, "If there was ever an *énergumène*, or possessed demoniac, in our days, there is a devil speaking with that woman's tongue."

"Practice," said the Lady of Lochleven, recovering her surprise; "here is all practice and imposture—To the dungeon with her!"

"Lady of Lochleven," said Mary, arising from her bed, and coming forward with her wonted dignity, "ere you make arrest on any one in our presence, hear me but one word. I have done you some wrong—I believed you privy to the murderous purpose of your vassal, and I deceived you in suffering you to believe it had taken effect. I did you wrong, Lady of Lochleven, for I perceive your purpose to aid me was sincere. We tasted not of the liquid, nor are we now sick, save that we languish for our freedom."

"It is avowed like Mary of Scotland," said Magdalen Græme; "and know, besides, that had the

queen drained the draught to the dregs, it was harmless as the water from a sainted spring. Trow ye, proud woman," she added, addressing herself to the Lady of Lochleven, "that I—I—would have been the wretch to put poison in the hands of a servant or vassal of the house of Lochleven, knowing whom that house contained? as soon would I have furnished drug to slay my own daughter."

"Am I thus bearded in mine own castle?" said the lady; "to the dungeon with her!—she shall abye what is due to the vender of poisons and practitioner of witchcrafts."

"Yet hear me for an instant, Lady of Lochleven," said Mary; "and do you," to Magdalen, "be silent at my command.—Your steward, lady, has by confession attempted my life, and those of my household, and this woman hath done her best to save them, by furnishing him with what was harmless, in place of the fatal drugs which he expected. Methinks I propose to you but a fair exchange, when I say I forgive your vassal with all my heart, and leave vengeance to God and to his conscience, so that you also forgive the boldness of this woman in your presence; for we trust you do not hold it as a crime, that she substituted an innocent beverage for the mortal poison which was to have drenched our cup."

"Heaven forefend, madam," said the lady, "that I should account that a crime which saved the house of Douglas from a foul breach of honour and hospitality! We have written to our son touching our vassal's delict, and he must abide his doom, which will most likely be death. Touching this woman, her trade is damnable by scripture, and is mortally punished by the wise laws of our ancestry—she also must abide her doom."

"And have I then," said the queen, "no claim on the house of Lochleven for the wrong I have so nearly suffered within their walls? I ask but in requital the life of a frail and aged woman, whose brain, as yourself may judge, seems somewhat affected by years and suffering."

"If the Lady Mary," replied the inflexible Lady of Lochleven, "hath been menaced with wrong in the house of Douglas, it may be regarded as some compensation, that her complots have cost that house the exile of a valued son."

"Plead no more for me, my gracious sovereign," said Magdalen Græme, "nor abase yourself to ask so much as a grey hair of my head at her hands. I knew the risk at which I served my church and my queen, and was ever prompt to pay my poor life as the ransom. It is a comfort to think, that in slaying me, or in restraining my freedom, or even in injuring that single grey hair, the house, whose honour she boasts so highly, will have filled up the measure of their shame by the breach of their solemn written assurance of safety."—And taking from her bosom a paper, she handed it to the queen.

"It is a solemn assurance of safety in life and limb," said Queen Mary, "with space to come and to go, under the hand and seal of the Chamberlain of Kinross, granted to Magdalen Græme, commonly called Mother Nicneven, in consideration of her consenting to put herself, for the space of twenty-four hours, if required, within the iron gate of the Castle of Lochleven."

"Knave!" said the lady, turning to the chamberlain, "how dared you grant her such a protection!"

"It was by your ladyship's orders, transmitted by Randal, as he can bear witness," replied Doctor Lundin; "nay, I am only like the pharmacopolist, who compounds the drugs after the order of the mediciner."

"I remember—I remember," answered the lady, "but I meant the assurance only to be used in case, by residing in another jurisdiction, she could not have been apprehended under our warrant."

"Nevertheless," said the queen, "the Lady of Lochleven is bound by the action of her deputy in granting the assurance."

"Madam," replied the lady, "the house of Douglas have never broken their safe-conduct, and never will do—too deeply did they suffer by such a breach of trust, exercised on themselves when your grace's ancestor, the second James, in defiance of the rights of hospitality, and of his own written assurance of safety, poniarded the brave Earl of Douglas with his own hand, and within two yards of the social board, at which he had just before sate the King of Scotland's honoured guest."

"Methinks," said the queen, carelessly, "in consideration of so very recent and enormous a tragedy, which I think only chanced some six score years ago, the Douglasses should have shown themselves less tenacious of the company of their sovereigns, than you, Lady of Lochleven, seem to be of mine."

"Let Randal," said the lady, "take the hag back to Kinross, and set her at full liberty, discharging her from our bounds in future, on peril of her head,—And let your wisdom," to the chamberlain, "keep her company. And fear not for your character, though I send you in such company; for, granting her to be a witch, it would be a waste of fagots to burn you for a wizard."

The crest-fallen chamberlain was preparing to depart; but Magdalen Græme, collecting herself, was about to reply, when the queen interposed, saying, "Good mother, we heartily thank you for your unfeigned zeal towards our person, and pray you, as our liege-woman, that you abstain from whatever may lead you into personal danger; and, further, it is our will that you depart without a word of further parley with any one in this castle. For thy present guerdon, take this small reliquary—it was given to us by our uncle the cardinal, and hath had the benediction of the holy father himself—and now depart in peace and in silence.—For you, learned sir," continued the queen, advancing to the doctor, who made his reverence in a manner doubly embarrassed by the awe of the queen's presence, which made him fear to do too little, and by the apprehension of his lady's displeasure, in case he should chance to do too much; "for you, learned sir, as it was not your fault, though surely our own good fortune, that we did not need your skill at this time, it would not become us, however circumstanced, to suffer our leech to leave us without such guerdon as we can offer."

With these words, and with the grace which never forsook her, though, in the present case, there might lurk under it a little gentle ridicule, she offered a small embroidered purse to the chamberlain, who, with extended hand and arched back, his learned face

stooping until a physiognomist might have practised the metoscopical science upon it, as seen from behind betwixt his gambadoes, was about to accept of the professional recompense, offered by so fair as well as illustrious a hand. But the lady interposed, and, regarding the chamberlain, said aloud, "No servant of our house, without instantly relinquishing that character, and incurring withal our highest displeasure, shall dare receive any gratuity at the hand of the Lady Mary."

Sadly and slowly the chamberlain raised his depressed stature into the perpendicular attitude, and left the apartment dejectedly, followed by Magdalen Græme, after, with mute but expressive gesture, she had kissed the reliquary with which the queen had presented her, and raising her clasped hands and uplifted eyes towards heaven, had seemed to entreat a benediction upon the royal dame. As she left the castle and went towards the quay where the boat lay, Roland Græme, anxious to communicate with her if possible, threw himself in her way, and might have succeeded in exchanging a few words with her as she was guarded only by the dejected chamberlain and his halberdiers; but she seemed to have taken, in its most strict and literal acceptation, the command to be silent, which she had received from the queen, for to the repeated signs of her grandson she only replied by laying her finger on her lip. Dr Lundin was not so reserved. Regret for the handsome gratuity, and for the compulsory task of self-denial imposed on him, had grieved the spirit of that worthy officer and learned mediciner—"Even thus, my friend," said he, squeezing the page's hand as he bade him farewell, "is merit rewarded. I came to cure this unhappy lady—and I profess she well deserves the trouble, for say what they will of her, she hath a most winning manner, a sweet voice, a gracious smile, and a most majestic wave of her hand. If she was not poisoned, say, my dear Master Roland, was that fault of mine, I being ready to cure her if she had?—and now I am denied the permission to accept my well-earned honorarium.—O Galen! O Hippocrates! is the graduate's cap and doctor's scarlet brought to this pass! *Frustra fatigamus remediis ægros.*"

He wiped his eyes, stepped on the gunwale, and the boat pushed off from the shore, and went merrily across the lake, which was dimpled by the summer wind.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Death distant?—No, alas! he's ever with us,
And shakes the dart at us in all our actings:
He lurks within our cup, while we're in health;
Sits by our sick-bed, mocks our medicines;
We cannot walk, or sit, or ride, or travel,
But death is by to seize us when he lists.

The Spanish Father.

FROM the agitating scene in the queen's presence-chamber, the Lady of Lochleven retreated to her own apartment, and ordered the steward to be called before her.

"Have they not disarmed thee, Dryfesdale?" she said, on seeing him enter accoutred, as usual, with sword and dagger.

"No!" replied the old man; "how should they?—Your ladyship, when you commanded me to ward, said nought of laying down my arms; and, I think, none of your menials, without your order, or your son's, dare approach Jasper Dryfesdale for such a purpose. Shall I now give up my sword to you?—it is worth little now, for it has fought for your house till it is worn down to cold iron, like the pantler's old chipping knife."

"You have attempted a deadly crime—poison under trust."

"Under trust!—hem—I know not what your ladyship thinks of it, but the world without thinks the trust was given you even for that very end; and you would have been well off had it been so ended as I proposed, and you neither the worse nor the wiser."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the lady, "and fool as villain, who could not even execute the crime he had planned!"

"I bid as fair for it as man could," replied Dryfesdale; "I went to a woman—a witch and a papist—If I found not poison, it was because it was otherwise predestined. I tried fair for it; but the half-done job may be clouted, if you will."

"Villain! I am even now about to send off an express messenger to my son, to take order how thou shouldst be disposed of. Prepare thyself for death if thou canst."

"He that looks on death, lady," answered Dryfesdale, "as that which he may not shun, and which has its own fixed and certain hour, is ever prepared for it. He that is hanged in May will eat no flaunes in Midsummer—so there is the moan made for the old serving-man. But whom, pray I, send you on so fair an errand?"

"There will be no lack of messengers," answered his mistress.

"By my hand, but there will," replied the old man; "your castle is but poorly manned, considering the watches that you must keep, having this charge—There is the warder, and two others, whom you discarded for tampering with Master George; then for the warder's tower, the baillie, the donjon—five men mount each guard, and the rest must sleep for the most part in their clothes. To send away another man, were to harass the sentinels to death—unthrifty misuse for a household. To take in new soldiers were dangerous, the charge requiring tried men. I see but one thing for it—I will do your errand to Sir William Douglas myself."

"That were indeed a resource!—And on what day within twenty years would it be done?" said the lady.

"Even with the speed of man and horse," said Dryfesdale; "for though I care not much about the latter days of an old serving-man's life, yet I would like to know as soon as may be whether my neck is mine own, or the hangman's."

"Holdest thou thy own life so lightly!" said the lady.

"Else I had recked more of that of others," said the predestinarian—"What is death?—it is but ceasing to live—And what is living?—a weary return of light and darkness, sleeping and waking, being hungered and eating. Your dead man needs neither candle nor can, neither fire nor feather-bed;

and the joiner's chest serves him for an eternal frieze-jerkin."

"Wretched man! believest thou not that after the death comes the judgment?"

"Lady," answered Dryfesdale, "as my mistress, I may not dispute your words; but, as spiritually speaking, you are still but a burner of bricks in Egypt, ignorant of the freedom of the saints; for, as was well shown to me by that gifted man, Nicolaus Schœfferbach, who was martyred by the bloody Bishop of Munster, he cannot sin who doth but execute that which is predestined, since——"

"Silence!" said the lady, interrupting him—"Answer me not with thy bold and presumptuous blasphemy, but hear me—Thou hast been long the servant of our house."——

"The born-servant of the Douglas—they have had the best of me—I served them since I left Lockerbie: I was then ten years old, and you may soon add the threescore to it."

"Thy foul attempt has miscarried, so thou art guilty only in intention. It were a deserved deed to hang thee on the warder's tower; and yet, in thy present mind, it were but giving a soul to Satan. I take thine offer, then—Go hence—here is my packet—I will add to it but a line, to desire him to send me a faithful servant or two to complete the garrison. Let my son deal with you as he will. If thou art wise, thou wilt make for Lockerbie so soon as thy foot touches dry land, and let the packet find another bearer; at all rates, look it miscarries not."

"Nay, madam," replied he—"I was born, as I said, the Douglas's servant, and I will be no corbie-messenger in mine old age—your message to your son shall be done as truly by me as if it concerned another man's neck. I take my leave of your honour."

The lady issued her commands, and the old man was ferried over to the shore, to proceed in his extraordinary pilgrimage. It is necessary the reader should accompany him on his journey, which Providence had determined should not be of long duration.

On arriving at the village, the steward, although his disgrace had transpired, was readily accommodated with a horse, by the chamberlain's authority; and the roads being by no means esteemed safe, he associated himself with Auchtermuchty, the common carrier, in order to travel in his company to Edinburgh.

The worthy waggoner, according to the established custom of all carriers, stage-coachmen, and other persons in such public authority, from the earliest days to the present, never wanted good reasons for stopping upon the road, as often and wherever he would; and the place which had most captivation for him as a resting-place was a change-house, as it was termed, not very distant from a romantic dell, well known by the name of Keiry-craigs. Attractions of a kind very different from those which arrested the progress of John Auchtermuchty and his wains, still continue to hover round this romantic spot, and none has visited its vicinity without a desire to remain long and to return soon.

Arrived near his favourite *howff*, not all the authority of Dryfesdale (much diminished indeed by the rumours of his disgrace) could prevail on the carrier, obstinate as the brutes which he drove, to pass on

without his accustomed halt, for which the distance he had travelled furnished little or no pretence. Old Keltie, the landlord, who has bestowed his name on a bridge in the neighbourhood of his quondam dwelling, received the carrier with his usual festive cordiality, and adjourned with him into the house, under pretence of important business, which, I believe, consisted in their emptying together a mutchkin stoup of usquebaugh. While the worthy host and his guest were thus employed, the discarded steward, with a double portion of moroseness in his gesture and look, walked discontentedly into the kitchen of the place, which was occupied but by one guest. The stranger was a slight figure, scarce above the age of boyhood, and in the dress of a page, but bearing an air of haughty aristocratic boldness and even insolence in his look and manner, that might have made Dryfesdale conclude he had pretensions to superior rank, had not his experience taught him how frequently these airs of superiority were assumed by the domestics and military retainers of the Scottish nobility.—"The pilgrim's morning to you, old sir," said the youth; "you come, as I think, from Lochleven Castle—What news of our bonnie queen?—a fairer dove was never pent up in so wretched a dovecot."

"They that speak of Lochleven, and of those whom its walls contain," answered Dryfesdale, "speak of what concerns the Douglas; and they who speak of what concerns the Douglas, do it at their peril."

"Do you speak from fear of them, old man, or would you make a quarrel for them?—I should have deemed your age might have cooled your blood."

"Never, while there are empty-pated coxcombs at each corner to keep it warm."

"The sight of thy grey hairs keeps mine cold," said the boy, who had risen up and now sat down again.

"It is well for thee, or I had cooled it with this holly-rod," replied the steward. "I think thou be'st one of those swash-bucklers, who brawl in ale-houses and taverns; and who, if words were pikes, and oaths were Andrew Ferraras, would soon place the religion of Babylon in the land once more, and the woman of Moab upon the throne."

"Now, by Saint Bennet of Seyton," said the youth, "I will strike thee on the face, thou foul-mouthed old railing heretic!"

"Saint Bennet of Seyton!" echoed the steward; "a proper warrant is Saint Bennet's, and for a proper nest of wolf-birds like the Seytons—I will arrest thee as a traitor to King James and the good regent.—Ho! John Auchtermuchty, raise aid against the king's traitor!"

So saying, he laid his hand on the youth's collar, and drew his sword. John Auchtermuchty looked in, but, seeing the naked weapon, ran faster out than he entered. Keltie, the landlord, stood by and helped neither party, only exclaiming, "Gentlemen! gentlemen! for the love of Heaven!" and so forth. A struggle ensued, in which the young man, chafed at Dryfesdale's boldness, and unable, with the ease he expected, to extricate himself from the old man's determined grasp, drew his dagger, and, with the speed of light, dealt him three wounds in the breast

and body, the least of which was mortal. The old man sunk on the ground with a deep groan, and the host set up a piteous exclamation of surprise.

"Peace, ye bawling hound!" said the wounded steward; "are dagger-stabs and dying men such rarities in Scotland, that you should cry as if the house were falling?—Youth, I do not forgive thee, for there is nought betwixt us to forgive. Thou hast done what I have done to more than one—And I suffer what I have seen them suffer—it was all ordained to be thus and not otherwise—But if thou wouldst do me right, thou wilt send this packet safely to the hands of Sir William of Douglas; and see that my memory suffer not, as if I would have loitered on mine errand for fear of my life."

The youth, whose passion had subsided the instant he had done the deed, listened with sympathy and attention, when another person, muffled in his cloak, entered the apartment, and exclaimed—"Good God! Dryfesdale, and expiring!"

"Ay, and Dryfesdale would that he had been dead," answered the wounded man, "rather than that his ears had heard the words of the only Douglas that ever was false—but yet it is better as it is. Good my murderer, and the rest of you, stand back a little, and let me speak with this unhappy apostate.—Kneel down by me, Master George—You have heard that I failed in my attempt to take away that Moabitish stumbling-block and her retinue—I gave them that which I thought would have removed the temptation out of thy path—and this, though I had other reasons to show to thy mother and others, I did chiefly purpose for the love of thee."

"For the love of me, base poisoner! Wouldst thou have committed so horrible, so unprovoked a murder, and mentioned my name with it?"

"And wherefore not, George of Douglas?" answered Dryfesdale. "Breath is now scarce with me, but I would spend my last gasp on this argument. Hast thou not, despite the honour thou owest to thy parents, the faith that is due to thy religion, the truth that is due to thy king, been so carried away by the charms of this beautiful sorceress, that thou wouldst have helped her to escape from her prison-house, and again to ascend the throne, which she had made a place of abomination?—Nay, stir not from me—my hand, though fast stiffening, has yet force enough to hold thee.—What dost thou aim at?—to wed this witch of Scotland?—I warrant thee, thou mayst succeed—her heart and hand have been oft won at a cheaper rate, than thou, fool that thou art, would think thyself happy to pay. But, should a servant of thy father's house have seen thee embrace the fate of the idiot Darnley, or of the villain Bothwell—the fate of the murdered fool, or of the living pirate—while an ounce of rat's-bane would have saved thee?"

"Think on God, Dryfesdale," said George Douglas, "and leave the utterance of those horrors—Repent if thou canst—if not, at least be silent.—Seyton, aid me to support this dying wretch, that he may compose himself to better thoughts, if it be possible."

"Seyton!" answered the dying man; "Seyton! Is it by a Seyton's hand that I fall at least—there is something of retribution in that—since the house

had nigh lost a sister by my deed." Fixing his fading eyes on the youth, he added, "He hath her very features and presence!—Stoop down, youth, and let me see thee closer—I would know thee when we meet in yonder world, for homicides will herd together there, and I have been one." He pulled Seyton's face, in spite of some resistance, closer to his own, looked at him fixedly, and added, "Thou hast begun young—thy career will be the briefer—ay, thou wilt be met with, and that anon—a young plant never throve that was watered with an old man's blood. Yet why blame I thee? Strange turns of fate!" he muttered, ceasing to address Seyton, "I designed what I could not do, and he has done what he did not perchance design.—Wonderous, that our will should ever oppose itself to the strong and uncontrollable tide of destiny—that we should strive with the stream, when we might drift with the current!—My brain will serve me to question it no farther.—I would Schœfferbach were here—yet why?—I am on a course which the vessel can hold without a pilot.—Farewell, George of Douglas—I die true to thy father's house." He fell into convulsions at these words, and shortly after expired.

Seyton and Douglas stood looking on the dying man, and when the scene was closed, the former was the first to speak. "As I live, Douglas, I meant not this, and am sorry; but he laid hands on me, and compelled me to defend my freedom, as I best might, with my dagger. If he were ten times thy friend and follower, I can but say that I am sorry."

"I blame thee not, Seyton," said Douglas, "though I lament the chance—There is an overruling destiny above us, though not in the sense of that wretched man, who, beguiled by some foreign mystagogue, used the awful word as the ready apology for whatever he chose to do—we must examine the packet."

"They withdrew into an inner room, and remained deep in consultation, until they were disturbed by the entrance of Keltie, who, with an embarrassed countenance, asked Master George Douglas's pleasure respecting the disposal of the body. "Your honour knows," he added, "that I make my bread by living men, not by dead corpses; and old Mr Dryfesdale, who was but a sorry customer while he was alive, occupies my public room now that he is deceased, and can neither call for ale nor brandy."

"Tie a stone round his neck," said Seyton, "and when the sun is down, have him to the Loch of Cleish; heave him in, and let him alone for finding out the bottom."

"Under your favour, sir," said George Douglas, "it shall not be so.—Keltie, thou art a true fellow to me, and thy having been so shall advantage thee. Send or take the body to the church of Ballingry, and tell what tale thou wilt of his having fallen in a brawl with some unruly guests of thine. Auchtermuchty knows nought else, nor are the times so peaceful as to admit close looking into such accounts."

"Nay, let him tell the truth," said Seyton, "so far as it harms not our scheme.—Say that Henry Seyton met with him, my good fellow—I care not a brass boddle for the feud."

"A feud with the Douglas was ever to be feared, however," said George, displeasure mingling with his natural deep gravity of manner.

"Not when the best of the name is on my side," replied Seyton.

"Alas! Henry, if thou meanest me, I am but half a Douglas in this emprise—half head, half heart, and half hand—But I will think on one who can never be forgotten, and be all, or more, than any of my ancestors was ever.—Keltie, say it was Henry Seyton did the deed; but beware, not a word of me!—Let Auchtermuchty carry this packet (which he had resealed with his own signet) to my father at Edinburgh; and here is to pay for the funeral expenses, and thy loss of custom."

"And the washing of the floor," said the landlord, "which will be an extraordinary job; for blood, they say, will scarcely ever cleanse out."

"But as for your plan," said George of Douglas, addressing Seyton, as if in continuation of what they had been before treating of, "it has a good face; but, under your favour, you are yourself too hot and too young, besides other reasons which are much against your playing the part you propose."

"We will consult the father abbot upon it," said the youth. "Do you ride to Kinross to-night?"

"Ay—so I purpose," answered Douglas; "the night will be dark, and suits a muffled man.—Keltie, I forgot, there should be a stone laid on that man's grave, recording his name, and his only merit, which was being a faithful servant to the Douglas."

"What religion was the man of?" said Seyton; "he used words which made me fear I have sent Satan a subject before his time."

"I can tell you little of that," said George Douglas; "he was noted for disliking both Rome and Geneva, and spoke of lights he had learned among the fierce sectaries of Lower Germany—an evil doctrine it was, if we judge by the fruits. God keep us from presumptuously judging of Heaven's secrets!"

"Amen!" said the young Seyton, "and from meeting any encounter this evening."

"It is not thy wont to pray so," said George Douglas.

"No! I leave that to you," replied the youth, "when you are seized with scruples of engaging with your father's vassals. But I would fain have this old man's blood off these hands of mine ere I shed more—I will confess to the abbot to-night, and I trust to have light penance for ridding the earth of such a miscreant. All I sorrow for is, that he was not a score of years younger—He drew steel first, however, that is one comfort."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Ay, Pedro,—Come you here with mask and lantern,
Ladder of ropes and other moonshine tools—
Why, youngster, thou mayst cheat the old duenna.
Flatter the waiting-woman, bribe the valet;
But know, that I her father play the Gryphon,
Tameless and sleepless, proof to fraud or bribe,
And guard the hidden treasure of her beauty.

The Spanish Father.

THE tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of Lochleven, where we take up the order of
VOL. III.

events on the same remarkable day on which Dryfesdale had been dismissed from the castle. It was past noon, the usual hour of dinner, yet no preparations seemed made for the queen's entertainment. Mary herself was retired into her own apartment, where she was closely engaged in writing. Her attendants were together in the presence-chamber, and much disposed to speculate on the delay of the dinner; for it may be recollected that their breakfast had been interrupted. "I believe in my conscience," said the page, "that having found the poisoning scheme miscarry, by having gone to the wrong merchant for their deadly wares, they are now about to try how famine will work upon us."

Lady Fleming was somewhat alarmed at this surmise, but comforted herself by observing that the chimney of the kitchen had reeked that whole day in a manner which contradicted the supposition.—Catherine Seyton presently exclaimed, "They were bearing the dishes across the court, marshaled by the Lady Lochleven herself, dressed out in her highest and stiffest ruff, with her partlet and sleeves of cyprus, and her huge old-fashioned farthingale of crimson velvet."

"I believe, on my word," said the page, approaching the window also, "it was in that very farthingale that she captivated the hearth of gentle King Jamie, which procured our poor queen her precious bargain of a brother."

"That may hardly be, Master Roland," answered the Lady Fleming, who was a great recorder of the changes of fashion, "since the farthingales came first in when the queen regent went to St Andrews, after the battle of Pinkie, and were then called vertgadins——"

She would have proceeded farther in this important discussion, but was interrupted by the entrance of the Lady of Lochleven, who preceded the servants bearing the dishes, and formally discharged the duty of tasting each of them. Lady Fleming regretted, in courtly phrase, that the Lady of Lochleven should have undertaken so troublesome an office.

"After the strange incident of this day, madam," said the lady, "it is necessary for my honour and that of my son, that I partake whatever is offered to my involuntary guest. Please to inform the Lady Mary that I attend her commands."

"Her majesty," replied Lady Fleming, with due emphasis on the word, "shall be informed that the Lady Lochleven waits."

Mary appeared instantly, and addressed her hostess with courtesy, which even approached to something more cordial. "This is nobly done, Lady Lochleven;" she said, "for though we ourselves apprehend no danger under your roof, our ladies have been much alarmed by this morning's chance, and our meal will be the more cheerful for your presence and assurance. Please you to sit down."

The Lady Lochleven obeyed the queen's commands, and Roland performed the office of carver and attendant as usual. But, notwithstanding what the queen had said, the meal was silent and unsocial; and every effort which Mary made to excite some conversation, died away under the solemn and chill replies of the Lady of Lochleven. At length it became plain that the queen, who had considered

her advances as a condescension on her part, and who piqued herself justly on her powers of pleasing, became offended at the repulsive conduct of her hostess. After looking with a significant glance at Lady Fleming and Catherine, she slightly shrugged her shoulders, and remained silent. A pause ensued, at the end of which the Lady Douglas spoke.—“I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company. I pray you to excuse me—I am a widow—alone here in a most perilous charge—deserted by my grandson—betrayed by my servant—I am little worthy of the grace you do me in offering me a seat at your table, where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests.”

“If the Lady Lochleven is serious,” said the queen, “we wonder by what simplicity she expects our present meals to be seasoned with mirth. If she is a widow, she lives honoured and uncontrolled, at the head of her late husband’s household; But I know, at least, of one widowed woman in the world, before whom the words desertion and betrayal ought never to be mentioned, since no one has been made so bitterly acquainted with their import.”

“I meant not to remind you of your misfortunes, by the mention of mine,” answered the Lady Lochleven, and there was again a deep silence.

Mary at length addressed Lady Fleming.—“We can commit no deadly sins here, *ma bonne*, where we are so well warded and looked to; but if we could, this carthusian silence might be useful as a kind of penance. If thou hast adjusted my wimple amiss, my Fleming, or if Catherine hath made a wry stitch in her broidery, when she was thinking of something else than her work, or if Roland Græme hath missed a wild-duck on the wing, and broke a quarrel-pane of glass in the turret window, as chanced to him a week since, now is the time to think on your sins and to repent of them.”

“Madam, I speak with all reverence,” said the Lady Lochleven; “but I am old, and claim the privilege of age. Methinks your followers might find fitter subjects for repentance than the trifles you mention, and so mention—once more, I crave your pardon—as if you jested with sin and repentance both.”

“You have been our taster, Lady Lochleven,” said the queen; “I perceive you would eke out your duty with that of our father confessor—and since you chuse that our conversation should be serious, may I ask you why the regent’s promise—since your son so styles himself—has not been kept to me in that respect? From time to time this promise has been renewed, and as constantly broken. Methinks, those who pretend themselves to so much gravity and sanctity, should not debar from others the religious succours which their consciences require.”

“Madam, the Earl of Murray was indeed weak enough,” said the Lady Lochleven, “to give so far way to your unhappy prejudices, and a religioner of the pope presented himself on his part at our town of Kinross.—But the Douglas is lord of his own castle, and will not permit his threshold to be darkened, no not for a single moment, by an emissary belonging to the Bishop of Rome.”

“Methinks it were well, then,” said Mary, “that

my lord regent would send me where there is less scruple and more charity.”

“In this, madam,” answered the Lady Lochleven, “you mistake the nature both of charity and of religion. Charity giveth to those who are in delirium the medicaments which may avail their health, but refuses those enticing cates and liquors which please the palate, but augment the disease.”

“This your charity, Lady Lochleven, is pure cruelty, under the hypocritical disguise of friendly care. I am oppressed amongst you as if you meant the destruction both of my body and soul; but Heaven will not endure such iniquity for ever, and they who are the most active agents in it may speedily expect their reward.”

At this moment Randal entered the apartment, with a look so much perturbed, that the Lady Fleming uttered a faint scream, the queen was obviously startled, and the Lady of Lochleven, though too bold and proud to evince any marked signs of alarm, asked hastily what was the matter?

“Dryfesdale has been slain, madam,” was the reply; “murdered as soon as he gained the dry land, by young Master Henry Seyton.”

It was now Catherine’s turn to start and grow pale—“Has the murderer of the Douglas’s vassal escaped?” was the lady’s hasty question.

“There was none to challenge him but old Keltie, and the carrier Auchtermuchty,” replied Randal; “unlikely men to slay one of the frackest* youths in Scotland of his years, and who was sure to have friends and partakers at no great distance.”

“Was the deed completed?” said the lady.

“Done, and done thoroughly,” said Randal; “a Seyton seldom strikes twice—But the body was not despoiled, and your honour’s packet goes forward to Edinburgh by Auchtermuchty, who leaves Keltie-bridge early to-morrow—marry, he has drunk two bottles of aqua-vitæ to put the fright out of his head, and now sleeps them off beside his cart-avers.”

There was a pause when this fatal tale was told. The queen and Lady Douglas looked on each other, as if each thought how she could best turn the incident to her own advantage in the controversy, which was continually kept alive betwixt them—Catherine Seyton kept her kerchief at her eyes and wept.

“You see, madam, the bloody maxims and practice of the deluded papists,” said Lady Lochleven.

“Nay, madam,” replied the queen, “say rather you see the deserved judgment of Heaven upon a calvinistical poisoner.”

“Dryfesdale was not of the Church of Geneva or of Scotland,” said the Lady Lochleven, hastily.

“He was a heretic, however,” replied Mary; “there is but one true and unerring guide, the others lead alike into error.”

“Well, madam, I trust it will reconcile you to your retreat, that this deed shows the temper of those who might wish you at liberty. Bloodthirsty tyrants and cruel man-quellers are they all, from the Clan-Ranald and Clan-Tosach in the north, to the Fernierst and Buccleuch in the south—the murdering Seytons in the east, and——”

“Methinks madam, you forget that I am a

* Boldest—most forward.

Seyton?" said Catherine, withdrawing her kerchief from her face, which was now coloured with indignation.

"If I had forgot it, fair mistress, your forward bearing would have reminded me," said Lady Lochleven.

"If my brother has slain the villain that would have poisoned his sovereign and his sister," said Catherine, "I am only so far sorry that he should have spared the hangman his proper task. For aught further, had it been the best Douglas in the land, he would have been honoured in falling by the Seyton's sword."

"Farewell, gay mistress," said the Lady of Lochleven, rising to withdraw; "it is such maidens as you, who make giddy-fashioned revelers and deadly brawlers. Boys must needs rise, forsooth, in the grace of some sprightly damsel, who thinks to dance through life as through a French galliard." She then made her reverence to the queen, and added, "Do you also, madam, fare you well, till curfew time, when I will make, perchance, more bold than welcome in attending upon your supper-board.—Come with me, Randal, and tell me more of this cruel fact."

"'Tis an extraordinary chance," said the queen, when she had departed, "and, villain as he was, I would this man had been spared time for repentance. We will cause something to be done for his soul, if we ever attain our liberty, and the church will permit such grace to an heretic.—But tell me, Catherine, *ma mignonne*—this brother of thine, who is so *frack*, as the fellow called him, bears he the same wonderful likeness to thee as formerly?"

"If your grace means in temper, you know whether I am so *frack* as the serving-man spoke him."

"Nay, thou art prompt enough in all reasonable conscience," replied the queen; "but thou art my own darling notwithstanding—But I meant, is this thy twin-brother as like thee in form and features as formerly? I remember thy dear mother alleged it as a reason for destining thee to the veil, that were ye both to go at large, thou wouldst surely get the credit of some of thy brother's mad pranks."

"I believe, madam," said Catherine, "there are some unusually simple people even yet, who can hardly distinguish betwixt us, especially when, for diversion's sake, my brother hath taken a female dress,"—and, as she spoke, she gave a quick glance at Roland Græme, to whom this conversation conveyed a ray of light, welcome as ever streamed into the dungeon of a captive through the door which opened to give him freedom.

"He must be a handsome cavalier this brother of thine, if he be so like you," replied Mary. "He was in France, I think, for these late years, so that I saw him not at Holyrood."

"His looks, madam, have never been much found fault with," answered Catherine Seyton; "but I would he had less of that angry and heady spirit which evil times have encouraged amongst our young nobles. God knows, I grudge not his life in your grace's quarrel; and love him for the willingness with which he labours for your rescue. But where-

fore should he brawl with an old ruffianly serving-man, and stain at once his name with such a broil, and his hands with the blood of an old and ignoble wretch?"

"Nay be patient, Catherine; I will not have thee traduce my gallant young knight. With Henry for my knight, and Roland Græme for my trusty squire, methinks I am like a princess of romance, who may shortly set at defiance the dungeons and the weapons of all wicked sorcerers.—But my head aches with the agitation of the day. Take me *La Mer des Histoires*, and resume where we left off on Wednesday.—Our lady help thy head, girl, or rather may she help thy heart!—I asked thee for the Sea of Histories, and thou hast brought *La Chronique d'Amour*."

Once embarked upon the Sea of Histories, the queen continued her labours with her needle, while Lady Fleming and Catherine read to her alternately for two hours.

As to Roland Græme, it is probable that he continued in secret intent upon the Chronicle of Love, notwithstanding the censure which the queen seemed to pass upon that branch of study. He now remembered a thousand circumstances of voice and manner, which, had his own prepossession been less, must surely have discriminated the brother from the sister; and he felt ashamed, that, having as it were by heart every particular of Catherine's gestures, words, and manners, he should have thought her, notwithstanding her spirits and levity, capable of assuming the bold step, loud tones, and forward assurance, which accorded well enough with her brother's hasty and masculine character. He endeavoured repeatedly to catch a glance of Catherine's eye, that he might judge how she was disposed to look upon him since he had made the discovery, but he was unsuccessful; for Catherine, when she was not reading herself, seemed to take so much interest in the exploits of the Teutonic knights against the heathens of Esthonia and Livonia, that he could not surprise her eye even for a second. But when, closing the book, the queen commanded their attendance in the garden, Mary, perhaps of set purpose (for Roland's anxiety could not escape so practised an observer), afforded him a favourable opportunity of accosting his mistress. The queen commanded them to a little distance, while she engaged Lady Fleming in a particular and private conversation; the subject whereof we learn from another authority to have been the comparative excellence of the high standing ruff and the falling band. Roland must have been duller, and more sheepish than ever was youthful lover, if he had not endeavoured to avail himself of this opportunity.

"I have been longing this whole evening to ask of you, fair Catherine," said the page, "how foolish and unapprehensive you must have thought me, in being capable to mistake betwixt your brother and you?"

"The circumstance does indeed little honour to my rustic manners," said Catherine, "since those of a wild young man were so readily mistaken for mine. But I shall grow wiser in time; and with that view I am determined not to think of your follies, but to correct my own."

"It will be the lighter subject of meditation of the two," said Roland.

"I know not that," said Catherine, very gravely; "I fear we have been both unpardonably foolish."

"I have been mad," said Roland, "unpardonably mad. But you, lovely Catherine"—

"I," said Catherine, in the same tone of unusual gravity, "have too long suffered you to use such expressions towards me—I fear I can permit it no longer, and I blame myself for the pain it may give you."

"And what can have happened so suddenly to change our relation to each other, or alter, with such sudden cruelty, your whole deportment to me?"

"I can hardly tell," replied Catherine, "unless it is that the events of the day have impressed on my mind the necessity of our observing more distance to each other—a chance similar to that which betrayed to you the existence of my brother, may make known to Henry the terms you have used to me; and, alas! his whole conduct, as well as his deed this day, makes me too justly apprehensive of the consequences."

"Fear nothing for that, fair Catherine," answered the page; "I am well able to protect myself against risks of that nature."

"That is to say," replied she, "that you would fight with my twin-brother to show your regard for his sister? I have heard the queen say, in her sad hours, that men are, in love or in hate, the most selfish animals of creation; and your carelessness in this matter looks very like it. But be not so much abashed—you are no worse than others."

"You do me injustice, Catherine," replied the page; "I thought but of being threatened with a sword, and did not remember in whose hand your fancy had placed it. If your brother stood before me, with his drawn weapon in his hand, so like as he is to you in word, person, and favour, he might shed my life's blood ere I could find in my heart to resist him to his injury."

"Alas!" said she, "it is not my brother alone. But you remember only the singular circumstances in which we have met in equality, and I may say in intimacy. You think not, that whenever I re-enter my father's house, there is a gulf between us you may not pass, but with peril of your life.—Your only known relative is of wild and singular habits, of a hostile and broken clan—the rest of your lineage unknown—forgive me that I speak what is the undeniable truth."

"Love, my beautiful Catherine, despises genealogies," answered Roland Græme.

"Love may, but so will not the Lord Seyton," rejoined the damsel.

"The queen, thy mistress and mine, she will intercede. O! drive me not from you at the moment I thought myself most happy!—and if I shall aid her deliverance, said not yourself that you and she would become my debtors?"

"All Scotland will become your debtors," said Catherine; "but for the active effects you might hope from our gratitude, you must remember I am wholly subjected to my father; and the poor queen is, for a long time, more likely to be dependent on

the pleasure of the nobles of her party, than possessed of power to control them."

"Be it so," replied Roland; "my deeds shall control prejudice itself—it is a bustling world, and I will have my share. The Knight of Avenel, high as he now stands, rose from as obscure an origin as mine."

"Ay!" said Catherine, "there spoke the doughty knight of romance, that will cut his way to the imprisoned princess, through fiends and fiery dragons."

"But if I can set the princess at large, and procure her the freedom of her own choice," said the page, "where, dearest Catherine, will that choice alight?"

"Release the princess from duress, and she will tell you," said the damsel; and breaking off the conversation abruptly, she joined the queen so suddenly, that Mary exclaimed, half aloud,

"No more tidings of evil import—no dissension, I trust, in my limited household?"—Then looking on Catherine's blushing cheek, and Roland's expanded brow and glancing eye—"No—no," she said, "I see all is well—*ma petite mignonne*, go to my apartment and fetch me down—let me see—ay, fetch my pomander box."

And having thus disposed of her attendant in the manner best qualified to hide her confusion, the queen added, speaking apart to Roland, "I should at least have two grateful subjects of Catherine and you; for what sovereign but Mary would aid true-love so willingly?—Ay, you lay your hand on your sword—your *petite flamberge à rien* there—Well, short time will show if all the good be true that is protested to us.—I hear them toll curfew from Kinross. To our chamber—this old dame hath promised to be with us again at our evening meal. Were it not for the hope of speedy deliverance, her presence would drive me distracted. But I will be patient."

"I profess," said Catherine, "I would I could be Henry, with all a man's privileges for one moment—I long to throw my plate at that confect of pride, and formality, and ill-nature."

The Lady Fleming reprimanded her young companion for this explosion of impatience; the queen laughed, and they went to the presence-chamber, where almost immediately entered supper, and the lady of the castle. The queen, strong in her prudent resolutions, endured her presence with great fortitude and equanimity, until her patience was disturbed by a new form, which had hitherto made no part of the ceremonial of the castle. When the other attendant had retired, Randal entered, bearing the keys of the castle fastened upon a chain, and announcing that the watch was set and the gates locked, delivered the keys with all reverence to the Lady of Lochleven.

The queen and her ladies exchanged with each other a look of disappointment, anger, and vexation; and Mary said aloud, "We cannot regret the smallness of our court, when we see our hostess discharge in person so many of its offices. In addition to her charges of principal steward of our household and grand almoner, she has to-night done duty as captain of our guard."

"And will continue to do so in future, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven, with much gravity;

"the history of Scotland may teach me how ill the duty is performed which is done by an accredited deputy—We have heard, madam, of favourites of later date, and as little merit, as Oliver Sinclair."

"O, madam," replied the queen, "my father had his female as well as his male favourites—there were the ladies Sandilands and Olifaunt, and some others, methinks; but their names cannot survive in the memory of so grave a person as you."

The Lady Lochleven looked as if she could have slain the queen on the spot, but commanded her temper, and retired from the apartment, bearing in her hand the ponderous bunch of keys.

"Now God be praised for that woman's youthful frailty," said the queen. "Had she not that weak point in her character, I might waste my words on her in vain—But that stain is the very reverse of what is said of the witch's mark—I can make her feel there, though she is otherwise insensible all over—But how say you, girls—here is a new difficulty—How are these keys to be come by?—there is no deceiving or bribing this dragon, I trow."

"May I crave to know," said Roland, "whether, if your grace were beyond the walls of the castle, you could find means of conveyance to the firm land, and protection when you are there?"

"Trust us for that, Roland," said the queen; "for to that point our scheme is indifferent well laid."

"Then if your grace will permit me to speak my mind, I think I could be of some use in this matter."

"As how, my good youth?—speak on," said the queen, "and fearlessly."

"My patron the Knight of Avenel used to compel the youth educated in his household to learn the use of axe and hammer, and working in wood and iron—he used to speak of old northern champions, who forged their own weapons, and of the Highland captain, Donald nan Ord, or Donald of the Hammer, whom he himself knew, and who used to work at the anvil with a sledge hammer in each hand. Some said he praised this art, because he was himself of churl's blood. However, I gained some practice in it, as the Lady Catherine Seyton partly knows; for since we were here I wrought her a silver brooch."

"Ay," replied Catherine, "but you should tell her grace that your workmanship was so indifferent that it broke to pieces next day, and I flung it away."

"Believe her not, Roland," said the queen; "she wept when it was broken, and put the fragments into her bosom. But for your scheme—could your skill avail to forge a second set of keys?"

"No, madam, because I know not the wards. But I am convinced I could make a set so like that hateful bunch which the lady bore off even now, that could they be exchanged against them by any means, she would never dream she was possessed of the wrong."

"And the good dame, thank Heaven, is somewhat blind," said the queen; "but then for a forge, my boy, and the means of labouring unobserved?"

"The armourer's forge, at which I used sometimes to work with him, is in the round vault at the bottom of the turret—he was dismissed with the warder for being supposed too much attached to George Douglas. The people were accustomed to

see me work there, and I will find some excuse that will pass current with them for putting bellows and anvil to work."

"The scheme has a promising face," said the queen; "about it, my lad, with all speed, and beware the nature of your work is not discovered."

"Nay, I will take the liberty to draw the bolt against chance visitors, so that I will have time to put away what I am working upon, before I undo the door."

"Will not that of itself attract suspicion, in a place where it is so current already?" said Catherine.

"Not a whit," replied Roland; "Gregory the armourer, and every good hammerman, locks himself in when he is about some masterpiece of craft. Besides, something must be risked."

"Part we then to-night," said the queen, "and God bless you, my children.—If Mary's head ever rises above water, you shall all arise along with her."

CHAPTER XXXV.

It is a time of danger, not of revel,
When churchmen turn masquers.

Spanish Father.

THE enterprise of Roland Græme appeared to prosper. A trinket or two, of which the work did not surpass the substance (for the materials were silver, supplied by the queen), were judiciously presented to those most likely to be inquisitive into the labours of the forge and anvil, which they thus were induced to reckon profitable to others and harmless in itself. Openly, the page was seen working about such trifles. In private, he forged a number of keys resembling so nearly in weight and in form those which were presented every evening to the Lady Lochleven, that, on a slight inspection, it would have been difficult to perceive the difference. He brought them to the dark rusty colour by the use of salt and water; and in the triumph of his heart, presented them at length to Queen Mary in her presence-chamber, about an hour before the tolling of the curfew. She looked at them with pleasure, but at the same time with doubt.—"I allow," she said, "that the Lady Lochleven's eyes, which are not of the clearest, may be well deceived, could we pass those keys on her, in place of the real implements of her tyranny. But how is this to be done, and which of my little court dare attempt this *tour de jongleur* with any chance of success? Could we but engage her in some earnest matter of argument—but those which I hold with her, always have been of a kind which make her grasp her keys the faster, as if she said to herself—Here I hold what sets me above your taunts and reproaches—And even for her liberty, Mary Stuart could not stoop to speak the proud heretic fair.—What shall we do? Shall Lady Fleming try her eloquence in describing the last new head-tire from Paris?—Alas! the good dame has not changed the fashion of her head-gear since Pinkie-field, for aught that I know. Shall my *mignonne* Catherine sing to her one of those touching airs, which draw the very

souls out of me and Roland Græme?—Alas! Dame Margaret Douglas would rather hear a huguenot psalm sung to the tune of *Réveillez-vous, belle endormie*.—Cousins and liege counsellors, what is to be done, for our wits are really astray in this matter.—Must our man-at-arms and the champion of our body, Roland Græme, manfully assault the old lady, and take the keys from her *par voie de fait*?”

“Nay! with your grace’s permission,” said Roland, “I doubt not to manage the matter with more discretion; for though in your grace’s service, I do not fear——”

“A host of old women,” interrupted Catherine, “each armed with rock and spindle, yet he has no fancy for pikes and partisans.”

“They that do not fear fair ladies’ tongues,” continued the page, “need dread nothing else. But, gracious liege, I am well nigh satisfied that I could pass the exchange of these keys on the Lady Lochleven; but I dread the sentinel who is now planted nightly in the garden, which, by necessity, we must traverse.”

“Our last advices from our friend son the shore have promised us assistance in that matter,” replied the queen.

“And is your grace well assured of the fidelity and watchfulness of those without?”

“For their fidelity, I will answer with my life, and for their vigilance, I will answer with my life—I will give thee instant proof, my faithful Roland, that they are ingenious and trusty as thyself. Come hither—Nay, Catherine, attend us; we carry not so deft a page into our private chamber alone. Make fast the door of the parlour, Fleming, and warn us if you hear the least step—or stay, go thou to the door, Catherine (in a whisper), thy ears and thy wits are both sharper.—Good Fleming, attend us thyself—(and again she whispered) her reverend presence will be as safe a watch on Roland as thine can—so be not jealous, *mignonne*.”

Thus speaking, they were lighted by the Lady Fleming into the queen’s bed-room, a small apartment enlightened by a projecting window.

“Look from that window, Roland,” she said; “see you amongst the several lights which begin to kindle, and to glimmer palely through the grey of the evening from the village of Kinross—Seest thou, I say, one solitary spark apart from the others, and nearer it seems to the verge of the water?—It is no brighter at this distance than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet, my good youth, that light is more dear to Mary Stuart than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven. By that signal, I know that more than one true heart are plotting my deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives me, I had long since stooped to my fate, and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan has been formed and abandoned, but still the light glimmers, and while it glimmers, my hope lives.—O! how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and like the lights of Saint Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation, where there was only dejection and despair!”

“If I mistake not,” answered Roland, “the candle shines from the house of Blinkhoolie, the mail-gardener.”

“Thou hast a good eye,” said the queen; “it is there where my trusty lieges—God and the saints pour blessings on them!—hold consultation for my deliverance. The voice of a wretched captive would die on these blue waters, long ere it could mingle in their councils, and yet I can hold communication—I will confide the whole to thee—I am about to ask those faithful friends, if the moment for the great attempt is nigh—Place the lamp in the window, Fleming.”

She obeyed, and immediately withdrew it. No sooner had she done so, than the light in the cottage of the gardener disappeared.

“Now, count,” said Queen Mary, “for my heart beats so thick that I cannot count myself.”

The Lady Fleming began deliberately to count one, two, three, and when she had arrived at ten, the light on the shore again shewed its pale twinkle.

“Now, Our Lady be praised!” said the queen; “it was but two nights since, that the absence of the light remained, while I could tell thirty. The hour of deliverance approaches. May God bless those who labour in it with such truth to me!—alas! with such hazard to themselves—And bless you too, my children!—Come, we must to the audience-chamber again. Our absence might excite suspicion, should they serve the supper.”

They returned to the presence-chamber, and the evening concluded as usual.

The next morning, at dinner-time, an unusual incident occurred. While Lady Douglas of Lochleven performed her daily duty of assistant and taster at the queen’s table, she was told a man-at-arms had arrived recommended by her son, but without any letter or other token than what he brought by word of mouth.

“Hath he given you that token?” demanded the lady.

“He reserved it, as I think, for your ladyship’s ear,” replied Randal.

“He doth well,” said the lady; “tell him to wait in the hall—But no—with your permission, madam (to the queen), let him attend me here.”

“Since you are pleased to receive your domestics in my presence,” said the queen, “I cannot chuse——”

“My infirmities must plead my excuse, madam,” replied the lady; “the life I must lead here ill suits with the years which have passed over my head, and compels me to waive ceremonial.”

“O, my good lady,” replied the queen, “I would there were nought in this your castle more strongly compulsive than the cobweb chains of ceremony; but bolts and bars are harder matters to contend with.”

As she spoke, the person announced by Randal entered the room, and Roland Græme at once recognized in him the Abbot Ambrosius.

“What is your name, good fellow?” said the lady.

“Edward Glendinning,” answered the abbot, with a suitable reverence.

“Art thou of the blood of the Knight of Avenel?” said the Lady of Lochleven.

"Ay, madam, and that nearly," replied the pretended soldier.

"It is likely enough," said the lady, "for the knight is the son of his own good works, and has risen from obscure lineage to his present high rank in the estate—But he is of sure truth and approved worth, and his kinsman is welcome to us. You hold, unquestionably, the true faith."

"Do not doubt of it, madam," said the disguised churchman.

"Hast thou a token to me from Sir William Douglas?" said the lady.

"I have, madam," replied he; "but it must be said in private."

"Thou art right," said the lady, moving towards the recess of a window; "say in what does it consist?"

"In the words of an old bard," replied the abbot.

"Repeat them," answered the lady; and he uttered, in a low tone, the lines from an old poem, called *The Howlet*,—

"O Douglas! Douglas
Tender and true."

"Trusty Sir John Holland!" said the Lady Douglas, apostrophizing the poet, "a kinder heart never inspired a rhyme, and the Douglas's honour was ever on thy harp-string! We receive you among our followers, Glendinning—But, Randal, see that he keep the outer ward only, till we shall hear more touching him from our son.—Thou fearest not the night-air, Glendinning?"

"In the cause of the lady before whom I stand, I fear nothing, madam," answered the disguised abbot.

"Our garrison, then, is stronger by one trustworthy soldier," said the matron—"Go to the buttery, and let them make much of thee."

When the Lady Lochleven had retired, the queen said to Roland Græme, who was now almost constantly in her company, "I spy comfort in that stranger's countenance; I know not why it should be so, but I am well persuaded he is a friend."

"Your grace's penetration does not deceive you," answered the page; and he informed her that the Abbot of Saint Mary's himself played the part of the newly arrived soldier.

The queen crossed herself and looked upwards. "Unworthy sinner that I am," she said, "that for my sake a man so holy, and so high in spiritual office, should wear the garb of a base sworder, and run the risk of dying the death of a traitor!"

"Heaven will protect its own servant, madam," said Catherine Seyton; "his aid would bring a blessing on our undertaking, were it not already blest for its own sake."

"What I admire in my spiritual father," said Roland, "was the steady front with which he looked on me, without giving the least sign of former acquaintance. I did not think the like was possible, since I have ceased to believe that Henry was the same person with Catherine."

"But marked you not how astutely the good father," said the queen, "eluded the questions of the woman Lochleven, telling her the very truth, which yet she received not as such?"

Roland thought in his heart, that when the truth was spoken for the purpose of deceiving, it was little better than a lie in disguise. But it was no time to agitate such questions of conscience.

"And now for the signal from the shore," exclaimed Catherine; "my bosom tells me we shall see this night two lights instead of one gleam from that garden of Eden—And then, Roland, do you play your part manfully, and we will dance on the green-sward like midnight fairies."

Catherine's conjecture misgave not, nor deceived her. In the evening two beams twinkled from the cottage, instead of one; and the page heard with beating heart, that the new retainer was ordered to stand sentinel on the outside of the castle. When he intimated this news to the queen, she held her hand out to him—he knelt, and when he raised it to his lips in all dutiful homage, he found it was damp and cold as marble. "For God's sake, madam, droop not now—sink not now."

"Call upon Our Lady, my liege," said the Lady Fleming—"call upon your tutelar saint."

"Call the spirits of the hundred kings you are descended from," exclaimed the page; "in this hour of need, the resolution of a monarch were worth the aid of a hundred saints."

"O! Roland Græme," said Mary, in a tone of deep despondency, "be true to me—many have been false to me. Alas! I have not always been true to myself. My mind misgives me that I shall die in bondage, and that this bold attempt will cost all our lives. It was foretold me by a soothsayer in France, that I should die in prison, and by a violent death, and here comes the hour—O, would to God it found me prepared!"

"Madam," said Catherine Seyton, "remember you are a queen. Better we all died in bravely attempting to gain our freedom, than remained here to be poisoned, as men rid them of the noxious vermin that haunt old houses."

"You are right, Catherine," said the queen; "and Mary will bear her like herself. But, alas! your young and buoyant spirit can ill spell the causes which have broken mine. Forgive me, my children, and farewell for a while—I will prepare both mind and body for this awful venture."

They separated, till again called together by the tolling of the curfew. The queen appeared grave, but firm and resolved; the Lady Fleming, with the art of an experienced courtier, knew perfectly how to disguise her inward tremors; Catherine's eye was fired, as if with the boldness of the project, and the half smile which dwelt upon her beautiful mouth, seemed to contemn all the risk and all the consequences of discovery; Roland, who felt how much success depended on his own address and boldness, summoned together his whole presence of mind, and, if he found his spirits flag for a moment, cast his eye upon Catherine, whom he thought he had never seen look so beautiful.—I may be foiled, he thought, but with this reward in prospect, they must bring the devil to aid them ere they cross me. Thus resolved he stood, like a greyhound in the slips, with hand, heart, eye intent upon making and seizing opportunity for the execution of their project.

The keys had, with the wonted ceremonial, been

presented to the Lady Lochleven. She stood with her back to the casement, which, like that of the queen's apartment, commanded a view of Kinross, with the church, which stands at some distance from the town, and nearer to the lake, then connected with the town by straggling cottages. With her back to this casement, then, and her face to the table, on which the keys lay for an instant while she tasted the various dishes which were placed there, stood the Lady of Lochleven, more provokingly intent than usual—so at least it seemed to her prisoners—upon the huge and heavy bunch of iron, the implements of their restraint. Just when, having finished her ceremony as taster of the queen's table, she was about to take up the keys, the page, who stood beside her, and had handed her the dishes in succession, looked sideways to the church-yard, and exclaimed he saw corpse-candles in the church-yard. The Lady of Lochleven was not without a touch, though a slight one, of the superstitions of the time; the fate of her sons made her alive to omens, and a corpse-light, as it was called, in the family burial-place, boded death. She turned her head towards the casement—saw a distant glimmering—forgot her charge for one second, and in that second were lost the whole fruits of her former vigilance. The page held the forged keys under his cloak, and with great dexterity exchanged them for the real ones. His utmost address could not prevent a slight clash as he took up the latter bunch. "Who touches the keys?" said the lady; and while the page answered that the sleeve of his cloak had stirred them, she looked round, possessed herself of the bunch which now occupied the place of the genuine keys, and again turned to gaze at the supposed corpse-candles.

"I hold these gleams," she said, after a moment's consideration, "to come not from the church-yard, but from the hut of the old gardener Blinkhoolie. I wonder what thrift that churl drives, that of late he hath ever had light in his house till the night grew deep. I thought him an industrious, peaceful man—if he turns resetter of idle companions and night-walkers, the place must be rid of him."

"He may work his baskets perchance," said the page, desirous to stop the train of her suspicion.

"Or nets, may he not?" answered the lady.

"Ay, madam," said Roland, "for trout and salmon."

"Or for fools and knaves," replied the lady; "but this shall be looked after to-morrow.—I wish your grace and your company a good evening.—Randal, attend us." And Randal, who waited in the ante-chamber, after having surrendered his bunch of keys, gave his escort to his mistress as usual, while, leaving the queen's apartments, she retired to her own.

"To-morrow!" said the page, rubbing his hands with glee as he repeated the lady's last words, "fools look to to-morrow, and wise folk use to-night.—May I pray you, my gracious liege, to retire for one half hour, until all the castle is composed to rest. I must go and rub with oil these blessed implements of our freedom. Courage and constancy, and all will go well, providing our friends on the shore fail not to send the boat you spoke of."

"Fear them not," said Catherine, "they are true as steel—if our dear mistress do but maintain her noble and royal courage."

"Doubt not me, Catherine," replied the queen; "a while since I was overborne, but I have recalled the spirit of my earlier and more sprightly days, when I used to accompany my armed nobles, and wish to be myself a man, to know what life it was to be in the fields with sword and buckler, jack and knapsack."

"O, the lark lives not a gayer life, nor sings a lighter and gayer song than the merry soldier," answered Catherine. "Your grace shall be in the midst of them soon, and the look of such a liege sovereign will make each of your host worth three in the hour of need; but I must to my task."

"We have but brief time," said Queen Mary; "one of the two lights in the cottage is extinguished—that shows the boat is put off."

"They will row very slow," said the page, "or kent where depth permits, to avoid noise.—To our several gear—I will communicate with the good father."

At the dead hour of midnight, when all was silent in the castle, the page put the key into the lock of the wicket which opened into the garden, and which was at the bottom of a staircase that descended from the queen's apartment. "Now, turn smooth and softly, thou good bolt," said he, "if ever oil softened rust!" and his precautions had been so effectual, that the bolt revolved with little or no sound of resistance. He ventured not to cross the threshold, but exchanging a word with the disguised abbot, asked if the boat were ready.

"This half hour," said the sentinel, "she lies beneath the wall, too close under the islet to be seen by the warder, but I fear she will hardly escape his notice in putting off again."

"The darkness," said the page, "and our profound silence, may take her off unobserved, as she came in. Hildebrand has the watch on the tower—a heavy-headed knave, who holds a can of ale to be the best head-piece upon a night-watch. He sleeps for a wager."

"Then bring the queen," said the abbot, "and I will call Henry Seyton to assist them to the boat."

On tiptoe, with noiseless step and suppressed breath, trembling at every rustle of their own apparel, one after another the fair prisoners glided down the winding stair, under the guidance of Roland Græme, and were received at the wicket-gate by Henry Seyton and the churchman. The former seemed instantly to take upon himself the whole direction of the enterprise. "My lord abbot," he said, "give my sister your arm—I will conduct the queen—and the youth will have the honour to guide Lady Fleming."

This was no time to dispute the arrangement, although it was not that which Roland Græme would have chosen. Catherine Seyton, who well knew the garden path, tripped on before like a sylph, rather leading the abbot than receiving assistance—the queen, her native spirit prevailing over female fear, and a thousand painful reflections, moved steadily forward, by assistance of Henry Seyton—while the Lady Fleming encumbered with her fears and her

helplessness Roland Græme, who followed in the rear, and who bore under the other arm a packet of necessaries belonging to the queen. The door of the garden, which communicated with the shore of the islet, yielded to one of the keys of which Roland had possessed himself, although not until he had tried several,—a moment of anxious terror and expectation. The ladies were then partly led, partly carried, to the side of the lake, where a boat with six rowers attended them, the men couched along the bottom to secure them from observation. Henry Seyton placed the queen in the stern; the abbot offered to assist Catherine, but she was seated by the queen's side before he could utter his proffer of help; and Roland Græme was just lifting Lady Fleming over the boat-side, when a thought suddenly occurred to him, and exclaiming, "Forgotten, forgotten! wait me but one half minute," he replaced on the shore the helpless lady of the bed-chamber, threw the queen's packet into the boat, and sped back through the garden with the noiseless speed of a bird on the wing.

"By Heaven he is false at last!" said Seyton; "I ever feared it!"

"He is as true," said Catherine, "as Heaven itself, and that I will maintain."

"Be silent, minion," said her brother, "for shame, if not for fear—Fellows, put off, and row for your lives."

"Help me, help me on board!" said the deserted Lady Fleming, and that louder than prudence warranted.

"Put off—put off," cried Henry Seyton; "leave all behind, so the queen is safe."

"Will you permit this, madam?" said Catherine, imploringly; "you leave your deliverer to death."

"I will not," said the queen.—"Seyton, I command you to stay at every risk."

"Pardon me, madam, if I disobey," said the intractable young man; and with one hand lifting in Lady Fleming, he began himself to push off the boat.

She was two fathoms' length from the shore, and the rowers were getting her head round, when Roland Græme, arriving, bounded from the beach, and attained the boat, overturning Seyton, on whom he lighted. The youth swore a deep but suppressed oath, and stopping Græme as he stepped towards the stern, said, "Your place is not with high-born dames—keep at the head, and trim the vessel—Now give way—give way—Row, for God and the queen!"

The rowers obeyed, and began to pull vigorously.

"Why did ye not muffle the oars?" said Roland Græme; "the dash must awaken the sentinel—Row, lads, and get out of shot; for had not old Hildebrand, the warder, supped upon poppy-porridge, this whispering must have waked him."

"It was all thine own delay," said Seyton; "thou shalt reckon with me hereafter for that and other matters."

But Roland's apprehension was verified too instantly to permit him to reply. The sentinel, whose slumbering had withstood the whispering, was alarmed by the dash of the oars. His challenge was instantly heard. "A boat—a boat!—bring to, or I shoot!" And, as they continued to ply their oars, he called aloud, "Treason! treason!" rung the bell

VOL. III.

of the castle, and discharged his harquebuss at the boat. The ladies crowded on each other like startled wild-fowl, at the flash and report of the piece, while the men urged the rowers to the utmost speed. They heard more than one ball whiz along the surface of the lake, at no great distance from their little bark; and from the lights, which glanced like meteors from window to window, it was evident the whole castle was alarmed, and their escape discovered.

"Pull!" again exclaimed Seyton; "stretch to your oars, or I will spur you to the task with my dagger—they will launch a boat immediately."

"That is cared for," said Roland; "I locked gate and wicket on them when I went back, and no boat will stir from the island this night, if doors of good oak and bolts of iron can keep men within stone walls.—And now I resign my office of porter of Lochleven, and give the keys to the Kelpie's keeping."

As the heavy keys plunged in the lake, the abbot, who till then had been repeating his prayers, exclaimed, "Now, bless thee, my son! for thy ready prudence puts shame on us all."

"I knew," said Mary, drawing her breath more freely, as they were now out of reach of the musketry—"I knew my squire's truth, promptitude, and sagacity.—I must have him dear friends with my no less true knights, Douglas and Seyton—but where, then, is Douglas?"

"Here, madam," answered the deep and melancholy voice of the boatman who sat next her, and who acted as steersman.

"Alas! was it you who stretched your body before me," said the queen, "when the balls were raining around us?"

"Believe you," said he, in a low tone, "that Douglas would have resigned to any one the chance of protecting his queen's life with his own?"

The dialogue was here interrupted by a shot or two from one of those small pieces of artillery called falconets, then used in defending castles. The shot was too vague to have any effect; but the broader flash, the deeper sound, the louder return, which was made by the midnight echoes of Bennarty, terrified and imposed silence on the liberated prisoners. The boat was alongside of a rude quay or landing-place, running out from a garden of considerable extent, ere any of them again attempted to speak. They landed, and while the abbot returned thanks aloud to Heaven, which had thus far favoured their enterprise, Douglas enjoyed the best reward of his desperate undertaking, in conducting the queen to the house of the gardener. Yet, not unmindful of Roland Græme, even in that moment of terror and exhaustion, Mary expressly commanded Seyton to give his assistance to Fleming, while Catherine voluntarily, and without bidding, took the arm of the page. Seyton presently resigned Lady Fleming to the care of the abbot, alleging, he must look after their horses; and his attendants, disencumbering themselves of their boat-cloaks, hastened to assist him.

While Mary spent in the gardener's cottage the few minutes which were necessary to prepare the steeds for their departure, she perceived, in a corner, the old man to whom the garden belonged, and called him to approach. He came as it were with reluctance.

"How, brother," said the abbot, "so slow to welcome thy royal queen and mistress, to liberty and to her kingdom!"

The old man, thus admonished, came forward, and, in good terms of speech, gave her grace joy of her deliverance. The queen returned him thanks in the most gracious manner, and added, "It will remain to us to offer some immediate reward for your fidelity, for we wot well your house has been long the refuge in which our trusty servants have met to concert measures for our freedom." So saying, she offered gold, and added, "We will consider your services more fully hereafter."

"Kneel, brother," said the abbot, "kneel instantly, and thank her grace's kindness."

"Good brother, that wert once a few steps under me, and art still many years younger," replied the gardener, pettishly, "let me do mine acknowledgments in my own way. Queens have knelt to me ere now, and in truth my knees are too old and stiff to bend even to this lovely-faced lady. May it please your grace, if your grace's servants have occupied my house, so that I could not call it mine own—if they have trodden down my flowers in the zeal of their midnight comings and goings, and destroyed the hope of the fruit season, by bringing their war-horses into my garden, I do but crave of your grace in requital, that you will chuse your residence as far from me as possible. I am an old man, who would willingly creep to my grave as easily as he can, in peace, good-will, and quiet labour."

"I promise you fairly, good man," said the queen, "I will not make yonder castle my residence again, if I can help it. But let me press on you this money—it will make some amends for the havoc we have made in your little garden and orchard."

"I thank your grace, but it will make me not the least amends," said the old man. "The ruined labours of a whole year are not so easily replaced to him who has perchance but that one year to live; and besides they tell me I must leave this place and become a wanderer in mine old age—I that have nothing on earth saving these fruit-trees, and a few old parchments and family secrets not worth knowing. As for gold, if I had loved it, I might have remained Lord Abbot of Saint Mary's—and yet, I wot not—for, if Abbot Boniface be but the poor peasant Blinkhoolie, his successor the Abbot Ambrosius is still transmuted for the worse into the guise of a sword-and-buckler-man."

"Is this indeed the Abbot Boniface of whom I have heard?" said the queen. "It is I who should have bent the knee for your blessing, good father."

"Bend no knee to me, lady! The blessing of an old man, who is no longer an abbot, go with you over dale and down—I hear the trampling of your horses."

"Farewell, father," said the queen. "When we are once more seated at Holyrood, we will neither forget thee nor thine injured garden."

"Forget us both," said the ex-Abbot Boniface, "and may God be with you!"

As they hurried out of the house, they heard the old man talking and muttering to himself, as he hastily drew bolt and bar behind them.

"The revenge of the Douglasses will reach the

poor old man," said the queen. "God help me, I ruin every one whom I approach."

"His safety is cared for," said Seyton; "he must not remain here, but will be privately conducted to a place of greater security. But I would your grace were in your saddle.—To horse! to horse!"

The party of Seyton and of Douglas were increased to about ten by those attendants who had remained with the horses. The queen and her ladies, with all the rest who came from the boat, were instantly mounted, and holding aloof from the village, which was already alarmed by the firing from the castle, with Douglas acting as their guide, they soon reached the open ground, and began to ride as fast as was consistent with keeping together in good order.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

He mounted himself on a coal-black steed,
And her on a freckled grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down from his side,
And roundly they rode away.

Old Ballad.

THE influence of the free air, the rushing of the horses over high and low, the ringing of the bridles, the excitation at once arising from a sense of freedom and of rapid motion, gradually dispelled the confused and dejected sort of stupefaction by which Queen Mary was at first overwhelmed. She could not at last conceal the change of her feelings to the person who rode at her rein, and who she doubted not was the Father Ambrosius; for Seyton, with all the heady impetuosity of a youth, proud, and justly so, of his first successful adventure, assumed all the bustle and importance of commander of the little party, which escorted, in the language of the time, the Fortune of Scotland. He now led the van, now checked his bounding steed till the rear had come up, exhorted the leaders to keep a steady, though rapid pace, and commanded those who were hindmost of the party to use their spurs, and allow no interval to take place in their line of march; and anon he was beside the queen, or her ladies, inquiring how they brooked the hasty journey, and whether they had any commands for him. But while Seyton thus busied himself with some advantage, and a good deal of ostentation, the horseman who rode beside the queen gave her his full and undivided attention, as if he had been waiting upon some superior being. When the road was rugged and dangerous, he abandoned almost entirely the care of his own horse, and kept his hand constantly upon the queen's bridle; a river or larger brook traversed their course, and his left arm retained her in the saddle, while his right held her palfrey's rein.

"I had not thought, reverend father," said the queen, when they reached the other bank, "that the convent bred such good horsemen."—The person she addressed sighed, but made no other answer.—"I know not how it is," said Queen Mary, "either the sense of freedom, or the pleasure of my favourite exercise, from which I have been so long debarred, or both combined, seem to have given wings to me—no fish ever shot through the water—no bird through the air, with the hurried feeling of liberty

and rapture with which I sweep through this night-wind, and over these wolds. Nay, such is the magic of feeling myself once more in the saddle, that I could almost swear I am at this moment mounted on my own favourite Rosabelle, who was never matched in Scotland for swiftness, for ease of motion, and for sureness of foot."

"And if the horse which bears so dear a burthen could speak," answered the deep voice of the melancholy George of Douglas, "would she not reply, who but Rosabelle ought at such an emergence as this to serve her beloved mistress, or who but Douglas ought to hold her bridle-rein!"

Queen Mary started; she foresaw at once all the evils like to arise to herself and him from the deep enthusiastic passion of this youth; but her feelings as a woman, grateful at once and compassionate, prevented her assuming the dignity of the queen, and she endeavoured to continue the conversation in an indifferent tone.

"Methought," she said, "I heard that, at the division of my spoils, Rosabelle had become the property of Lord Morton's paramour and lady-love, Alice."

"The noble palfrey had indeed been destined to so base a lot," answered Douglas; "she was kept under four keys, and under the charge of a numerous crew of grooms and domestics—but Queen Mary needed Rosabelle, and Rosabelle is here."

"And was it well, Douglas," said Queen Mary, "when such fearful risks of various kinds must needs be encountered, that you should augment their perils to yourself, for a subject of so little moment as a palfrey?"

"Do you call that of little moment which has afforded you a moment's pleasure?—Did you not start with joy when I first said you were mounted on Rosabelle?—And to purchase you that pleasure, though it were to last no longer than the flash of lightning doth, would not Douglas have risked his life a thousand times!"

"O, peace, Douglas, peace," said the queen, "this is an unfitting language; and, besides, I would speak," said she, recollecting herself, "with the Abbot of Saint Mary's—Nay, Douglas, I will not let you quit my rein in displeasure."

"Displeasure, lady!" answered Douglas; "alas! sorrow is all that I can feel for your well-warranted contempt—I should be as soon displeased with Heaven for refusing the wildest wish which mortal can form."

"Abide by my rein, however," said Mary, "there is room for my lord abbot on the other side; and, besides, I doubt if his assistance would be so useful to Rosabelle and me as yours has been, should the road again require it."

The abbot came up on the other side, and she immediately opened a conversation with him on the topic of the state of parties, and the plan fittest for her to pursue in consequence of her deliverance. In this conversation Douglas took little share, and never but when directly applied to by the queen, while, as before, his attention seemed entirely engrossed by the care of the queen's personal safety. She learned, however, she had a new obligation to him, since by his contrivance the abbot, whom he had furnished

with the family pass-word, was introduced into the castle as one of the garrison.

Long before day-break they ended their hasty and perilous journey before the gates of West Niddrie, a castle in West Lothian, belonging to Lord Seyton. When the queen was about to alight, Henry Seyton, preventing Douglas, received her in his arms, and, kneeling down, prayed her majesty to enter the house of his father, her faithful servant.

"Your grace," he added, "may repose yourself here in perfect safety—it is already garrisoned with good men for your protection; and I have sent a post to my father, whose instant arrival, at the head of five hundred men, may be looked for. Do not dismay yourself, therefore, should your sleep be broken by the trampling of horse; but only think that here are some scores more of the saucy Seytons come to attend you."

"And by better friends than the saucy Seytons a Scottish queen cannot be guarded," replied Mary. "Rosabelle went fleet as the summer breeze, and well nigh as easy; but it is long since I have been a traveller, and I feel that repose will be welcome.—Catherine, *ma mignonne*, you must sleep in my apartment to-night, and bid me welcome to your noble father's castle.—Thanks, thanks to all my kind deliverers—thanks, and a good night is all I can now offer; but if I climb once more to the upper side of Fortune's wheel, I will not have her bandage. Mary Stuart will keep her eyes open, and distinguish her friends.—Seyton, I need scarce recommend the venerable abbot, the Douglas, and my page, to your honourable care and hospitality."

Henry Seyton bowed, and Catherine and Lady Fleming attended the queen to her apartment; where, acknowledging to them that she should have found it difficult in that moment to keep her promise of holding her eyes open, she resigned herself to repose, and awakened not till the morning was advanced.

Mary's first feeling when she awoke, was the doubt of her freedom; and the impulse prompted her to start from bed, and hastily throwing her mantle over her shoulders, to look out at the casement of her apartment.—O sight of joy! instead of the crystal sheet of Lochleven, unaltered save by the influence of the wind, a landscape of wood and moorland lay before her, and the park around the castle was occupied by the troops of her most faithful and most favourite nobles.

"Rise, rise, Catherine," cried the enraptured princess; "arise and come hither!—here are swords and spears in true hands, and glittering armour on loyal breasts. Here are banners, my girl, floating in the wind, as lightly as summer-clouds—Great God! what pleasure to my weary eyes to trace their devices—thine own brave father's—the princely Hamilton's—the faithful Fleming's—See—see—they have caught a glimpse of me, and throng towards the window!"

She flung the casement open, and with her bare head, from which the tresses flew back loose and disheveled, her fair arm slenderly veiled by her mantle, returned by motion and sign the exulting shouts of the warriors, which echoed for many a furlong around. When the first burst of ecstatic joy was over, she recollected how lightly she was

dressed, and, putting her hands to her face, which was covered with blushes at the recollection, withdrew abruptly from the window. The cause of her retreat was easily conjectured, and increased the general enthusiasm for a princess, who had forgotten her rank in her haste to acknowledge the services of her subjects. The unadorned beauties of the lovely woman, too, moved the military spectators more than the highest display of her regal state might; and what might have seemed too free in her mode of appearing before them, was more than atoned for by the enthusiasm of the moment, and by the delicacy evinced in her hasty retreat. Often as the shouts died away, as often were they renewed, till wood and hill rung again; and many a deep oath was made that morning on the cross of the sword, that the hand should not part with the weapon, till Mary Stuart was restored to her rights. But what are the promises, what the hopes of mortals? In ten days these gallant and devoted volunteers were slain, were captives, or were fled.

Mary flung herself into the nearest seat, and still blushing, yet half smiling, exclaimed, "*Ma mignonne*, what will they think of me!—to show myself to them with my bare feet hastily thrust into the slippers—only this loose mantle about me—my hair loose on my shoulders—my arms and neck so bare—O, the best they can suppose is, that her abode in yonder dungeon has turned their queen's brain! But my rebel subjects saw me exposed when I was in the depth of affliction, why should I hold colder ceremony with these faithful and loyal men?—Call Fleming, however—I trust she has not forgotten the little mail with my apparel—We must be as brave as we can, *mignonne*."

"Nay, madam, our good Lady Fleming was in no case to remember any thing."

"You jest, Catherine," said the queen, somewhat offended; "it is not in her nature, surely, to forget her duty so far as to leave us without a change of apparel."

"Roland Græme, madam, took care of that," answered Catherine; "for he threw the mail, with your highness's clothes and jewels, into the boat, ere he ran back to lock the gate—I never saw so awkward a page as that youth—the packet well nigh fell on my head."

"He shall make thee amends, my girl," said queen Mary, laughing, "for that, and all other offences given. But call Fleming, and let us put ourselves into apparel to meet our faithful lords."

Such had been the preparations, and such was the skill of Lady Fleming, that the queen appeared before her assembled nobles in such attire as became, though it could not enhance, her natural dignity. With the most winning courtesy, she expressed to each individual her grateful thanks, and dignified not only every noble, but many of the lesser barons by her particular attention.

"And whither now, my lords?" she said; "what way do your councils determine for us?"

"To Draphane Castle," replied Lord Arbroath, "if your majesty is so pleased; and thence to Dumbarton, to place your grace's person in safety; after which we long to prove if these traitors will abide us in the field."

"And when do we journey?"

"We propose," said Lord Seyton, "if your grace's fatigue will permit, to take horse after the morning's meal."

"Your pleasure, my lords, is mine," replied the queen; "we will rule our journey by your wisdom now, and hope hereafter to have the advantage of governing by it our kingdom.—You will permit my ladies and me, my good lords, to break our fasts along with you—We must be half soldiers ourselves, and set state apart."

Low bowed many a helmeted head at this gracious proffer, when the queen, glancing her eyes through the assembled leaders, missed both Douglas and Roland Græme, and inquired for them in a whisper at Catherine Seyton.

"They are in yonder oratory, madam, sad enough," replied Catherine; and the queen observed that her favourite's eyes were red with weeping.

"This must not be," said the queen. "Keep the company amused—I will seek them, and introduce them myself."

She went into the oratory, where the first she met was George Douglas, standing, or rather reclining, in the recess of a window, his back rested against the wall, and his arms folded on his breast. At the sight of the queen he started, and his countenance showed, for an instant, an expression of intense delight, which was instantly exchanged for his usual deep melancholy.

"What means this?" she said; "Douglas, why does the first deviser and bold executor of the happy scheme for our freedom shun the company of his fellow nobles, and of the sovereign whom he has obliged?"

"Madam," replied Douglas, "those whom you grace with your presence bring followers to aid your cause, wealth to support your state,—can offer you halls in which to feast, and impregnable castles for your defence. I am a houseless and landless man—disinherited by my father, and laid under his malediction—disowned by my name and kindred,—who bring nothing to your standard but a single sword, and the poor life of its owner."

"Do you mean to upbraid me, Douglas," replied the queen, "by showing what you have lost for my sake?"

"God forbid, madam," interrupted the young man, eagerly; "were it to do again, and had I ten times as much rank and wealth, and twenty times as many friends to lose, my losses would be overpaid by the first step you made as a free princess, upon the soil of your native kingdom."

"And what then ails you, that you will not rejoice with those who rejoice upon the same joyful occasion?" said the queen.

"Madam," replied the youth, "though exheridated and disowned, I am yet a Douglas: with most of yonder nobles my family have been in feud for ages—a cold reception amongst them were an insult—and a kind one yet more humiliating."

"For shame, Douglas," replied the queen, "shake off this unmanly gloom!—I can make thee match for the best of them in title and fortune, and, believe me, I will—Go then amongst them, I command you."

"That word," said Douglas, "is enough—I go. This only let me say, that not for wealth or title would I have done that which I have done—Mary Stuart will not, and the queen cannot reward me."

So saying, he left the oratory, mingled with the nobles, and placed himself at the bottom of the table. The queen looked after him, and put her kerchief to her eyes.

"Now, Our Lady pity me," she said, "for no sooner are my prison-cares ended, than those which beset me as a woman and a queen again thicken around me.—Happy Elizabeth! to whom political interest is every thing, and whose heart never betrays thy head.—And now must I seek this other boy, if I would prevent daggers-drawing betwixt him and the young Seyton."

Roland Græme was in the same oratory, but at such a distance from Douglas, that he could not overhear what passed betwixt the queen and him. He also was moody and thoughtful, but cleared his brow at the queen's question, "How now, Roland? you are negligent in your attendance this morning. Are you so much overcome with your night's ride?"

"Not so, gracious madam," answered Græme; "but I am told the Page of Lochleven is not the Page of Niddrie Castle; and so Master Henry Seyton hath in a manner been pleased to supersede my attendance."

"Now, Heaven forgive me," said the queen, "how soon these cock-chickens begin to spar!—with children and boys, at least, I may be a queen.—I will have you friends.—Some one send me Henry Seyton hither." As she spoke the last words aloud, the youth whom she had named entered the apartment. "Come hither," she said, "Henry Seyton—I will have you give your hand to this youth, who so well aided in the plan of my escape."

"Willingly, madam," answered Seyton, "so that the youth will grant me, as a boon, that he touch not the hand of another Seyton whom he knows of. My hand has passed current for hers with him before now—and to win my friendship, he must give up thoughts of my sister's love."

"Henry Seyton," said the queen, "does it become you to add any condition to my command?"

"Madam," said Henry, "I am the servant of your grace's throne, son to the most loyal man in Scotland. Our goods, our castles, our blood, are yours. Our honour is in our own keeping. I could say more, but——"

"Nay, speak on, rude boy," said the queen; "what avails it that I am released from Lochleven, if I am thus enthralled under the yoke of my pretended deliverers, and prevented from doing justice to one who has deserved as well of me as yourself?"

"Be not in this distemperature for me, sovereign lady," said Roland; "this young gentleman, being the faithful servant of your grace, and the brother of Catherine Seyton, bears that about him which will charm down my passion at the hottest."

"I warn thee once more," said Henry Seyton, haughtily, "that you make no speech which may infer that the daughter of Lord Seyton can be aught to thee beyond what she is to every churl's blood in Scotland."

The queen was again about to interfere, for Roland's complexion rose, and it became somewhat questionable how long his love for Catherine would suppress the natural fire of his temper. But the interposition of another person, hitherto unseen, prevented Mary's interference. There was in the oratory a separate shrine, enclosed with a high screen of pierced oak, within which was placed an image of Saint Bennet, of peculiar sanctity. From this recess, in which she had been probably engaged in her devotions, issued suddenly Magdalen Græme, and addressed Henry Seyton, in reply to his last offensive expressions—"And of what clay, then, are they moulded, these Seytons, that the blood of the Græmes may not aspire to mingle with theirs? Know, proud boy, that when I call this youth my daughter's child, I affirm his descent from Malise Earl of Strathern, called Malise with the bright brand; and I trow the blood of your house springs from no higher source."

"Good mother," said Seyton, "methinks your sanctity should make you superior to these worldly vanities; and indeed it seems to have rendered you somewhat oblivious touching them, since, to be of gentle descent, the father's name and lineage must be as well qualified as the mother's."

"And if I say he comes of the blood of Avenel by the father's side," replied Magdalen Græme, "name I not blood as richly coloured as thine own?"

"Of Avenel?" said the queen; "is my page descended of Avenel?"

"Ay, gracious princess, and the last male heir of that ancient house—Julian Avenel was his father, who fell in battle against the southron."

"I have heard the tale of sorrow," said the queen; "it was thy daughter, then, who followed that unfortunate baron to the field, and died on his body? Alas! how many ways does woman's affection find to work out her own misery! The tale has oft been told and sung in hall and bower—And thou, Roland, art that child of misfortune, who was left among the dead and dying?—Henry Seyton, he is thine equal in blood and birth."

"Scarcely so," said Henry Seyton, "even were he legitimate; but if the tale be told and sung aright, Julian Avenel was a false knight, and his leman a frail and credulous maiden."

"Now, by Heaven, thou liest!" said Roland Græme, and laid his hand on his sword. The entrance of Lord Seyton, however, prevented violence.

"Save me, my lord," said the queen, "and separate these wild and untamed spirits."

"How, Henry!" said the baron, "are my castle, and the queen's presence, no checks on thine insolence and impetuosity?—And with whom art thou brawling?—unless my eyes spell that token false, it is with the very youth who aided me so gallantly in the skirmish with the Leslies—Let me look, fair youth, at the medal which thou wearest in thy cap. By Saint Bennet, it is the same!—Henry, I command thee to forbear him, as thou lovest my blessing——"

"And as you honour my command," said the queen; "good service hath he done me."

"Ay, madam," replied young Seyton, "as when he carried the billet enclosed in the sword-sheath to

Lochleven—marry, the good youth knew no more than a pack-horse what he was carrying.”

“But I, who dedicated him to this great work,” said Magdalen Græme; “I, by whose advice and agency this just heir hath been unloosed from her thralldom—I, who spared not the last remaining hope of a falling house in this great action—I, at least, knew and counselled; and what merit may be mine, let the reward, most gracious queen, descend upon this youth. My ministry here is ended; you are free—a sovereign princess, at the head of a gallant army, surrounded by valiant barons—My service could avail you no farther, but might well prejudice you; your fortune now rests upon men’s hearts and men’s swords—may they prove as trusty as the faith of women!”

“You will not leave us, mother,” said the queen—“you whose practices in our favour were so powerful, who dared so many dangers, and wore so many disguises, to blind our enemies and to confirm our friends—you will not leave us in the dawn of our reviving fortunes, ere we have time to know and to thank you?”

“You cannot know her,” answered Magdalen Græme, “who knows not herself—there are times when, in this woman’s frame of mind, there is the strength of him of Gath—in this over-toiled brain, the wisdom of the most sage counsellor—and again the mist is on me, and my strength is weakness, my wisdom folly. I have spoken before princes and cardinals—ay, noble princess, even before the princes of thine own house of Lorraine; and I know not whence the words of persuasion came which flowed from my lips, and were drunk in by their ears.—And now, even when I most need words of persuasion, there is something which chokes my voice, and robs me of utterance.”

“If there be aught in my power to do thee pleasure,” said the queen, “the barely naming it shall avail as well as all thine eloquence.”

“Sovereign lady,” replied the enthusiast, “it shames me that at this high moment, something of human frailty should cling to one, whose vows the saints have heard, whose labours in the rightful cause Heaven has prospered. But it will be thus while the living spirit is shrined in the clay of mortality—I will yield to the folly,” she said, weeping as she spoke, “and it shall be the last.” Then seizing Roland’s hand, she led him to the queen’s feet, kneeling herself upon one knee, and causing him to kneel on both. “Mighty princess,” she said, “look on this flower—it was found by a kindly stranger on a bloody field of battle, and long it was ere my anxious eyes saw, and my arms pressed, all that was left of my only daughter. For your sake, and for that of the holy faith we both profess, I could leave this plant, while it was yet tender, to the nurture of strangers—ay, of enemies, to whom, perchance, his blood would have been as wine, had the heretic Glendinning known that he had in his house the heir of Julian Avenel. Since then I have seen him only in a few hours of doubt and dread, and now I part with the child of my love—for ever—for ever.—O, for every weary step I have made in your rightful cause, in this and in foreign lands, give protection to the child whom I must no more call mine!”

“I swear to you, mother,” said the queen, deeply affected, “that, for your sake and his own, his happiness and fortunes shall be our charge!”

“I thank you, daughter of princes,” said Magdalen, and pressed her lips, first to the queen’s hand, then to the brow of her grandson. “And now,” she said, drying her tears, and rising with dignity, “Earth has had its own, and Heaven claims the rest.—Lioness of Scotland, go forth and conquer! and if the prayers of a devoted votaress can avail thee, they will rise in many a land, and from many a distant shrine. I will glide like a ghost from land to land, from temple to temple; and where the very name of my country is unknown, the priests shall ask who is the queen of that distant northern land, for whom the aged pilgrim was so fervent in prayer. Farewell! Honour be thine, and earthly prosperity, if it be the will of God—if not, may the penance thou shalt do here, ensure thee happiness hereafter.—Let no one speak or follow me—my resolution is taken—my vow cannot be canceled.”

She glided from their presence as she spoke, and her last look was upon her beloved grandchild. He would have risen and followed, but the queen and Lord Seyton interfered.

“Press not on her now,” said Lord Seyton, “if you would not lose her for ever. Many a time have we seen the sainted mother, and often at the most needful moment; but to press on her privacy, or to thwart her purpose, is a crime which she cannot pardon. I trust we shall yet see her at her need—a holy woman she is for certain, and dedicated wholly to prayer and penance; and hence the heretics hold her as distracted, while catholics deem her a saint.”

“Let me then hope,” said the queen, “that you, my lord, will aid me in the execution of her last request.”

“What! in the protection of my young second?—cheerfully—that is, in all that your majesty can think it fitting to ask of me.—Henry, give thy hand upon the instant to Roland Avenel, for so I presume he must now be called.”

“And shall be lord of the barony,” said the queen, “if God prosper our rightful arms.”

“It can only be to restore it to my kind protectress, who now holds it,” said young Avenel. “I would rather be landless all my life, than she lost a rood of ground by me.”

“Nay,” said the queen, looking to Lord Seyton, “his mind matches his birth—Henry, thou hast not yet given thy hand.”

“It is his,” said Henry, giving it with some appearance of courtesy, but whispering Roland at the same time. “For all this, thou hast not my sister’s.”

“May it please your grace,” said Lord Seyton, “now that these passages are over, to honour our poor meal. Time it were that our banners were reflected in the Clyde. We must to horse with as little stop as may be.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Ay, sir, our ancient crown, in these wild times,
Oft stood upon a cast—the gamester's ducat,
So often staked, and lost, and then regain'd,
Scarce knew so many hazards.

The Spanish Father.

It is not our object to enter into the historical part of the reign of the ill-fated Mary, or to recount, how, during the week which succeeded her flight from Lochleven, her partisans mustered around her with their followers, forming a gallant army, amounting to six thousand men. So much light has been lately thrown on the most minute details of the period, by Mr Chalmers, in his valuable History of Queen Mary, that the reader may be safely referred to it for the most full information which ancient records afford concerning that interesting time. It is sufficient for our purpose to say, that while Mary's head-quarters were at Hamilton, the regent and his adherents had, in the king's name, assembled a host at Glasgow, inferior indeed to that of the queen in numbers, but formidable from the military talents of Murray, Morton, the Laird of Grange, and others, who had been trained from their youth in foreign and domestic wars.

In these circumstances, it was the obvious policy of Queen Mary to avoid a conflict, secure that were her person once in safety, the number of her adherents must daily increase; whereas, the forces of those opposed to her, must, as had frequently happened in the previous history of her reign, have diminished, and their spirits become broken. And so evident was this to her counsellors, that they resolved their first step should be to place the queen in the strong castle of Dumbarton, there to await the course of events, the arrival of succours from France, and the levies which were made by her adherents in every province of Scotland. Accordingly, orders were given, that all men should be on horseback or on foot, appareled in their armour, and ready to follow the queen's standard in array of battle, the avowed determination being to escort her to the Castle of Dumbarton in defiance of her enemies.

The muster was made upon Hamilton-moor, and the march commenced in all the pomp of feudal times. Military music sounded, banners and pennons waved, armour glittered far and wide, and spears glanced and twinkled like stars in a frosty sky. The gallant spectacle of warlike parade was on this occasion dignified by the presence of the queen herself, who, with a fair retinue of ladies and household attendants, and a special guard of gentlemen, amongst whom young Seyton and Roland were distinguished, gave grace at once and confidence to the army, which spread its ample files before, around, and behind her. Many churchmen also joined the cavalcade, most of whom did not scruple to assume arms, and declare their intention of wielding them in defence of Mary and the catholic faith. Not so the Abbot of Saint Mary's. Roland had not seen this prelate since the night of their escape from Lochleven, and he now beheld him, robed in the dress of his order, assume his station near the queen's per-

son. Roland hastened to pull off his basnet, and beseech the abbot's blessing.

"Thou hast it, my son!" said the priest; "I see thee now under thy true name, and in the rightful garb. The helmet with the holly branch befits your brows well—I have long waited for the hour thou shouldst assume it."

"Then you knew of my descent, my good father!" said Roland.

"I did so, but it was under seal of confession from thy grandmother; nor was I at liberty to tell the secret, till she herself should make it known."

"Her reason for such secrecy, my father?" said Roland Avenel.

"Fear, perchance, of my brother—a mistaken fear, for Halbert would not, to ensure himself a kingdom, wrong an orphan; besides, that your title, in quiet times, even had your father done your mother that justice, which I well hope he did, could not have competed with that of my brother's wife, the child of Julian's elder brother."

"They need fear no competition from me," said Avenel. "Scotland is wide enough, and there are many manors to win, without plundering my benefactor. But prove to me, my reverend father, that my father was just to my mother—show me that I may call myself a legitimate Avenel, and make me your bounden slave for ever."

"Ay," replied the abbot, "I hear the Seytons hold thee cheap for that stain on thy shield. Something, however, I have learnt from the late Abbot Boniface, which, if it prove sooth, may redeem that reproach."

"Tell me that blessed news," said Roland, "and the future service of my life"—

"Rash boy!" said the abbot, "I should but madden thine impatient temper, by exciting hopes that may never be fulfilled—and is this a time for them? Think on what perilous march we are bound, and if thou hast a sin unconfessed, neglect not the only leisure which Heaven may perchance afford thee for confession and absolution."

"There will be time enough for both, I trust, when we reach Dumbarton," answered the page.

"Ay," said the abbot, "thou crowest as loudly as the rest—but we are not yet at Dumbarton, and there is a lion in the path."

"Mean you Murray, Morton, and the other rebels at Glasgow, my reverend father? Tush! they dare not look on the royal banner."

"Even so," replied the abbot, "speak many of those who are wiser than thou.—I have returned from the southern shires, where I left many a chief of name arming in the queen's interest—I left the lords here wise and considerate men—I find them madmen on my return—they are willing, for mere pride and vain glory, to brave the enemy, and to carry the queen, as it were in triumph, past the walls of Glasgow, and under the beards of the adverse army.—Seldom does Heaven smile on such mistimed confidence. We shall be encountered, and that to the purpose."

"And so much the better," replied Roland, "the field of battle was my cradle."

"Beware it be not thy dying-bed," said the abbot; "but what avails it whispering to young wolves the

dangers of the chase? You will know, perchance, ere this day is out, what yonder men are, whom you hold in rash contempt."

"Why, what are they?" said Henry Seyton, who now joined them; "have they sinews of wire, and flesh of iron?—Will lead pierce and steel cut them?—If so, reverend father, we have little to fear."

"They are evil men," said the abbot, "but the trade of war demands no saints.—Murray and Morton are known to be the best generals in Scotland. No one ever saw Lindesay's or Ruthven's back—Kirkaldy of Grange was named by the Constable Montmorency the first soldier in Europe—My brother, too good a name for such a cause, has been far and wide known for a soldier."

"The better, the better," said Seyton, triumphantly, "we shall have all these traitors of rank and name in a fair field before us. Our cause is the best, our numbers are the strongest, our hearts and limbs match theirs—Saint Bennet, and set on!"

The abbot made no reply, but seemed lost in reflection; and his anxiety in some measure communicated itself to Roland Avenel, who, ever as their line of march led over a ridge or an eminence, cast an anxious look towards the towers of Glasgow, as if he expected to see symptoms of the enemy issuing forth. It was not that he feared the fight, but the issue was of such deep import to his country, and to himself, that the natural fire of his spirit burnt with a less lively, though with a more intense glow. Love, honour, fame, fortune, all seemed to depend on the issue of one field, rashly hazarded perhaps, but now likely to become unavoidable.

When, at length, their march came to be nearly parallel with the city of Glasgow, Roland became sensible, that the high grounds before them were already in part occupied by a force, showing, like their own, the royal banner of Scotland, and on the point of being supported by columns of infantry and squadrons of horse, which the city gates had poured forth, and which hastily advanced to sustain those troops who already possessed the ground in front of the queen's army. Horseman after horseman galloped in from the advanced guard, with tidings that Murray had taken the field with his whole army; that his object was to intercept the queen's march, and his purpose unquestionable to hazard a battle. It was now that the tempers of men were subjected to a sudden and a severe trial; and that those who had too presumptuously concluded that they would pass without combat, were something disconcerted, when, at once, and with little time to deliberate, they found themselves placed in front of a resolute enemy.—Their chiefs immediately assembled around the queen, and held a hasty council of war. Mary's quivering lip confessed the fear which she endeavoured to conceal under a bold and dignified demeanour. But her efforts were overcome by painful recollections of the disastrous issue of her last appearance in arms at Carberry-hill; and when she meant to have asked them their advice for ordering the battle, she involuntarily inquired whether there were no means of escaping without an engagement.

"Escaping?" answered the Lord Seyton; "When I stand as one to ten of your highness's enemies I

may think of escape—but never while I stand with three to two!"

"Battle! battle!" exclaimed the assembled lords; "we will drive the rebels from their vantage ground, as the hound turns the hare on the hill-side."

"Methinks, my noble lords," said the abbot, "it were as well to prevent his gaining that advantage.—Our road lies through yonder hamlet on the brow, and whichever party hath the luck to possess it, with its little gardens and enclosures, will attain a post of great defence."

"The reverend father is right," said the queen. "O, haste thee, Seyton, haste, and get thither before them—they are marching like the wind."

Seyton bowed low, and turned his horse's head.—"Your highness honours me," he said; "I will instantly press forward, and seize the pass."

"Not before me, my lord, whose charge is the command of the van-guard?" said the Lord of Arbroath.

"Before you, or any Hamilton in Scotland," said the Seyton, "having the queen's command—Follow me, gentlemen, my vassals, and kinsmen—Saint Bennet, and set on!"

"And follow me," said Arbroath, "my noble kinsmen, and brave men-tenants; we will see which will first reach the post of danger. For God and Queen Mary!"

"Ill-omened haste, and most unhappy strife," said the abbot, who saw them and their followers rush hastily and emulously to ascend the height, without waiting till their men were placed in order.—"And you, gentlemen," he continued, addressing Roland and Seyton, who were each about to follow those who hastened thus disorderly to the conflict, "will you leave the queen's person unguarded?"

"O, leave me not, gentlemen!" said the queen—"Roland and Seyton, do not leave me—there are enough of arms to strike in this fell combat—with draw not those to whom I trust for my safety."

"We may not leave her grace," said Roland, looking at Seyton, and turning his horse.

"I ever looked when thou wouldst find out that," rejoined the fiery youth.

Roland made no answer, but bit his lip till the blood came, and spurring his horse up to the side of Catherine Seyton's palfrey, he whispered in a low voice, "I never thought to have done aught to deserve you; but this day I have heard myself upbraided with cowardice, and my sword remained still sheathed, and all for the love of you."

"There is madness among us all," said the damsel; "my father, my brother, and you, are all alike bereft of reason. Ye should think only of this poor queen, and you are all inspired by your own absurd jealousies—The monk is the only soldier and man of sense among you all.—My lord abbot," she cried aloud, "were it not better we should draw to the westward, and wait the event that God shall send us, instead of remaining here in the highway, endangering the queen's person, and cumbering the troops in their advance?"

"You say well, my daughter," replied the abbot, "had we but one to guide us where the queen's person may be in safety—Our nobles hurry to the

conflict, without casting a thought on the very cause of the war."

"Follow me," said a knight, or man-at-arms, well mounted, and attired completely in black armour, but having the visor of his helmet closed, and bearing no crest on his helmet, or device upon his shield.

"We will follow no stranger," said the abbot, "without some warrant of his truth."

"I am a stranger and in your hands," said the horseman; "if you wish to know more of me, the queen herself will be your warrant."

The queen had remained fixed to the spot, as if disabled by fear, yet mechanically smiling, bowing, and waving her hand, as banners were lowered and spears depressed before her, while, emulating the strife betwixt Seyton and Arbroath, band on band pressed forward their march towards the enemy. Scarce, however, had the black rider whispered something in her ear, than she assented to what he said; and when he spoke aloud, and with an air of command, "Gentlemen, it is the queen's pleasure that you should follow me," Mary uttered, with something like eagerness, the word, "Yes."

All were in motion in an instant, for the black horseman, throwing off a sort of apathy of manner, which his first appearance indicated, spurred his horse to and fro, making him take such active bounds and short turns as showed the rider master of the animal; and getting the queen's little retinue in some order for marching, he led them to the left, directing his course towards a castle, which, crowning a gentle yet commanding eminence, presented an extensive view over the country beneath, and, in particular, commanded a view of those heights which both armies hastened to occupy, and which it was now apparent must almost instantly be the scene of struggle and dispute.

"Yonder towers," said the abbot, questioning the sable horseman, "to whom do they belong?—and are they now in the hands of friends?"

"They are untenanted," replied the stranger, "or, at least, they have no hostile inmates.—But urge these youths, Sir Abbot, to make more haste—this is but an evil time to satisfy their idle curiosity, by peering out upon the battle in which they are to take no share."

"The worse luck mine," said Henry Seyton, who overheard him; "I would rather be under my father's banner at this moment than be made chamberlain of Holyrood, for this my present duty of peaceful ward well and patiently discharged."

"Your place under your father's banner will shortly be right dangerous," said Roland Avenel, who, pressing his horse towards the westward, had still his look reverted to the armies; "for I see yonder body of cavalry, which presses from the eastward, will reach the village ere Lord Seyton can gain it."

"They are but cavalry," said Seyton, looking attentively; "they cannot hold the village without shot of harquebuss."

"Look more closely," said Roland, "you will see that each of these horsemen who advance so rapidly from Glasgow, carries a footman behind him."

VOL. III.

"Now, by Heaven, he speaks well!" said the black cavalier; "one of you two must go carry the news to Lord Seyton and Lord Arbroath, that they hasten not their horsemen on before the foot, but advance more regularly."

"Be that my errand," said Roland, "for I first marked the stratagem of the enemy."

"But by your leave," said Seyton, "yonder is my father's banner engaged, and it best becomes me to go to the rescue."

"I will stand by the queen's decision," said Roland Avenel.

"What new appeal?—what new quarrel?" said Queen Mary—"Are there not in yonder dark host enemies enough to Mary Stuart, but must her very friends turn enemies to each other?"

"Nay, madam," said Roland, "the young Master of Seyton and I did but dispute who should leave your person to do a most needful message to the host. He thought his rank entitled him, and I deemed that the person of least consequence, being myself, were better periled"—

"Not so," said the queen; "if one must leave me, be it Seyton."

Henry Seyton bowed till the white plumes on his helmet mixed with the flowing mane of his gallant war-horse, then placed himself firmly in the saddle, shook his lance aloft with an air of triumph and determination, and striking his horse with the spurs, made towards his father's banner, which was still advancing up the hill, and dashed his steed over every obstacle that occurred in his headlong path.

"My brother! my father!" exclaimed Catherine, with an expression of agonized apprehension—they are in the midst of peril, and I in safety!"

"Would to God," said Roland, "that I were with them, and could ransom every drop of their blood by two of mine!"

"Do I not know thou dost wish it?" said Catherine—"Can a woman say to a man what I have well nigh said to thee, and yet think that he could harbour fear or faintness of heart?—There is that in yon distant sound of approaching battle that pleases me even while it affrights me. I would I were a man, that I might feel that stern delight, without the mixture of terror!"

"Ride up, ride up, Lady Catherine Seyton," cried the abbot, as they still swept on at a rapid pace, and were now close beneath the walls of the castle—"ride up, and aid Lady Fleming to support the queen—she gives way more and more."

They halted and lifted Mary from the saddle, and were about to support her towards the castle, when she said faintly, "Not there, not there—these walls will I never enter more!"

"Be a queen, madam," said the abbot, "and forget that you are a woman."

"O, I must forget much more," answered the unfortunate Mary, in an under tone, "ere I can look with steady eyes on these well-known scenes!—I must forget the days which I spent here as the bride of the lost—the murdered"—

"This is the Castle of Crookstone," said the Lady Fleming, "in which the queen held her first court after she was married to Darnley."

"Heaven," said the abbot, "thy hand is upon us!"

—Bear yet up, madam—your foes are the foes of the holy church, and God will this day decide whether Scotland shall be catholic or heretic.”

A heavy and continued fire of cannon and musketry bore a tremendous burthen to his words, and seemed far more than they to recal the spirits of the queen.

“To yonder tree,” she said, pointing to a yew-tree, which grew on a small mount close to the castle; “I know it well—from thence you may see a prospect wide as from the peaks of Schellion.”

And freeing herself from her assistants, she walked with a determined, yet somewhat wild step, up to the stem of the noble yew. The abbot, Catherine, and Roland Avenel, followed her, while Lady Fleming kept back the inferior persons of her train. The black horseman also followed the queen, waiting on her as closely as the shadow upon the light, but ever remaining at the distance of two or three yards—he folded his arms on his bosom, turned his back to the battle, and seemed solely occupied by gazing on Mary through the bars of his closed visor. The queen regarded him not, but fixed her eyes upon the spreading yew.

“Ay, fair and stately tree,” she said, as if at the sight of it she had been rapt away from the present scene, and had overcome the horror which had oppressed her at the first approach to Crookstone, “there thou standest, gay and goodly as ever, though thou hearest the sounds of war, instead of the vows of love. All is gone since I last greeted thee—love and lover—vows and vower—king and kingdom.—How goes the field, my lord abbot?—with us I trust—yet what but evil can Mary’s eyes witness from this spot!”

Her attendants eagerly bent their eyes on the field of battle, but could discover nothing more than that it was obstinately debated. The small enclosures and cottage gardens in the village, of which they had a full and commanding view, and which lately lay, with their lines of sycamore and ash trees, so still and quiet in the mild light of a May sun, were now each converted into a line of fire, canopied by smoke; and the sustained and constant report of the musketry and cannon, mingled with the shouts of the meeting combatants, showed that as yet neither party had given ground.

“Many a soul finds its final departure to heaven or hell, in these awful thunders,” said the abbot; “let those that believe in the holy church, join me in orisons for victory in this dreadful combat.”

“Not here—not here,” said the unfortunate queen; “pray not here, father, or pray in silence—my mind is too much torn between the past and the present, to dare to approach the heavenly throne—Or, if ye will pray, be it for one whose fondest affections have been her greatest crimes, and who has ceased to be a queen, only because she was a deceived and a tender-hearted woman.”

“Were it not well,” said Roland, “that I rode somewhat nearer the hosts, and saw the fate of the day?”

“Do so, in the name of God,” said the abbot; “for if our friends are scattered, our flight must be hasty—but beware thou approach not too nigh the

conflict, there is more than thine own life depends on thy safe return.”

“O, go not too nigh,” said Catherine; “but fail not to see how the Seytons fight, and how they bear themselves.”

“Fear nothing, I will be on my guard,” said Roland Avenel; and without waiting further answer, rode towards the scene of conflict, keeping, as he rode, the higher and unenclosed ground, and ever looking cautiously around him, for fear of involving himself in some hostile party. As he approached, the shots rung sharp and more sharply on his ear, the shouts came wilder and wilder, and he felt that thick beating of the heart, that mixture of natural apprehension, intense curiosity, and anxiety for the dubious event, which even the bravest experience when they approach alone to a scene of interest and of danger.

At length he drew so close, that from a bank, screened by bushes and underwood, he could distinctly see where the struggle was most keenly maintained. This was in a hollow way, leading to the village, up which the queen’s vanguard had marched with more hasty courage than well advised conduct, for the purpose of possessing themselves of that post of vantage. But they found the hedges and enclosures already occupied by the enemy, led by the celebrated Kirkaldy of Grange and the Earl of Morton; and not small was the loss which they sustained while struggling forward to come to close with the men-at-arms on the other side. But, as the queen’s followers were chiefly noblemen and barons, with their kinsmen and followers, they had pressed onwards, contemning obstacles and danger, and had, when Roland arrived on the ground, met hand to hand at the gorge of the pass with the regent’s vanguard, and endeavoured to bear them out of the village at the spear-point; while their foes, equally determined to keep the advantage which they had attained, struggled with the like obstinacy to drive back the assailants.

Both parties were on foot, and armed in proof; so that, when the long lances of the front ranks were fixed in each other’s shields, corslets, and breast-plates, the struggle resembled that of two bulls, who, fixing their frontlets hard against each other, remain in that posture for hours, until the superior strength or obstinacy of the one compels the other to take to flight, or bears him down to the earth. Thus locked together in the deadly struggle, which swayed slowly to and fro, as one or other party gained the advantage, those who fell were trampled on alike by friends and foes; those whose weapons were broken retired from the front rank, and had their places supplied by others; while the rearward ranks, unable otherwise to take share in the combat, fired their pistols, and hurled their daggers, and the points and truncheons of the broken weapons, like javelins, against the enemy.

“God and the queen!” resounded from the one party; “God and the king!” thundered from the other, while, in the name of their sovereign, fellow-subjects shed each other’s blood, and in the name of their Creator, defaced his image. Amid the tumult was often heard the voices of the captains shouting their commands; of leaders and chiefs, crying their

—vlaty—

—vlaty—vlaty—vlaty—

—vlaty—vlaty—vlaty—

—vlaty—vlaty—vlaty—

gathering words; of groans and shrieks from the falling and the dying.

The strife had lasted nearly an hour. The strength of both parties seemed exhausted, but their rage was unabated, and their obstinacy unsubdued, when Roland, who turned eye and ear to all around him, saw a column of infantry, headed by a few horsemen, wheel round the base of the bank where he had stationed himself, and, leveling their long lances, attack the flank of the queen's vanguard, closely engaged as they were with the conflict on their front. The very first glance showed him that the leader who directed this movement was the Knight of Avenel, his ancient master, and the next convinced him that its effect would be decisive. The result of the attack of fresh and unbroken forces upon the flank of those already wearied with a long and obstinate struggle, was, indeed, instantaneous.

The column of the assailants, which had hitherto shown one dark, dense, and united line of helmets, surmounted with plumage, was at once broken and hurled in confusion down the hill, which they had so long endeavoured to gain. In vain were the leaders heard calling upon their followers to stand to the combat, and seen personally resisting when all resistance was evidently vain. They were slain, or felled to the earth, or hurried backwards by the mingled tide of flight and pursuit. What were Roland's feelings on beholding the rout, and feeling that all that remained for him was to turn bridle, and endeavour to ensure the safety of the queen's person! Yet, keen as his grief and shame might be, they were both forgotten, when, almost close beneath the bank which he occupied, he saw Henry Seyton forced away from his own party in the tumult, covered with dust and blood, and defending himself desperately against several of the enemy who had gathered around him, attracted by his gay armour. Roland paused not a moment, but pushing his steed down the bank, leaped him amongst the hostile party, dealt three or four blows amongst them, which struck down two, and made the rest stand aloof; then reaching Seyton his hand, he exhorted him to seize fast on his horse's mane.

"We live or die together this day," said he; "keep but fast hold till we are out of the press, and then my horse is yours."

Seyton heard, and exerted his remaining strength, and, by their joint efforts, Roland brought him out of danger, and behind the spot from whence he had witnessed the disastrous conclusion of the fight. But no sooner were they under shelter of the trees, than Seyton let go his hold, and, in spite of Roland's efforts to support him, fell at length on the turf. "Trouble yourself no more with me," he said; "this is my first and my last battle—and I have already seen too much of it to wish to see the close. Hasten to save the queen—and commend me to Catherine—she will never more be mistaken for me nor I for her—the last sword-stroke has made an eternal distinction."

"Let me aid you to mount my horse," said Roland, eagerly, "and you may yet be saved—I can find my own way on foot—turn but my horse's head westward, and he will carry you fleet and easy as the wind."

"I will never mount steed more," said the youth; "farewell—I love thee better dying, than ever I thought to have done while in life—I would that old man's blood were not on my hand—*Sancte Benedicte, ora pro me*—Stand not to look on a dying man, but haste to save the queen."

These words were spoken with the last effort of his voice, and scarce were they uttered ere the speaker was no more. They recalled Roland to the sense of the duty which he had well-nigh forgotten, but they did not reach his ears only.

"The queen—where is the queen?" said Halbert Glendinning, who, followed by two or three horsemen, appeared at this instant. Roland made no answer, but turning his horse, and confiding in his speed, gave him at once rein and spur, and rode over height and hollow towards the Castle of Crookstone. More heavily armed, and mounted upon a horse of less speed, Sir Halbert Glendinning followed with couched lance, calling out as he rode, "Sir, with the holly branch, halt, and show your right to bear that badge—fly not thus cowardly, nor dishonour the cognizance thou deservest not to wear!—Halt, Sir Coward, or by Heaven I will strike thee with my lance on the back, and slay thee like a dastard—I am the Knight of Avenel—I am Halbert Glendinning."

But Roland, who had no purpose of encountering his old master, and who besides knew the queen's safety depended on his making the best speed he could, answered not a word to the defiance and reproaches which Sir Halbert continued to throw out against him; but making the best use of his spurs, rode yet harder than before, and had gained about a hundred yards upon his pursuer, when coming near to the yew-tree where he had left the queen, he saw them already getting to horse, and cried out as loud as he could, "Foes! foes!—Ride for it, fair ladies—Brave gentlemen, do your devoir to protect them."

So saying, he wheeled his horse, and avoiding the shock of Sir Halbert Glendinning, charged one of his followers, who was nearly on a line with him, so rudely with his lance, that he overthrew horse and man. He then drew his sword and attacked the second, while the black man-at-arms, throwing himself in the way of Glendinning, they rushed on each other so fiercely, that both horses were overthrown, and the riders lay rolling on the plain. Neither was able to arise, for the black horseman was pierced through with Glendinning's lance, and the Knight of Avenel, oppressed with the weight of his own horse, and sorely bruised besides, seemed in little better plight than he whom he had mortally wounded.

"Yield thee, Sir Knight of Avenel, rescue or no rescue," said Roland, who had put a second antagonist out of condition to combat, and hastened to prevent Glendinning from renewing the conflict.

"I may not chuse but yield," said Sir Halbert, "since I can no longer fight, but it shames me to speak such a word to a coward like thee."

"Call me not coward," said Roland, lifting his visor, and helping his prisoner to rise, "since but for old kindness at thy hand, and yet more at thy lady's, I had met thee as a brave man should."

"The favourite page of my wife!" said Sir Halbert

astonished: "Ah! wretched boy, I have heard of thy treason at Lochleven."

"Reproach him not, my brother," said the abbot, "he was but an agent in the hands of Heaven."

"To horse, to horse!" said Catherine Seyton; "mount and be gone, or we are all lost. I see our gallant army flying for many a league.—To horse, my lord abbot—To horse, Roland—My gracious liege, to horse; ere this, we should have ridden a mile."

"Look on these features," said Mary, pointing to the dying knight, who had been unhelmed by some compassionate hand; "look there, and tell me if she who ruins all who love her, ought to fly a foot farther to save her wretched life."

The reader must have long anticipated the discovery which the queen's feelings had made before her eyes confirmed it. It was the features of the unhappy George Douglas, on which death was stamping his mark.

"Look—look at him well," said the queen; "thus has it been with all who loved Mary Stuart!—The royalty of Francis, the wit of Chatelet, the power and gallantry of the gay Gordon, the melody of Rizzio, the portly form and youthful grace of Darnley, the bold address and courtly manners of Bothwell—and now the deep-devoted passion of the noble Douglas—nought could save them—they looked on the wretched Mary, and to have loved her was crime enough to deserve early death! No sooner had the victim formed a kind thought of me, than the poisoned cup, the axe and block, the dagger, the mine, were ready to punish them for casting away affection on such a wretch as I am.—Importune me not—I will fly no farther—I can die but once, and I will die here."

While she spoke, her tears fell fast on the face of the dying man, who continued to fix his eyes on her with an eagerness of passion, which death itself could hardly subdue.—"Mourn not for me," he said, faintly, "but care for your own safety—I die a Douglas, and I die pitied by Mary Stuart!"

He expired with these words, and without withdrawing his eyes from her face; and the queen, whose heart was of that soft and gentle mould, which, in domestic life, and with a more suitable partner than Darnley, might have made her happy, remained weeping by the dead man, until recalled to herself by the abbot, who found it necessary to use a style of unusual remonstrance. "We also, madam," he said, "we, your grace's devoted followers, have friends and relatives to weep for. I leave a brother in eminent jeopardy—the husband of the Lady Fleming—the father and brothers of the Lady Catherine, are all in yonder bloody field, slain, it is to be feared, or prisoners. We forget the fate of our own nearest and dearest, to wait on our queen, and she is too much occupied with her own sorrows to give one thought to ours."

"I deserve not your reproach, father," said the queen, checking her tears; "but I am docile to it—where must we go?—what must we do?"

"We must fly, and that instantly," said the abbot; "whither is not so easily answered, but we may dispute it upon the road—Lift her to her saddle, and set forward."

They set off accordingly—Roland lingered a moment, to command the attendance of the Knight of Avenel to the Castle of Crookstone, and to say that he demanded from him no other condition of liberty than his word, that he and his followers would keep secret the direction in which the queen fled. As he turned his rein to depart, the honest countenance of Adam Woodcock stared upon him with an expression of surprise, which, at another time, would have excited his hearty mirth. He had been one of the followers who had experienced the weight of Roland's arm, and they now knew each other, Roland having put up his visor, and the good yeoman having thrown away his barret-cap, with the iron bars in front, that he might the more readily assist his master. Into this barret-cap, as it lay on the ground, Roland forgot not to drop a few gold pieces (fruits of the queen's liberality), and with a signal of kind recollection and enduring friendship, he departed at full gallop to overtake the queen, the dust raised by her train being already far down the hill.

"It is not fairy-money," said honest Adam, weighing and handling the gold—"And it is Master Roland himself, that is a certain thing—the same open hand, and, by Our Lady!—(shrugging his shoulders) the same ready fist!—My lady will hear of this gladly, for she mourns for him as if he were her son. And to see how gay he is! But these light lads are sure to be uppermost as the froth to be on the top of the quart-pot—Your man of solid parts remains ever a falconer." So saying, he went to aid his comrades, who had now come up in greater numbers to carry his master into the Castle of Crookstone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

My native land, good night!

BYRON.

MANY a bitter tear was shed during the hasty flight of Queen Mary, over fallen hopes, future prospects, and slaughtered friends. The deaths of the brave Douglas, and of the fiery but gallant young Seyton, seemed to affect the queen as much as the fall from the throne, on which she had so nearly been again seated. Catherine Seyton devoured in secret her own grief, anxious to support the broken spirits of her mistress; and the abbot, bending his anxious thoughts upon futurity, endeavoured in vain to form some plan which had a shadow of hope. The spirit of young Roland, for he also mingled in the hasty debates held by the companions of the queen's flight, continued unchecked and unbroken.

"Your majesty," he said, "has lost a battle—Your ancestor, Bruce, lost seven successively, ere he sat triumphant on the Scottish throne, and proclaimed with the voice of a victor, in the field of Bannockburn, the independence of his country. Are not these heaths, which we may traverse at will, better than the locked, guarded, and lake-moated Castle of Lochleven?—We are free—in that one word there is comfort for all our losses."

He struck a bold note, but the heart of Mary made no response.

"Better," she said, "I had still been in Lochleven, than seen the slaughter made by my rebels among the subjects who offered themselves to death for my sake. Speak not to me of further efforts—they would only cost the lives of you, the friends who recommend them—I would not again undergo what I felt, when I saw from yonder mount the swords of the fell horsemen of Morton raging among the faithful Seytens and Hamiltons, for their loyalty to their queen—I would not again feel what I felt when Douglas's life-blood stained my mantle for his love to Mary Stuart—not to be empress of all that Britain's seas enclose. Find for me some place where I can hide my unhappy head, which brings destruction on all who love it—it is the last favour that Mary asks of her faithful followers."

In this dejected mood, but still pursuing her flight with unabated rapidity, the unfortunate Mary, after having been joined by Lord Herries and a few followers, at length halted, for the first time, at the Abbey of Dundrennan, nearly sixty miles distant from the field of battle. In this remote corner of Galloway, the Reformation not having yet been strictly enforced against the monks, a few still lingered in their cells unmolested; and the prior, with tears and reverence, received the fugitive queen at the gate of his convent.

"I bring you ruin, my good father," said the queen, as she was lifted from her palfrey.

"It is welcome," said the prior, "if it comes in the train of duty."

Placed on the ground and supported by her ladies, the queen looked for an instant at her palfrey, which, jaded and drooping its head, seemed as if it mourned the distresses of its mistress.

"Good Roland," said the queen, whispering, "let Rosabelle be cared for—ask thy heart, and it will tell thee why I make this little request even in this awful hour."

She was conducted to her apartment, and in the hurried consultation of her attendants, the fatal resolution of the retreat to England was finally adopted. In the morning it received her approbation, and a messenger was dispatched to the English warden to pray him for safe conduct and hospitality, on the part of the Queen of Scotland. On the next day, the abbot walked in the garden of the abbey with Roland, to whom he expressed his disapprobation of the course pursued. "It is madness and ruin," he said; "better commit herself to the savage Highlanders or wild Bordermen, than to the faith of Elizabeth. A woman to a rival woman—a presumptive successor to the keeping of a jealous queen!—Roland, Herries is true and loyal, but his counsel has ruined his mistress."

"Ay, ruin follows us every where," said an old man with a spade in his hand, and dressed like a lay-brother, of whose presence, in the vehemence of his exclamation, the abbot had not been aware—"Gaze not on me with such wonder!—I am he who was the Abbot Boniface at Kennaquhair, who was the gardener Blinkhoolie at Lochleven, hunted round to the place in which I served my noviciate, and now ye are come to rouse me up again!—A weary life I have had for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing!"

"We will soon rid you of our company, good father," said the abbot; "and the queen will, I fear me, trouble your retreat no more."

"Nay, you said as much before," said the querulous old man, "and yet I was put forth from Kinross, and pillaged by troopers on the road.—They took from me the certificate that you wot of—that of the baron—ay, he was a moss-trooper like themselves—You asked me of it, and I could never find it, but they found it—it showed the marriage of—of—my memory fails me—now see how men differ!—Father Nicholas would have told you an hundred tales of the Abbot Ingelram, on whose soul God have mercy!—He was, I warrant you, fourscore and six, and I am not more than—let me see."

"Was not Avenel the name you seek, my good father?" said Roland, impatiently, yet moderating his tone for fear of alarming or offending the infirm old man.

"Ay, right—Avenel, Julian Avenel—You are perfect in the name—I kept all the special confessions, judging it held with my vow to do so—I could not find it when my successor, Ambrosius, spoke on't—but the troopers found it, and the knight struck his breast, till the target clattered like an empty watering can."

"Saint Mary!" said the abbot, "in whom could such a paper excite such interest? What was the appearance of the knight, his arms, his colours?"

"Ye distract me with your questions—I dared hardly look at him—they charged me with bearing letters for the queen, and searched my mail—This was all along of your doings at Lochleven."

"I trust in God," said the abbot to Roland, who stood beside him, shivering and trembling with impatience, "the paper has fallen into the hands of my brother—I heard he had been with his followers on the scout betwixt Stirling and Glasgow.—Bore not the knight a holly bough in his helmet?—Canst thou not remember?"

"O, remember—remember," said the old man, pettishly; "count as many years as I do, if your plots will let you, and see what and how much you remember—Why, I scarce remember the pear-mains which I grafted here with my own hands some fifty years since."

At this moment a bugle sounded loudly from the beach.

"It is the death-blast to Queen Mary's royalty," said Ambrosius; "the English warden's answer has been received, favourable doubtless, for when was the door of the trap closed against the prey which it was set for?—Droop not, Roland—this matter shall be sifted to the bottom—but we must not now leave the queen—follow me—let us do our duty, and trust the issue with God—Farewell, good father—I will visit thee again soon."

He was about to leave the garden, followed by Roland, with half-reluctant steps. The ex-abbot resumed his spade.

"I could be sorry for these men," he said, "ay, and for that poor queen, but what avail earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore?—and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort."

"He is stricken with age," said Ambrosius, as he dragged Roland down to the sea-beach; "we

must let him take his time to collect himself—nothing now can be thought on but the fate of the queen.”

They soon arrived where she stood, surrounded by her little train, and by her side the sheriff of Cumberland, a gentleman of the house of Lowther, richly dressed and accompanied by soldiers. The aspect of the queen exhibited a singular mixture of alacrity and reluctance to depart. Her language and gesture spoke hope and consolation to her attendants, and she seemed desirous to persuade even herself that the step she adopted was secure, and that the assurance she had received of kind reception was altogether satisfactory; but her quivering lip, and unsettled eye, betrayed at once her anguish at departing from Scotland, and her fears of confiding herself to the doubtful faith of England.

“Welcome, my lord abbot,” said she; “and you, Roland Avenel, we have joyful news for you—our loving sister’s officers proffer us, in her name, a safe asylum from the rebels who have driven us from our own—only it grieves me we must here part from you for a short space.”

“Part from us, madam!” said the abbot; “is your welcome in England then to commence with the abridgment of your train and dismissal of your consellers?”

“Take it not thus, good father,” said Mary; “the warden and the sheriff, faithful servants of our royal sister, deem it necessary to obey her instructions in the present case, even to the letter, and can only admit me with my female attendants. An express will instantly be dispatched from London, assigning me a place of residence; and I will speedily send to all of you whenever my court shall be formed.”

“Your court formed in England! and while Elizabeth lives and reigns?” said the abbot—“that will be when we shall see two suns in one heaven!”

“Do not think so,” replied the queen; “we are well assured of our sister’s good faith. Elizabeth loves fame—and not all that she has won by her power and her wisdom will equal that which she will acquire by extending her hospitality to a distressed sister!—not all that she may hereafter do of good, wise, and great, would blot out the reproach of abusing our confidence. Farewell, my page—now my knight—farewell for a brief season. I will dry the tears of Catherine, or I will weep with her till neither of us can weep longer.” She held out her hand to Roland, who, flinging himself on his knees, kissed it with much emotion. He was about to render the same homage to Catherine, when the queen, assuming an air of sprightliness, said, “Her lips, thou foolish boy! and, Catherine, coy it not—these English gentlemen should see, that, even in our cold clime, beauty knows how to reward bravery and fidelity!”

“We are not now to learn the force of Scottish beauty, or the mettle of Scottish valour,” said the Sheriff of Cumberland, courteously—“I would it were in my power to bid these attendants upon her who is herself the mistress of Scottish beauty, as welcome to England as my poor cares would make them. But our queen’s orders are positive in case of such an emergence, and they must not be disputed

by her subject.—May I remind your majesty that the tide ebbs fast?”

The sheriff took the queen’s hand, and she had already placed her foot on the gangway, by which she was to enter the skiff, when the abbot, starting from a trance of grief and astonishment at the words of the sheriff, rushed into the water, and seized upon her mantle.

“She foresaw it!—she foresaw it!” he exclaimed—“she foresaw your flight into her realm; and, foreseeing it, gave orders you should be thus received. Blinded, deceived, doomed princess! your fate is sealed when you quit this strand.—Queen of Scotland, thou shalt not leave thine heritage!” he continued, holding a still firmer grasp upon her mantle; “true men shall turn rebels to thy will, that they may save thee from captivity or death. Fear not the bills and bows whom that gay man has at his beck—we will withstand him by force. Oh, for the arm of my warlike brother!—Roland Avenel, draw thy sword!”

The queen stood irresolute and frightened; one foot upon the plank, the other on the sand of her native shore, which she was quitting for ever.

“What needs this violence, Sir Priest?” said the Sheriff of Cumberland; “I came hither at your queen’s command, to do her service; and I will depart at her least order, if she rejects such aid as I can offer. No marvel is it if our queen’s wisdom foresaw that such chance as this might happen amidst the turmoils of your unsettled state; and, while willing to afford fair hospitality to her royal sister, deemed it wise to prohibit the entrance of a broken army of her followers into the English frontier.”

“You hear,” said Queen Mary, gently unloosing her robe from the abbot’s grasp, “that we exercise full liberty of choice in leaving this shore; and, questionless, the choice will remain free to us in going to France, or returning to our own dominions, as we shall determine—Besides, it is too late—Your blessing, father, and God speed thee!”

“May He have mercy on thee, and speed thee also!” said the abbot, retreating: “But my soul tells me I look on thee for the last time!”

The sails were hoisted, the oars were plied, the vessel went freshly on her way through the frith, which divides the shores of Cumberland from those of Galloway; but not till the vessel diminished to the size of a child’s frigate, did the doubtful, and dejected, and dismissed followers of the queen cease to linger on the sands; and long, long could they discern the kerchief of Mary, as she waved the oft-repeated signal of adieu to her faithful adherents, and to the shores of Scotland.

If good tidings of a private nature could have consoled Roland for parting with his mistress, and for the distresses of his sovereign, he received such comfort some days subsequent to the queen’s leaving Dundrennan. A breathless post—no other than Adam Woodcock—brought dispatches from Sir Halbert Glendinning to the abbot, whom he found, with Roland, still residing at Dundrennan, and in vain torturing Boniface with fresh interrogations.

The packet bore an earnest invitation to his brother to make Avenel Castle for a time his residence. "The clemency of the regent," said the writer, "has extended pardon both to Roland and to you, upon condition of your remaining a time under my wardship. And I have that to communicate respecting the parentage of Roland, which not only you will willingly listen to, but which will be also found to afford me, as the husband of his nearest relative, some interest in the future course of his life."

The abbot read this letter, and paused, as if considering what were best for him to do. Meanwhile, Woodcock took Roland aside, and addressed him as follows:—"Now look, Mr Roland, that you do not let any papist nonsense lure either the priest or you from the right quarry. See you, you ever bore yourself as a bit of a gentleman. Read that, and thank God that threw old Abbot Boniface in our way, as two of the Seyton's men were conveying him toward Dundrennan here.—We searched him for intelligence concerning that fair exploit of yours at Lochleven, that has cost many a man his life, and me a set of sore bones—and we found what is better for your purpose than ours."

The paper which he gave was, indeed, an attestation by Father Philip, subscribing himself unworthy sacristan, and brother of the House of Saint Mary's, stating, "that, under a vow of secrecy, he had united in the holy sacrament of marriage Julian Avenel and Catherine Græme; but that, Julian having repented of his union, he, Father Philip, had been sinfully prevailed on by him to conceal and disguise the same, according to a complot devised betwixt him and the said Julian Avenel, whereby the poor damsel was induced to believe that the ceremony had been performed by one not in holy orders, and having no authority to that effect. Which sinful concealment the undersigned conceived to be the cause why he was abandoned to the misguiding of a water-fiend, whereby he had been under a spell, besides being sorely afflicted with rheumatic pains ever after.—Wherefore he had deposited this testificate and confession, with the day and date of the said marriage, with his lawful superior, Boniface, Abbot of Saint Mary's, *sub sigillo confessionis*."

It appeared by a letter from Julian, folded carefully up with the certificate, that the Abbot Boniface had, in effect, bestirred himself in the affair, and obtained from the baron a promise to avow his marriage; but the death of both Julian and his injured bride, together with the abbot's resignation, his ignorance of the fate of their unhappy offspring, and, above all, his listless and inactive disposition, had suffered the matter to become totally forgotten, until it was recalled by some accidental conversation with Ambrosius concerning the fortunes of the Avenel family. At the request of his successor, he searched for it; but, as he would receive no assistance in looking among the few records of spiritual experiences and important confessions, which he had conscientiously treasured, it might have remained for ever hidden amongst them, but for the more active researches of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"So that you are like to be heir of Avenel at last, Master Roland, after my lord and lady have gone to their place," said Adam; "and as I have but one boon to ask, I trust you will not nick me with nay."

"Not if it be in my power to say yes, my trusty friend."

"Why, then, I must needs, if I live to see that day, keep on feeding the eyasses with unwashed flesh," said Woodcock, sturdily, yet as if doubting the reception that his request might meet with.

"Thou shalt feed them with what you list for me," said Roland, laughing; "I am not many months older than when I left the castle, but I trust I have gathered wit enough to cross no man of skill in his own vocation."

"Then I would not change places with the king's falconer," said Adam Woodcock, "nor with the queen's neither—but they say she will be mewed up and never need one—I see it grieves you to think of it, and I could grieve for company, but what help for it—fortune will fly her own flight, let a man hollo himself hoarse."

The abbot and Roland journeyed to Avenel, where the former was tenderly received by his brother, while the lady wept for joy to find that in her favourite orphan she had protected the sole surviving branch of her own family. Sir Halbert Glendinning and his household were not a little surprised at the change which a brief acquaintance with the world had produced in their former inmate, and rejoiced to find, in the petted, spoiled, and presuming page, a modest and unassuming young man, too much acquainted with his own expectations and character, to be hot or petulant in demanding the consideration which was readily and voluntarily yielded to him. The old major-domo Wingate was the first to sing his praises, to which Mrs Liliass bore a loud echo, always hoping that God would teach him the true Gospel.

To the true Gospel the heart of Roland had secretly long inclined; and the departure of the good abbot for France, with the purpose of entering into some house of his order in that kingdom, removed his chief objection to renouncing the catholic faith. Another might have existed in the duty which he owed to Magdalen Græme, both by birth and from gratitude. But he learned, ere he had been long a resident in Avenel, that his grandmother had died at Cologne, in the performance of a penance too severe for her age, which she had taken upon herself in behalf of the Queen and Church of Scotland, as soon as she heard of the defeat at Langside. The zeal of the Abbot Ambrosius was more regulated, but he retired into the Scottish convent of ———, and so lived there, that the fraternity were inclined to claim for him the honours of canonization. But he guessed their purpose, and prayed them, on his death-bed, to do no honours to the body of one as sinful as themselves; but to send his body and his heart to be buried in Avenel burial-aisle, in the Monastery of Saint Mary's, that the last abbot of that celebrated house of devotion might sleep among its ruins.

Long before that period arrived, Roland Avenel was wedded to Catherine Seyton, who, after two

years' residence with her unhappy mistress, was dismissed, upon her being subjected to closer restraint than had been at first exercised. She returned to her father's house; and as Roland was acknowledged for the successor and lawful heir of the ancient house of Avenel, greatly increased as the estate was by the providence of Sir Halbert Glendinning, there occurred no objections to the match on the part of her family. Her mother was recently dead when she first entered the convent; and her father, in the unsettled times which followed Queen

Mary's flight to England, was not averse to an alliance with a youth, who, himself loyal to Queen Mary, still held some influence, through means of Sir Halbert Glendinning, with the party in power.

Roland and Catherine, therefore, were united, spite of their differing faiths; and the White Lady, whose apparition had been infrequent when the house of Avenel seemed verging to extinction, was seen to sport by her haunted well, with a zone of gold around her bosom as broad as the baldric of an earl.



Kenilworth.

No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope.

The Critic.

CHAPTER I.

I am an innkeeper, and know my grounds,
And study them; brain o' man, I study them.
I must have jovial guests to drive my ploughs,
And whistling boys to bring my harvests home,
Or I shall hear no flails thwack.

BEN JONSON : *The New Inn.*

It is the privilege of tale-tellers to open their story in an inn, the free rendezvous of all travellers, and where the humour of each displays itself, without ceremony or restraint. This is specially suitable when the scene is laid during the old days of merry England, when the guests were in some sort not merely the inmates, but the messmates and temporary companions of mine host, who was usually a personage of privileged freedom, comely presence, and good humour. Patronized by him, the characters of the company were placed in ready contrast; and they seldom failed, during the emptying of a six-hooped pot, to throw off reserve, and present themselves to each other, and their landlord, with the freedom of old acquaintance.

The village of Cumnor, within three or four miles of Oxford, boasted, during the eighteenth of Queen Elizabeth, an excellent inn of the old stamp, conducted, or rather ruled, by Giles Gosling, a man of a goodly person, and of somewhat a round belly, fifty years of age and upwards, moderate in his reckonings, prompt in his payments, having a cellar of sound liquor, a ready wit, and a pretty daughter. Since the days of old Harry Baillie of the Tabard in Southwark, no one had excelled Giles Gosling in the power of pleasing his guests of every description; and so great was his fame, that to have been in Cumnor, without wetting a cup at the bonny Black Bear, would have been to avouch one's self utterly indifferent to reputation as a traveller. A country fellow might as well return from London without looking in the face of majesty. The men of Cumnor were proud of their host, and their host was proud of his house, his liquor, his daughter, and himself.

It was in the court-yard of the inn which called this honest fellow landlord, that a traveller alighted in the close of the evening, gave his horse, which seemed to have made a long journey, to the hostler, and made some inquiry, which produced the following dialogue betwixt the myrmidons of the bonny Black Bear.

"What, ho! John Tapster."

"At hand, Will Hostler," replied the man of the spiggot, showing himself in his costume of loose jacket, linen breeches, and green apron, half within and half without a door, which appeared to descend to an outer cellar.

"Here is a gentleman asks if you draw good ale," continued the hostler.

VOL. III.

"Beshrew my heart else," answered the tapster, "since there are but four miles betwixt us and Oxford.—Marry, if my ale did not convince the heads of the scholars, they would soon convince my pate with the pewter flagon."

"Call you that Oxford logic?" said the stranger, who had now quitted the rein of his horse, and was advancing towards the inn-door, when he was encountered by the goodly form of Giles Gosling himself.

"Is it logic you talk of, sir guest?" said the host; "why, then, have at you with a downright consequence—"

The horse to the rack,
And to fire with the sack."

"Amen! with all my heart, my good host," said the stranger; "let it be a quart of your best Canaries, and give me your good help to drink it."

"Nay, you are but in your accidents yet, sir traveller, if you call on your host for help for such a sipping matter as a quart of sack—were it a gallon, you might lack some neighbourly aid at my hand, and yet call yourself a toper."

"Fear me not," said the guest, "I will do my devoir as becomes a man who finds himself within five miles of Oxford; for I am not come from the fields of Mars to discredit myself amongst the followers of Minerva."

As he spoke thus, the landlord, with much semblance of hearty welcome, ushered his guest into a large low chamber, where several persons were seated together in different parties; some drinking, some playing at cards, some conversing, and some, whose business called them to be early risers on the morrow, concluding their evening meal, and conferring with the chamberlain about their night's quarters.

The entrance of a stranger procured him that general and careless sort of attention which is usually paid on such occasions, from which the following results were deduced:—The guest was one of those who, with a well-made person, and features, not in themselves unpleasing, are nevertheless so far from handsome, that, whether from the expression of their features, or the tone of their voice, or from their gait and manner, there arises, on the whole, a disinclination to their society. The stranger's address was bold, without being frank, and seemed eagerly and hastily to claim for him a degree of attention and deference, which he feared would be refused, if not instantly vindicated as his right. His attire was a riding-cloak, which, when open, displayed a handsome jerkin, overlaid with lace, and belted with a buff girdle, which sustained a broad-sword and a pair of pistols.

"You ride well provided, sir," said the host, looking at the weapons as he placed on the table

the mulled sack which the traveller had ordered.

"Yes, mine host; I have found the use on't in dangerous times, and I do not, like your modern grandees, turn off my followers the instant they are useless."

"Ay, sir?" said Giles Gosling; "then you are from the Low Countries, the land of pike and caliver?"

"I have been high and low, my friend, broad and wide, far and near; but here is to thee in a cup of thy sack—fill thyself another to pledge me; and, if it is less than superlative, e'en drink as you have brewed."

"Less than superlative!" said Giles Gosling, drinking off the cup, and smacking his lips with an air of ineffable relish,—“I know nothing of superlative, nor is there such a wine at the Three Cranes, in the Vintry, to my knowledge; but if you find better sack than that in Sheres, or in the Canaries either, I would I may never touch either pot or penny more. Why, hold it up betwixt you and the light, you shall see the little motes dance in the golden liquor like dust in the sunbeam. But I would rather draw wine for ten clowns than one traveller.—I trust your honour likes the wine?"

"It is neat and comfortable, mine host; but to know good liquor, you should drink where the vine grows. Trust me, your Spaniard is too wise a man to send you the very soul of the grape. Why, this now, which you account so choice, were counted but as a cup of bastard at the Groyne, or at Port St Mary's. You should travel, mine host, if you would be deep in the mysteries of the butt and pottle-pot."

"In troth, signior guest," said Giles Gosling, "if I were to travel only that I might be discontented with that which I can get at home, methinks I should go but on a fool's errand. Besides, I warrant you, there is many a fool can turn his nose up at good drink without ever having been out of the smoke of Old England; and so ever gramercy mine own fire-side."

"This is but a mean mind of yours, mine host," said the stranger; "I warrant me, all your town's-folks do not think so basely. You have gallants among you, I dare undertake, that have made the Virginia voyage, or taken a turn in the Low Countries at least. Come, cudgel your memory. Have you no friends in foreign parts that you would gladly have tidings of?"

"Troth, sir, not I," answered the host, "since ranting Robin of Drysandford was shot at the siege of the Brill. The devil take the caliver that fired the ball, for a blither lad never filled cup at midnight. But he is dead and gone, and I know not a soldier, or a traveller who is a soldier's mate, that I would give a peeled codling for."

"By the mass, that is strange. What! so many of our brave English hearts are abroad, and you, who seem to be a man of mark, have no friend, no kinsman, among them?"

"Nay, if you speak of kinsmen," answered Gosling, "I have one wild slip of a kinsman, who left us in the last year of Queen Mary; but he is better lost than found."

"Do not say so, friend, unless you have heard ill

of him lately. Many a wild colt has turned out a noble steed.—His name, I pray you?"

"Michael Lambourne," answered the landlord of the Black Bear; "a son of my sister's—there is little pleasure in recollecting either the name or the connexion."

"Michael Lambourne!" said the stranger, as if endeavouring to recollect himself—"what, no relation to Michael Lambourne, the gallant cavalier who behaved so bravely at the siege of Venlo, that Grave Maurice thanked him at the head of the army? Men said he was an English cavalier, and of no high extraction."

"It could scarce be my nephew," said Giles Gosling, "for he had scarce the courage of a hen-partridge for aught but mischief."

"O, many a man finds courage in the wars," replied the stranger.

"It may be," said the landlord; "but I would have thought our Mike more likely to lose the little he had."

"The Michael Lambourne whom I knew," continued the traveller, "was a likely fellow—went always gay and well attired, and had a hawk's eye after a pretty wench."

"Our Michael," replied the host, "had the look of a dog with a bottle at its tail, and wore a coat every rag of which was bidding good day to the rest."

"O, men pick up good apparel in the wars," replied the guest.

"Our Mike," answered the landlord, "was more like to pick it up in a frippery warehouse, while the broker was looking another way; and, for the hawk's eye you talk of, his was always after my stray spoons. He was tapster's boy here in this blessed house for a quarter of a year; and between misreckonings, miscarriages, mistakes, and misdemeanours, had he dwelt with me for three months longer, I might have pulled down sign, shut up house, and given the devil the key to keep."

"You would be sorry, after all," continued the traveller, "were I to tell you poor Mike Lambourne was shot at the head of his regiment at the taking in of a scone near Maestricht."

"Sorry!—it would be the blithest news I ever heard of him, since it would ensure me he was not hanged. But let him pass—I doubt his end will never do such credit to his friends; were it so, I should say—(taking another cup of sack)—Here's God rest him, with all my heart."

"Tush, man," replied the traveller, "never fear but you will have credit by your nephew yet, especially if he be the Michael Lambourne whom I knew, and loved very nearly, or altogether, as well as myself. Can you tell me no mark by which I could judge whether they be the same?"

"Faith, none that I can think of," answered Giles Gosling, "unless that our Mike had the gallows branded on his left shoulder for stealing a silver caudle-cup from Dame Snort of Hogsditch."

"Nay, there you lie like a knave, uncle," said the stranger, slipping aside his ruff, and turning down the sleeve of his doublet from his neck and shoulder; "by this good day, my shoulder is as unscarred as thine own."

"What, Mike, boy—Mike!" exclaimed the host;—"and is it thou, in good earnest? Nay, I have judged so for this half hour; for I knew no other person would have ta'en half the interest in thee. But, Mike, an thy shoulder be unscathed as thou sayest, thou must own that Goodman Thong, the hangman, was merciful in his office, and stamped thee with a cold iron."

"Tush, uncle—truce with your jests. Keep them to season your sour ale, and let us see what hearty welcome thou wilt give a kinsman who has rolled the world around for eighteen years; who has seen the sun set where it rises, and has travelled till the west has become the east."

"Thou hast brought back one traveller's gift with thee, Mike, as I well see, and that was what thou least didst need to travel for. I remember well, among thine other qualities, there was no crediting a word which came from thy mouth."

"Here's an unbelieving pagan for you, gentlemen!" said Michael Lambourne, turning to those who witnessed this strange interview betwixt uncle and nephew, some of whom, being natives of the village, were no strangers to his juvenile wildness. "This may be called slaying a Cumnor fatted calf for me with a vengeance.—But, uncle, I come not from the husks and the swine-trough, and I care not for thy welcome or no welcome; I carry that with me will make me welcome, wend where I will."

So saying, he pulled out a purse of gold, indifferently well filled, the sight of which produced a visible effect upon the company. Some shook their heads, and whispered to each other, while one or two of the less scrupulous speedily began to recollect him as a school-companion, a townsman, or so forth. On the other hand, two or three grave sedate-looking persons shook their heads, and left the inn, hinting, that, if Giles Gosling wished to continue to thrive, he should turn his thriftless godless nephew adrift again, as soon as he could. Gosling demeaned himself, as if he were much of the same opinion; for even the sight of the gold made less impression on the honest gentleman than it usually doth upon one of his calling.

"Kinsman Michael," he said, "put up thy purse. My sister's son shall be called to no reckoning in my house for supper or lodging; and I reckon thou wilt hardly wish to stay longer, where thou art e'en but too well known."

"For that matter, uncle," replied the traveller, "I shall consult my own needs and conveniences. Meantime I wish to give the supper and sleeping cup to those good townsmen, who are not too proud to remember Mike Lambourne, the tapster's boy. If you will let me have entertainment for my money, so—if not, it is but a short two minutes' walk to the Hare and Tabor, and I trust our neighbours will not grudge going thus far with me."

"Nay, Mike," replied his uncle, "as eighteen years have gone over thy head, and I trust thou art somewhat amended in thy conditions, thou shalt not leave my house at this hour, and shalt e'en have whatever in reason you list to call for. But I would I knew that that purse of thine, which thou vapourest of, were as well come by as it seems well filled."

"Here is an infidel for you, my good neighbours," said Lambourne, again appealing to the audience. "Here's a fellow will rip up his kinsman's folies of a good score of years standing—And for the gold, why, sirs, I have been where it grew, and was to be had for the gathering. In the New World have I been, man—in the El dorado, where urchins play at cherry-pit with diamonds, and country-wenchies thread rubies for necklaces, instead of rowan-tree berries; where the pan-tiles are made of pure gold, and the paving-stones of virgin-silver."

"By my credit, friend Mike," said young Lawrence Goldthred, the cutting mercer of Abingdon, "that were a likely coast to trade to. And what may lawns, cypresses, and ribbons fetch, where gold is so plenty?"

"O, the profit were unutterable," replied Lambourne, "especially when a handsome young merchant bears the pack himself; for the ladies of that clime are bona-robas, and being themselves somewhat sun-burnt, they catch fire like tinder at a fresh complexion like thine, with a head of hair inclining to be red."

"I would I might trade thither," said the mercer, chuckling.

"Why, and so thou mayest," said Michael; "that is, if thou art the same brisk boy, who was partner with me at robbing the abbot's orchard—'tis but a little touch of alchemy to decoct thy house and land into ready money, and that ready money into a tall ship, with sails, anchors, cordage, and all things conforming; then clap thy warehouse of goods under hatches, put fifty good fellows on deck, with myself to command them, and so hoise top-sails, and hey for the New World."

"Thou hast taught him a secret, kinsman," said Giles Gosling, "to decoct, an that be the word, his pound into a penny, and his webs into a thread.—Take a fool's advice, neighbour Goldthred. Tempt not the sea, for she is a devourer. Let cards and cockatrices do their worst, thy father's bales may bide a banging for a year or two, ere thou comest to the Spittal; but the sea hath a bottomless appetite, she would swallow the wealth of Lombard-street in a morning, as easily as I would a poached egg and a cup of clary—and for my kinsman's El dorado, never trust me if I do not believe he has found it in the pouches of some such gulls as thyself.—But take no snuff in the nose about it; fall to and welcome, for here comes the supper, and I heartily bestow it on all that will take share, in honour of my hopeful nephew's return, always trusting that he has come home another man.—In faith, kinsman, thou art as like my poor sister as ever was son to mother."

"Not quite so like old Benedict Lambourne her husband, though," said the mercer, nodding and winking. "Dost thou remember, Mike, what thou saidst when the schoolmaster's ferule was over thee for striking up thy father's crutches?—it is a wise child, saidst thou, that knows its own father. Dr Bricham laughed till he cried again, and his crying saved yours."

"Well, he made it up to me many a day after," said Lambourne; "and how is the worthy pedagogue?"

"Dead," said Giles Gosling, "this many a day since."

"That he is," said the clerk of the parish; "I sat by his bed the whilst—He passed away in a blessed frame, '*Morior—mortuus sum vel fui—mori*'—These were his latest words, and he just added, 'My last verb is conjugated.'"

"Well, peace be with him," said Mike, "he owes me nothing."

"No, truly," replied Goldthred; "and every lash which he laid on thee, he always was wont to say, he spared the hangman a labour."

"One would have thought he left him little to do then," said the clerk; "and yet Goodman Thong had no sinecure of it with our friend, after all."

"*Voto à Dios!*" exclaimed Lambourne, his patience appearing to fail him, as he snatched his broad slouched hat from the table and placed it on his head, so that the shadow gave the sinister expression of a Spanish bravo, to eyes and features which naturally boded nothing pleasant. "Harkee, my masters—all is fair among friends, and under the rose; and I have already permitted my worthy uncle here, and all of you, to use your pleasure with the frolics of my nonage. But I carry sword and dagger, my good friends, and can use them lightly too upon occasion—I have learned to be dangerous upon points of honour ever since I served the Spaniard, and I would not have you provoke me to the degree of falling foul."

"Why, what would you do?" said the clerk.

"Ay, sir, what would you do?" said the mercer, bustling up on the other side of the table.

"Slit your throat, and spoil your Sunday's quavering, Sir Clerk," said Lambourne, fiercely; "Cudgel you, my worshipful dealer in flimsy sarsenets, into one of your own bales."

"Come, come," said the host, interposing, "I will have no swaggering here.—Nephew, it will become you best to show no haste to take offence; and you, gentlemen, will do well to remember, that if you are in an inn, still you are the innkeeper's guests, and should spare the honour of his family.—I protest your silly broils make me as oblivious as yourself; for yonder sits my silent guest, as I call him, who hath been my two days' inmate, and hath never spoken a word, save to ask for his food and his reckoning—gives no more trouble than a very peasant—pays his shot like a prince royal—looks but at the sum total of the reckoning, and does not know what day he shall go away. O, 'tis a jewel of a guest! and yet, hang-dog that I am, I have suffered him to sit by himself like a castaway in yonder obscure nook, without so much as asking him to take bite or sup amongst with us. It were but the right guerdon of my incivility, were he to set off to the Hare and Tabor before the night grows older."

With his white napkin gracefully arranged over his left arm, his velvet cap laid aside for the moment, and his best silver flagon in his right hand, mine host walked up to the solitary guest whom he mentioned, and thereby turned upon him the eyes of the assembled company.

He was a man aged betwixt twenty-five and thirty, rather above the middle size, dressed with plainness and decency, yet bearing an air of ease, which al-

most amounted to dignity, and which seemed to infer that his habit was rather beneath his rank. His countenance was reserved and thoughtful, with dark hair and dark eyes—the last, upon any momentary excitement, sparkled with uncommon lustre, but on other occasions had the same meditative and tranquil cast which was exhibited by his features. The busy curiosity of the little village had been employed to discover his name and quality, as well as his business at Cumnor; but nothing had transpired on either subject which could lead to its gratification. Giles Gosling, head-borough of the place, and a steady friend to Queen Elizabeth and the protestant religion, was at one time inclined to suspect his guest of being a jesuit, or seminary priest, of whom Rome and Spain sent at this time so many to grace the gallows in England. But it was scarce possible to retain such a prepossession against a guest who gave so little trouble, paid his reckoning so regularly, and who proposed, as it seemed, to make a considerable stay in the bonny Black Bear.

"Papists," argued Giles Gosling, "are a pinching, close-fisted race, and this man would have found a lodging with the wealthy squire at Bessellesley, or with the old knight at Wootton, or in some other of their Roman dens, instead of living in a house of public entertainment, as every honest man and good christian should. Besides, on Friday, he stuck by the powdered beef and carrot, though there were as good spitchcock'd eels on the board as ever were ta'en out of the Isis."

Honest Giles, therefore, satisfied himself that his guest was no Roman, and with all comely courtesy besought the stranger to pledge him in a draught of the cool tankard, and honour with his attention a small collation which he was giving to his nephew, in honour of his return, and, as he verily hoped, of his reformation. The stranger at first shook his head, as if declining the courtesy; but mine host proceeded to urge him with arguments founded on the credit of his house, and the construction which the good people of Cumnor might put upon such an unsocial humour.

"By my faith, sir," he said, "it touches my reputation that men should be merry in my house, and we have ill tongues amongst us at Cumnor (as where be there not?) who put an evil mark on men who pull their hat over their brows as if they were looking back to the days that are gone, instead of enjoying the blithe sunshiny weather which God has sent us in the sweet looks of our sovereign mistress, Queen Elizabeth, whom Heaven long bless and preserve."

"Why, mine host," answered the stranger, "there is no treason, sure, in a man enjoying his own thoughts, under the shadow of his own bonnet? You have lived in the world twice as long as I have, and you must know there are thoughts that will haunt us in spite of ourselves, and to which it is in vain to say, Begone, and let me be merry."

"By my sooth," answered Giles Gosling, "if such troublesome thoughts haunt your mind, and will not get them gone for plain English, we will have one of Father Bacon's pupils from Oxford, to conjure them away with logic and with Hebrew—Or, what say you to laying them in a glorious red sea of claret,

my noble guest? Come, sir, excuse my freedom. I am an old host, and must have my talk. This peevish humour of melancholy sits ill upon you—it suits not with a sleek boot, a hat of a trim block, a fresh cloak, and a full purse—A pize on it, send it off to those who have their legs swathed with a hay-wisp, their heads thatched with a felt bonnet, their jerkin as thin as a cobweb, and their pouch without ever a cross to keep the fiend Melancholy from dancing in it. Cheer up, sir! or by this good liquor we will banish thee from the joys of blithesome company, into the mists of melancholy and the land of little ease. Here be a set of good fellows willing to be merry; do not scowl on them like the devil looking over Lincoln.”

“You say well, my worthy host,” said the guest, with a melancholy smile, which, melancholy as it was, gave a very pleasant expression to his countenance—“You say well, my jovial friend; and they that are moody like myself, should not disturb the mirth of those who are happy—I will drink a round with your guests with all my heart, rather than be termed a mar-feast.”

So saying, he arose and joined the company, which, encouraged by the precept and example of Michael Lambourne, and consisting chiefly of persons much disposed to profit by the opportunity of a merry meal at the expense of their landlord, had already made some inroads upon the limits of temperance; as was evident from the tone in which Michael inquired after his old acquaintances in the town, and the bursts of laughter with which each answer was received. Giles Gosling himself was somewhat scandalized at the obstreperous nature of their mirth, especially as he involuntarily felt some respect for the unknown guest. He paused, therefore, at some distance from the table occupied by these noisy revelers, and began to make a sort of apology for their license.

“You would think,” he said, “to hear these fellows talk, that there was not one of them who had not been bred to live by *stand* and *deliver*; and yet to-morrow you will find them a set of as pains-taking mechanics and so forth, as ever cut an inch short of measure, or paid a letter of change in light crowns over a counter. The mercer there wears his hat awry, over a shagged head of hair, that looks like a curly water-dog’s back, goes unbraced, wears his cloak on one side, and affects a ruffianly vapouring humour,—when in his shop at Abingdon, he is, from his flat cap to his glistening shoes, as precise in his apparel as if he was named for mayor. He talks of breaking parks, and taking the highway, in such fashion that you would think he haunted every night betwixt Hounslow and London; when indeed he may be found sound asleep in his feather-bed, with a candle placed beside him on one side, and a bible on the other, to fright away the goblins.”

“And your nephew, mine host, this same Michael Lambourne, who is lord of the feast? Is he, too, such a would-be ruffler as the rest of them?”

“Why there you push me hard,” said the host; “my nephew is my nephew, and though he was a desperate Dick of yore, yet Mike may have mended like other folks, you wot—And I would not have you think all I said of him, even now, was strict

gospel—I knew the wag all the while, and wished to pluck his plumes from him—And now, sir, by what name shall I present my worshipful guest to these gallants?”

“Marry, mine host,” replied the stranger, “you may call me Tressilian.”

“Tressilian?” answered my host of the bear, “a worthy name; and, as I think, of Cornish lineage; for what says the south proverb—

By Pol, Tre, and Pen,
You may know the Cornish men.

Shall I say the worthy Mr Tressilian of Cornwall?”

“Say no more than I have given you warrant for, mine host, and so shall you be sure you speak no more than is true. A man may have one of those honourable prefixes to his name, yet be born far from Saint Michael’s Mount.”

Mine host pushed his curiosity no further, but presented Mr Tressilian to his nephew’s company, who, after exchange of salutations, and drinking to the health of their new companion, pursued the conversation in which he found them engaged, seasoning it with many an intervening pledge.

CHAPTER II.

Talk you of young Master Lancelot?

Merchant of Venice.

AFTER some brief interval, Master Goldthred, at the earnest instigation of mine host, and the joyous concurrence of his guests, indulged the company with the following morsel of melody:

Of all the birds on bush or tree,
Commend me to the owl,
Since he may best ensample be
To those the cup that trowl.
For when the sun hath left the west,
He chuses the tree that he loves the best,
And he whoops out his song, and he laughs at his jest;
Then, though hours be late, and weather foul,
We ’ll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.

The lark is but a bumpkin fowl,
He sleeps in his nest till morn;
But my blessing upon the jolly owl
That all night blows his horn.
Then up with your cup till you stagger in speech,
And match me this catch, though you swagger and screech,
And drink till you wink, my merry men each;
For, though hours be late, and weather be foul,
We ’ll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.

“There is savour in this, my hearts,” said Michael, when the mercer had finished his song, “and some goodness seems left among you yet—but what a beadroll you have read me of old comrades, and to every man’s name tacked some ill-omened motto! And so Swashing Will of Wallingford hath bid us good night?”

“He died the death of a fat buck,” said one of the party, “being shot with a cross-bow bolt, by old Thatcham, the duke’s stout park-keeper at Donnington Castle.”

“Ay, he always loved venison well,” replied Michael, “and a cup of claret to boot—and so

here's one to his memory. Do me right, my masters."

When the health of this departed worthy had been duly honoured, Lambourne proceeded to inquire after Prance of Padworth.

"Pranced off—made immortal ten years since," said the mercer; "Marry, sir, Oxford Castle and Goodman Thong, and a tenpenny-worth of cord, best know how."

"What, so they hung poor Prance high and dry? so much for loving to walk by moon-light—a cup to his memory my masters—all merry fellows like moon-light. What has become of Hal with the plume? he who lived near Yattendon, and wore the long feather—I forget his name."

"What, Hal Hempseed?" replied the mercer, "why, you may remember he was a sort of a gentleman, and would meddle in state matters, and so he got into the mire about the Duke of Norfolk's matter these two or three years since, fled the country with a pursuivant's warrant at his heels, and has never since been heard of."

"Nay, after these barks," said Michael Lambourne, "I need hardly inquire after Tony Foster; for when ropes and cross-bow shafts, and pursuivants' warrants, and such like gear, were so rife, Tony could hardly 'scape them."

"Which Tony Foster mean you?" said the inn-keeper.

"Why, he they called Tony Fire-the-fagot, because he brought a light to kindle the pile round Latimer and Ridley, when the wind blew out Jack Thong's torch, and no man else would give him light for love or money."

"Tony Foster lives and thrives," said the host.—"But, kinsman, I would not have you call him Tony Fire-the-fagot, if you would not brook the stab."

"How! is he grown ashamed on't?" said Lambourne; "why, he was wont to boast of it, and say he liked as well to see a roasted heretic as a roasted ox."

"Ay, but, kinsman, that was in Mary's time," replied the landlord, "when Tony's father was reeve here to the Abbot of Abingdon. But since that, Tony married a pure precisian, and is as good a protestant, I warrant you, as the best."

"And looks grave, and holds his head high, and scorns his old companions," said the mercer.

"Then he hath prospered, I warrant him," said Lambourne; "for ever when a man hath got nobles of his own, he keeps out of the way of those whose exchequers lie in other men's purchase."

"Prospered, quotha!" said the mercer, "why, you remember Cumnor Place, the old mansion-house beside the church-yard?"

"By the same token, I robbed the orchard three times—what of that?—it was the old abbot's residence when there was plague or sickness at Abingdon."

"Ay," said the host, "but that has been long over; and Anthony Foster hath a right in it, and lives there by some grant from a great courtier, who had the church lands from the crown; and there he dwells, and has as little to do with any poor wight in Cumnor as if he were himself a belted knight."

"Nay," said the mercer, "it is not altogether pride in Tony neither—there is a fair lady in the case, and Tony will scarce let the light of day look on her."

"How," said Tressilian, who now for the first time interfered in their conversation, "did ye not say this Foster was married, and to a precisian?"

"Married he was, and to as bitter a precisian as ever eat flesh in Lent; and a cat-and-dog life she led with Tony, as men said. But she is dead, rest be with her, and Tony hath but a slip of a daughter; so it is thought he means to wed this stranger, that men keep such a coil about."

"And why so?—I mean, why do they keep a coil about her?" said Tressilian.

"Why, I wot not," answered the host, "except that men say she is as beautiful as an angel, and no one knows whence she comes, and every one wishes to know why she is kept so closely mewed up. For my part, I never saw her—you have, I think, Master Goldthred?"

"That I have, old boy," said the mercer. "Look you, I was riding hither from Abingdon—I passed under the east oriel window of the old mansion, where all the old saints and histories, and such like are painted—It was not the common path I took, but one through the park; for the postern-door was upon the latch, and I thought I might take the privilege of an old comrade to ride across through the trees, both for shading, as the day was somewhat hot, and for avoiding of dust, because I had on my peach-coloured doublet, pinked out with cloth of gold."

"Which garment," said Michael Lambourne, "thou wouldst willingly make twinkle in the eyes of a fair dame. Ah! villain, thou wilt never leave thy old tricks."

"Not so—not so," said the mercer, with a smirking laugh; "not altogether so—but curiosity, thou knowest, and a strain of compassion withal,—for the poor young lady sees nothing from morn to even but Tony Foster, with his scowling black brows, his bull's head, and his bandy legs."

"And thou wouldst willingly show her a dapper body, in a silken jerkin—a limb like a short-legged hen's, in a cordovan boot, and a round, simpering, what-d'ye-lack, sort of a countenance, set off with a velvet bonnet, a turkey feather, and a gilded brooch. Ah! jolly mercer, they who have good wares are fond to show them.—Come, gentles, let not the cup stand—here's to long spurs, short boots, full bonnets, and empty skulls!"

"Nay, now, you are jealous of me, Mike," said Goldthred; "and yet my luck was but what might have happened to thee, or any man."

"Marry confound thine impudence," retorted Lambourne; "thou wouldst not compare thy pudding face, and sarsenet manners, to a gentleman and a soldier!"

"Nay, my good sir," said Tressilian, "let me beseech you will not interrupt the gallant citizen; methinks he tells his tale so well, I could hearken to him till midnight."

"It's more of your favour than of my desert," answered Master Goldthred; "but since I give you pleasure, worthy Master Tressilian, I shall proceed,

maugre all the gibes and quips of this valiant soldier, who, peradventure, hath had more cuffs than crowns in the Low Countries.—And so, sir, as I passed under the great painted window, leaving my rein loose on my ambling palfrey's neck, partly for mine ease and partly that I might have the more leisure to peer about, I hears me the lattice open; and never credit me, sir, if there did not stand there the person of as fair a woman as ever crossed mine eyes; and I think I have looked on as many pretty wenches, and with as much judgment, as other folks."

"May I ask her appearance, sir?" said Tressilian.

"O sir," replied Master Goldthred, "I promise you, she was in gentlewoman's attire—a very quaint and pleasing dress, that might have served the queen herself; for she had a forepart with body and sleeves, of ginger-coloured satin, which, in my judgment, must have cost by the yard some thirty shillings, lined with murrey taffeta, and laid down and guarded with two broad laces of gold and silver. And her hat, sir, was truly the best-fashioned thing that I have seen in these parts, being of tawny taffeta, embroidered with scorpions of Venice gold, and having a border garnished with gold fringe;—I promise you, sir, an absolute and all-surpassing device. Touching her skirts, they were in the old pass-devant fashion."

"I did not ask you of her attire, sir," said Tressilian, who had shown some impatience during this conversation, "but of her complexion—the colour of her hair, her features."

"Touching her complexion," answered the mercer, "I am not so special certain; but I marked that her fan had an ivory handle, curiously inlaid;—and then again, as to the colour of her hair, why, I can warrant, be its hue what it might, that she wore above it a net of green silk, parcel twisted with gold."

"A most mercer-like memory," said Lambourne; "the gentleman asks him of the lady's beauty, and he talks of her fine clothes!"

"I tell thee," said the mercer, somewhat disconcerted, "I had little time to look at her; for just as I was about to give her the good time of day, and for that purpose had puckered my features with a smile"—

"Like those of a jackanape, simpering at a chestnut," said Michael Lambourne.

"—Up started of a sudden," continued Goldthred, without heeding the interruption, "Tony Foster himself, with a cudgel in his hand——"

"And broke thy head across, I hope, for thine impertinence," said his entertainer.

"That were more easily said than done," answered Goldthred, indignantly; "no, no—there was no breaking of heads—it's true, he advanced his cudgel, and spoke of laying on, and asked why I did not keep the public road, and such like; and I would have knocked him over the pate handsomely for his pains, only for the lady's presence, who might have swooned, for what I know."

"Now, out upon thee for a faint-spirited slave!" said Lambourne; "what adventurous knight ever thought of the lady's terror, when he went to thwack

giant, dragon, or magician, in her presence, and for her deliverance? But why talk to thee of dragons, who would be driven back by a dragon-fly? There thou hast missed the rarest opportunity!"

"Take it thyself, then, bully Mike," answered Goldthred—"Yonder is the enchanted manor, and the dragon and the lady all at thy service, if thou darest venture on them."

"Why, so I would for a quarter of sack," said the soldier—"Or stay—I am foully out of linen—wilt thou bet a piece of Hollands against these five angels, that I go not up to the hall to-morrow, and force Tony Foster to introduce me to his fair guest?"

"I accept your wager," said the mercer; "and I think, though thou hadst even the impudence of the devil, I shall gain on thee this bout. Our landlord here shall hold stakes, and I will stake down gold till I send thee linen."

"I will hold stakes on no such matter," said Gosling. "Good now, my kinsman, drink your wine in quiet, and let such ventures alone. I promise you, Master Foster hath interest enough to lay you up in lavender in the castle at Oxford, or to get your legs made acquainted with the town-stocks."

"That would be but renewing an old intimacy; for Mike's shins and the town's wooden pinfold have been well known to each other ere now," said the mercer; "but he shall not budge from his wager, unless he means to pay forfeit."

"Forfeit?" said Lambourne; "I scorn it. I value Tony Foster's wrath no more than a shelled pea-cod, and I will visit his Lindabrides, by Saint George, be he willing or no."

"I would gladly pay you your halves of the risk, sir," said Tressilian, "to be permitted to accompany you on the adventure."

"In what would that advantage you, sir," answered Lambourne.

"In nothing, sir," said Tressilian, "unless to mark the skill and valour with which you conduct yourself. I am a traveller, who seeks for strange rencounters and uncommon passages, as the knights of yore did after adventures and feats of arms."

"Nay, if it pleasures you to see a trout tickled," answered Lambourne, "I care not how many witness my skill. And so here I drink to success to my enterprise; and he that will not pledge me on his knees is a rascal, and I will cut his legs off by the garters."

The draught which Michael Lambourne took upon this occasion, had been preceded by so many others, that reason tottered on her throne. He swore one or two incoherent oaths at the mercer, who refused, reasonably enough, to pledge him to a sentiment, which inferred the loss of his own wager.

"Wilt thou chop logic with me," said Lambourne, "thou knave, with no more brains than are in a skein of raveled silk? by Heaven, I will cut thee into fifty yards of galloon lace!"

But as he attempted to draw his sword for this doughty purpose, Michael Lambourne was seized upon by the tapster and the chamberlain, and conveyed to his own apartment, there to sleep himself sober at his leisure.

The party then broke up, and the guests took their

leave; much more to the contentment of mine host than of some of the company, who were unwilling to quit good liquor, when it was to be had for free cost, so long as they were able to sit by it. They were, however, compelled to remove; and go at length they did, leaving Gosling and Tressilian in the empty apartment.

"By my faith," said the former, "I wonder where our great folks find pleasure, when they spend their means in entertainments, and in playing mine host without sending in a reckoning. It is what I but rarely practise; and whenever I do, by Saint Julian, it grieves me beyond measure. Each of these empty stoups now, which my nephew and his drunken comrades have swilled off, should have been a matter of profit to one in my line, and I must set them down a dead loss. I cannot, for my heart, conceive the pleasure of noise, and nonsense, and drunken freaks, and drunken quarrels, and smut, and blasphemy, and so forth, when a man loses money instead of gaining by it. And yet many a fair estate is lost in upholding such a useless course, and that greatly contributes to the decay of publicans; for who the devil do you think would pay for drink at the Black Bear, when he can have it for nothing at my lord's or the squire's?"

Tressilian perceived that the wine had made some impression even on the seasoned brain of mine host, which was chiefly to be inferred from his declaiming against drunkenness. As he himself had carefully avoided the bowl, he would have availed himself of the frankness of the moment to extract from Gosling some further information upon the subject of Anthony Foster, and the lady whom the mercer had seen in his mansion-house; but his inquiries only set the host upon a new theme of declamation against the wiles of the fair sex, in which he brought, at full length, the whole wisdom of Solomon to reinforce his own. Finally, he turned his admonitions, mixed with much objurgation, upon his tapsters and drawers, who were employed in removing the relics of the entertainment, and restoring order to the apartment; and at length, joining example to precept, though with no good success, he demolished a salver with half a score of glasses, in attempting to show how such service was done at the Three Cranes in the Vintry, then the most topping tavern in London. This last accident so far recalled him to his better self, that he retired to his bed, slept sound, and awoke a new man in the morning.

CHAPTER III.

Nay, I'll hold touch—the game shall be play'd out,
It ne'er shall stop for me, this merry wager;
That which I say when gamesome, I'll avouch
In my most sober mood, ne'er trust me else.

The Hazard-Table

"AND how doth your kinsman, good mine host?" said Tressilian, when Giles Gosling first appeared in the public room on the morning following the revel which we described in the last chapter. "Is he well, and will he abide by his wager?"

"For well, sir, he started two hours since, and

has visited I know not what purlieus of his old companions; hath but now returned, and is at this instant breakfasting on new-laid eggs and muscadine; and for his wager, I caution you as a friend to have little to do with that, or indeed with aught that Mike proposes. Wherefore, I counsel you to a warm breakfast upon a culiss, which shall restore the tone of the stomach; and let my nephew and Master Goldthred swagger about their wager as they list."

"It seems to me, mine host," said Tressilian, "that you know not well what to say about this kinsman of yours; and that you can neither blame nor commend him without some twinge of conscience."

"You have spoken truly, Master Tressilian," replied Giles Gosling. "There is natural affection whimpering into one ear, 'Giles, Giles, why wilt thou take away the good name of thy own nephew? Wilt thou defame thy sister's son, Giles Gosling? wilt thou defoul thine own nest, dishonour thine own blood?' And then, again, comes Justice, and says, 'Here is a worthy guest as ever came to the bonny Black Bear; one who never challenged a reckoning, (as I say to your face you never did, Master Tressilian—not that you have had cause,) one who knows not why he came, so far as I can see, or when he is going away; and wilt thou, being a publican, having paid scot and lot these thirty years in the town of Cumnor, and being at this instant headborough, wilt thou suffer this guest of guests, this man of men, this six-hooped pot (as I may say) of a traveller, to fall into the meshes of thy nephew, who is known for a swasher and a desperate Dick, a carder and a dicer, a professor of the seven damnable sciences, if ever man took degrees in them?'—No, by Heaven! I might wink, and let him catch such a small butterfly as Goldthred; but thou, my guest, shalt be forewarned, forearmed, so thou wilt but listen to thy trusty host."

"Why, mine host, thy counsel shall not be cast away," replied Tressilian; "however, I must uphold my share in this wager, having once passed my word to that effect. But lend me, I pray, some of thy counsel.—This Foster, who or what is he, and why makes he such mystery of his female inmate?"

"Troth," replied Gosling, "I can add but little to what you heard last night. He was one of Queen Mary's papists, and now he is one of Queen Elizabeth's protestants; he was an onhanger of the Abbot of Abingdon, and now he lives as master of the manor-house. Above all, he was poor and is rich. Folks talk of private apartments in his old waste mansion-house, bedizened fine enough to serve the queen, God bless her. Some men think he found a treasure in the orchard, some that he sold himself to the devil for treasure, and some say that he cheated the abbot out of the church plate, which was hidden in the old manor-house at the Reformation. Rich, however, he is, and God and his conscience, with the devil perhaps besides, only know how he came by it. He has sulky ways too, breaking off intercourse with all that are of the place, as if he had either some strange secret to keep, or held himself to be made of another clay than we are. I think it likely my kinsman and he will quar-

rel, if Mike thrust his acquaintance on him; and I am sorry that you, my worthy Master Tressilian, will still think of going in my nephew's company."

Tressilian again answered him, that he would proceed with great caution, and that he should have no fears on his account; in short, he bestowed on him all the customary assurances with which those who are determined on a rash action, are wont to parry the advice of their friends.

Meantime, the traveller accepted the landlord's invitation, and had just finished the excellent breakfast which was served to him and Gosling by pretty Cicely, the beauty of the bar, when the hero of the preceding night, Michael Lambourne, entered the apartment. His toilette had apparently cost him some labour, for his clothes, which differed from those he wore on his journey, were of the newest fashion, and put on with great attention to the display of his person.

"By my faith, uncle," said the gallant, "you made a wet night of it, and I feel it followed by a dry morning.—I will pledge you willingly in a cup of bastard.—How, my pretty coz, Cicely! why, I left you but a child in the cradle, and there thou stand'st in thy velvet waistcoat, as light a girl as England's sun shines on. Know thy friends and kindred, Cicely, and come hither, child, that I may kiss thee, and give thee my blessing."

"Concern not yourself about Cicely, kinsman," said Giles Gosling, "but e'en let her go her way, a' God's name; for although your mother were her father's sister, yet that shall not make you and her cater-cousins."

"Why, uncle," replied Lambourne, "think'st thou I am an infidel, and would harm those of mine own house?"

"It is for no harm that I speak, Mike," answered his uncle, "but a simple humour of precaution which I have. True, thou art as well gilded as a snake when he casts his old slough in the spring-time; but for all that, thou creepest not into my Eden. I will look after mine Eve, Mike, and so content thee.—But how brave thou be'st, lad! To look on thee now, and compare thee with Master Tressilian here, in his sad-coloured riding-suit, who would not say that thou wert the real gentleman, and he the tapster's boy?"

"Troth, uncle," replied Lambourne, "no one would say so but one of your country breeding, that knows no better. I will say, and I care not who hears me, there is something about the real gentry that few men come up to that are not born and bred to the mystery. I wot not where the trick lies; but although I can enter an ordinary with as much audacity, rebuke the waiters and drawers as loudly, drink as deep a health, swear as round an oath, and fling my gold as freely about as any of the jingling spurs and white feathers that are around me,—yet, hang me if I can ever catch the true grace of it, though I have practised for an hundred times. The man of the house sets me lowest at the board, and carves to me the last; and the drawer says,—'Coming, friend,' without any more reverence or respectful addition. But, hang it, let it pass, care killed a cat. I have gentry enough to pass the trick on Tony Fire-the-fagot, and that will do for the matter in hand."

VOL. III.

"You hold your purpose, then, of visiting your old acquaintance?" said Tressilian to the adventurer.

"Ay, sir," replied Lambourne; "when stakes are made, the game must be played; that is gamester's law, all over the world. You, sir, unless my memory fails me (for I did steep it somewhat too deeply in the sack-butt), took some share in my hazard."

"I propose to accompany you in your adventure," said Tressilian, "if you will do me so much grace as to permit me; and I have staked my share of the forfeit in the hands of our worthy host."

"That he hath," answered Giles Gosling, "in as fair harry-nobles as ever were melted into sack by a good fellow. So, luck to your enterprize, since you will needs venture on Tony Foster; but, by my credit, you were better take another draught before you depart, for your welcome at the hall, yonder, will be somewhat of the driest. And if you do get into peril, beware of taking to cold steel; but send for me, Giles Gosling the head-borough, and I may be able to make something out of Tony yet, for as proud as he is."

The nephew dutifully obeyed his uncle's hint, by taking a second and deeper pull at the tankard, observing, that his wit never served him so well as when he had washed his temples with a deep morning's draught; and they set forth together for the habitation of Anthony Foster.

"The village of Cumnor is pleasantly situated on a hill, and in a wooded park, closely adjacent, was situated the ancient mansion occupied at this time by Anthony Foster, of which the ruins may be still extant. The park was then full of large trees, and, in particular, of ancient and mighty oaks, which stretched their giant arms over the high wall surrounding the demesne, thus giving it a melancholy, secluded, and monastic appearance. The entrance to the park lay through an old-fashioned gate-way in the outer wall, the door of which was closed by two huge oaken leaves, thickly studded with nails, like the gate of an old town.

"We shall be finely helped up here," said Michael Lambourne, looking at the gate-way and gate, "if this fellow's suspicious humour should refuse us admission altogether, as it is like he may, in case this linsey-wolsey fellow of a mercer's visit to his premises has disquieted him. But, no," he added, pushing the huge gate, which gave way, "the door stands invitingly open; and here we are within the forbidden ground, without other impediment than the passive resistance of a heavy oak door, moving on rusty hinges."

They stood now in an avenue overshadowed by such old trees as we have described, and which had been bordered at one time by high hedges of yew and holly. But these having been untrimmed for many years, had run up into great bushes, or rather dwarf-trees, and now encroached, with their dark and melancholy boughs, upon the road which they once had screened. The avenue itself was grown up with grass, and, in one or two places, interrupted by piles of withered brushwood, which had been lopped from the trees cut down in the neighbouring park, and was here stacked for drying. Formal walks and avenues, which, at different points, crossed this

principal approach, were, in like manner, choked up and interrupted by piles of brushwood and billets, and, in other places, by underwood and brambles. Besides the general effect of desolation which is so strongly impressed whenever we behold the contrivances of man wasted and obliterated by neglect, and witness the marks of social life effaced gradually by the influence of vegetation, the size of the trees, and the outspreading extent of their boughs, diffused a gloom over the scene, even when the sun was at highest, and made a proportional impression on the mind of those who visited it. This was felt even by Michael Lambourne, however alien his habits were to receiving any impressions, excepting from things which addressed themselves immediately to his passions.

"This wood is as dark as a wolf's mouth," said he to Tressilian, as they walked together slowly along the solitary and broken approach, and were just come in sight of the monastic front of the old mansion, with its shafted windows, brick walls, overgrown with ivy and creeping shrubs, and twisted stalks of chimneys, of heavy stone-work. "And yet," continued Lambourne, "it is fairly done on the part of Foster too; for since he chuses not visitors, it is right to keep his place in a fashion that will invite few to trespass upon his privacy. But had he been the Anthony I once knew him, these sturdy oaks had long since become the property of some honest woodmonger, and the manor-close here had looked lighter at midnight than it now does at noon, while Foster played fast and loose with the price, in some cunning corner in the purlieus of Whitefriars."

"Was he then such an unthrift," asked Tressilian.

"He was," answered Lambourne, "like the rest of us, no saint, and no saver. But what I liked worst of Tony was, that he loved to take his pleasure by himself, and grudged, as men say, every drop of water that went past his own mill. I have known him deal with such measures of wine when he was alone, as I would not have ventured on with aid of the best toper in Berkshire;—that, and some sway towards superstition, which he had by temperament, rendered him unworthy the company of a good fellow. And now he has earthed himself here, in a den just befitting such a sly fox as himself."

"May I ask you, Master Lambourne," said Tressilian, "since your old companion's humour jumps so little with your own, wherefore you are so desirous to renew acquaintance with him?"

"And may I ask you, in return, Master Tressilian," answered Lambourne, "wherefore you have shown yourself so desirous to accompany me on this party?"

"I told you my motive," said Tressilian, "when I took share in your wager,—it was simple curiosity."

"La you there now!" answered Lambourne: "See how you civil and discreet gentlemen think to use us who live by the free exercise of our wits! Had I answered your question, by saying that it was simple curiosity which led me to visit my old comrade Anthony Foster, I warrant you had set it down for an evasion, and a turn of my trade. But any answer, I suppose, must serve my turn."

"And wherefore should not bare curiosity," said Tressilian, "be a sufficient reason for my taking this walk with you?"

"O, content yourself, sir," replied Lambourne; "you cannot put the change on me so easy as you think, for I have lived among the quick-stirring spirits of the age too long to swallow chaff for grain. You are a gentleman of birth and breeding—your bearing makes it good;—of civil habits and fair reputation—your manners declare it, and my uncle avouches it; and yet you associate yourself with a sort of scant-of-grace, as men call me; and, knowing me to be such, you make yourself my companion in a visit to a man whom you are a stranger to, and all out of mere curiosity forsooth! The excuse, if curiously balanced, would be found to want some scruples of just weight, or so."

"If your suspicions were just," said Tressilian, "you have shown no confidence in me to invite or deserve mine."

"O, if that be all," said Lambourne, "my motives lie above water. While this gold of mine lasts,"—taking out his purse, chucking it into the air, and catching it as it fell,—"I will make it buy pleasure, and when it is out, I must have more. Now, if this mysterious Lady of the Manor—this fair Lindabrides of Tony Fire-the-fagot, be so admirable a piece as men say, why there is chance that she may aid me to melt my nobles into groats; and, again, if Anthony be so wealthy a chuff as report speaks him, he may prove the philosopher's stone to me, and convert my groats into fair rose-nobles again."

"A comfortable proposal truly!" said Tressilian; "but I see not what chance there is of accomplishing it."

"Not to-day, or perchance to-morrow," answered Lambourne; "I expect not to catch the old jack till I have disposed my ground-baits handsomely. But I know something more of his affairs this morning than I did last night, and I will so use my knowledge that he shall think it more perfect than it is.—Nay, without expecting either pleasure or profit, or both, I had not stepped a stride within this manor, I can tell you; for I promise you I hold our visit not altogether without risk. But here we are, and we must make the best on't."

While he thus spoke, they had entered a large orchard which surrounded the house on two sides, though the trees, abandoned by the care of man, were overgrown and mossy, and seemed to bear little fruit. Those which had been formerly trained as espaliers, had now resumed their natural mode of growing, and exhibited grotesque forms, partaking of the original training which they had received. The greater part of the ground, which had once been parterres and flower-gardens, was suffered in like manner to run to waste, excepting a few patches which had been dug up, and planted with ordinary pot-herbs. Some statues, which had ornamented the garden in its days of splendour, were now thrown down from their pedestals, and broken in pieces; and a large summer-house, having a heavy stone front, decorated with carving, representing the life and actions of Samson, was in the same dilapidated condition.

They had just traversed this garden of the slug-

gard, and were within a few steps of the door of the mansion, when Lambourne had ceased speaking; a circumstance very agreeable to Tressilian, as it saved him the embarrassment of either commenting upon or replying to the frank avowal which his companion had just made of the sentiments and views which induced him to come hither. Lambourne knocked roundly and boldly at the huge door of the mansion, observing at the same time, he had seen a less strong one upon a county jail. It was not until they had knocked more than once, that an aged sour-visaged domestic reconnoitred them through a small square hole in the door, well-secured with bars of iron, and demanded what they wanted.

"To speak with Master Foster instantly, on pressing business of the state," was the ready reply of Michael Lambourne.

"Methinks you will find difficulty to make that good," said Tressilian in a whisper to his companion, while the servant went to carry the message to his master.

"Tush," replied the adventurer; "no soldier would go on were he always to consider when and how he should come off. Let us once obtain entrance, and all will go well enough."

In a short time the servant returned, and drawing with a careful hand both bolt and bar, opened the gate, which admitted them through an archway into a square court, surrounded by buildings. Opposite to the arch was another door, which the serving-man in like manner unlocked, and thus introduced them into a stone-paved parlour, where there was but little furniture, and that of the rudest and most ancient fashion. The windows were tall and ample, reaching almost to the roof of the room, which was composed of black oak; those opening to the quadrangle, were obscured by the height of the surrounding buildings, and, as they were traversed with massive shafts of solid stone-work, and thickly painted with religious devices, and scenes taken from scripture history, by no means admitted light in proportion to their size; and what did penetrate through them, partook of the dark and gloomy tinge of the stained glass.

Tressilian and his guide had time enough to observe all these particulars, for they waited some space in the apartment ere the present master of the mansion at length made his appearance. Prepared as he was to see an inauspicious and ill-looking person, the ugliness of Anthony Foster considerably exceeded what Tressilian had anticipated. He was of middle stature, built strongly, but so clumsily, as to border on deformity, and to give all his motions the ungainly awkwardness of a left-legged and left-handed man. His hair, in arranging which men at that time, as at present, were very nice and curious, instead of being carefully cleaned and disposed into short curls, or else set up on end, as is represented in old paintings, in a manner resembling that used by fine gentlemen of our own day, escaped in sable negligence from under a furred bonnet, and hung in elf-locks, which seemed strangers to the comb, over his rugged brows, and around his very singular and unprepossessing countenance. His keen dark eyes were deep set beneath broad and shaggy eye-brows, and, as they were usually bent

on the ground, seemed as if they were themselves ashamed of the expression natural to them, and were desirous to conceal it from the observation of men. At times, however, when, more intent on observing others, he suddenly raised them, and fixed them keenly on those with whom he conversed, they seemed to express both the fiercer passions and the power of mind which could at will suppress or disguise the intensity of inward feeling. The features which corresponded with these eyes and this form were irregular, and marked so as to be fixed for ever on the mind of him who had once seen them. Upon the whole, as Tressilian could not help acknowledging to himself, the Anthony Foster who now stood before them, was the last person, judging from personal appearance, upon whom one would have chosen to intrude an unexpected and undesired visit. His attire was a doublet of russet leather, like those worn by the better sort of country folks, girt with a buff belt, in which was stuck on the right side, a long knife or dudgeon-dagger, and on the other a cutlass. He raised his eyes as he entered the room, and fixed a keenly penetrating glance upon his two visitors, then cast them down as if counting his steps, while he advanced slowly into the middle of the room, and said, in a low and smothered tone of voice, "Let me pray you, gentlemen, to tell me the cause of this visit."

He looked as if he expected the answer from Tressilian; so true was Lambourne's observation, that the superior air of breeding and dignity shone through the disguise of an inferior dress. But it was Michael who replied to him, with the easy familiarity of an old friend, and a tone which seemed unembarrassed by any doubt of the most cordial reception.

"Ha! my dear friend and ingler, Tony Foster!" he exclaimed, seizing upon the unwilling hand, and shaking it with such emphasis as almost to stagger the sturdy frame of the person whom he addressed; "how fares it with you for many a long year?—What! have you altogether forgotten your friend, gossip, and play-fellow, Michael Lambourne?"

"Michael Lambourne!" said Foster, looking at him a moment, then dropping his eyes, and with little ceremony extracting his hand from the friendly grasp of the person by whom he was addressed, "are you Michael Lambourne?"

"Ay; sure as you are Anthony Foster," replied Lambourne.

"'Tis well!" answered his sullen host; "and what may Michael Lambourne expect from his visit hither?"

"*Voto á Dios!*" answered Lambourne; "I expected a better welcome than I am like to meet, I think."

"Why, thou gallows-bird—thou jail-rat—thou friend for the hangman and his customers," replied Foster, "hast thou the assurance to expect countenance from any one whose neck is beyond the compass of a Tyburn tippet?"

"It may be with me as you say," replied Lambourne; "and suppose I grant it to be so, for argument's sake, I were still good enough society for mine ancient friend Anthony Fire-the-fagot, though

he be, for the present, by some indescribable title, the master of Cumnor Place."

"Hark you, Michael Lambourne!" said Foster; "you are a gambler now, and live by the counting of chances—Compute me the odds that I do not, on this instant, throw you out of that window into the ditch there."

"Twenty to one that you do not," answered the sturdy visitor.

"And wherefore, I pray you?" demanded Anthony Foster, setting his teeth and compressing his lips, like one who endeavours to suppress some violent internal emotion.

"Because," said Lambourne, coolly, "you dare not for your life lay a finger on me. I am younger and stronger than you, and have in me a double portion of the fighting devil, though not, it may be, quite so much of the undermining fiend, that finds an underground way to his purpose—who hides halts under folk's pillows, and who puts ratsbane into their porridge, as the stage-play says."

Foster looked at him earnestly, then turned away and paced the room twice, with the same steady and considerate pace with which he had entered it; then suddenly came back and extended his hand to Michael Lambourne, saying, "Be not wroth with me, good Mike; I did but try whether thou hadst parted with aught of thine old and honourable frankness, which your enviers and backbiters called saucy impudence."

"Let them call it what they will," said Michael Lambourne, "it is the commodity we must carry through the world with us.—Uds daggers! I tell thee, man, mine own stock of assurance was too small to trade upon, I was fain to take in a ton or two more of brass at every port where I touched in the voyage of life; and I started overboard what modesty and scruples I had remaining, in order to make room for the stowage."

"Nay, nay," replied Foster, "touching scruples and modesty, you sailed hence in ballast.—But who is this gallant, honest Mike?—is he a Corinthian—a cutter like thyself?"

"I prithee, know Master Tressilian, bully Foster," replied Lambourne, presenting his friend in answer to his friend's question, "know him and honour him, for he is a gentleman of many admirable qualities; and though he traffics not in my line of business, at least so far as I know, he has, nevertheless, a just respect and admiration for artists of our class. He will come to in time, as seldom fails; but as yet he is only a neophyte, only a proselyte, and frequents the company of cocks of the game, as a puny fencer does the schools of the masters, to see how a foil is handled by the teachers of defence."

"If such be his quality, I will pray your company in another chamber, honest Mike, for what I have to say to thee is for thy private ear.—Meanwhile, I pray you, sir, to abide us in this apartment, and without leaving it—there be those in this house who would be alarmed by the sight of a stranger."

Tressilian acquiesced, and the two worthies left the apartment together, in which he remained alone to await their return.

CHAPTER IV.

Not serve two masters?—Here 's a youth will try it—
Would fain serve God, yet give the devil his due;
Says grace before he doth a deed of villany,
And returns thanks devoutly when 't is acted.

Old Play.

THE room into which the master of Cumnor Place conducted his worthy visitant was of greater extent than that in which they had at first conversed, and had yet more the appearance of dilapidation. Large oaken presses, filled with shelves of the same wood, surrounded the room, and had, at one time, served for the arrangement of a numerous collection of books, many of which yet remained, but torn and defaced, covered with dust, deprived of their costly clasps and bindings, and tossed together in heaps upon the shelves, as things altogether disregarded, and abandoned to the pleasure of every spoiler. The very presses themselves seemed to have incurred the displeasure of those enemies of learning, who had destroyed the volumes with which they had been heretofore filled. They were, in several places, dismantled of their shelves, and otherwise broken and damaged, and were, moreover, mantled with cobwebs, and covered with dust.

"The men who wrote these books," said Lambourne, looking round him, "little thought whose keeping they were to fall into."

"Nor what yeoman's service they were to do me," quoth Anthony Foster—"the cook hath used them for scouring his pewter, and the groom hath had nought else to clean my boots with this many a month past."

"And yet," said Lambourne, "I have been in cities where such learned commodities would have been deemed too good for such offices."

"Pshaw, pshaw!" answered Foster, "they are popish trash, every one of them,—private studies of the mumping old Abbot of Abingdon. The nineteenthly of a pure Gospel sermon were worth a cart-load of such rakings of the kennel of Rome."

"God-a-mercy, Master Tony Fire-the-fagot!" said Lambourne, by way of reply.

Foster scowled darkly at him, as he replied, "Hark ye, friend Mike! forget that name, and the passage which it relates to, if you would not have our newly-revived comradeship die a sudden and a violent death."

"Why," said Michael Lambourne, "you were wont to glory in the share you had in the death of the two old heretical bishops."

"That," said his comrade, "was while I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and applies not to my walk or my ways, now that I am called forth into the lists. Mr Melchisedec Maultext compared my misfortune in that matter to that of the Apostle Paul, who kept the clothes of the witnesses who stoned Saint Stephen. He held forth on the matter three sabbaths past, and illustrated the same by the conduct of an honourable person present, meaning me."

"I prithee peace, Foster," said Lambourne, "for I know not how it is, I have a sort of creeping comes over my skin when I hear the devil quote Scripture;

and besides, man, how couldst thou have the heart to quit that convenient old religion, which you could slip off or on as easily as your glove? Do I not remember how you were wont to carry your conscience to confession, as duly as the month came round? and when thou hadst had it scoured, and burnished, and whitewashed by the priest, thou wert ever ready for the worst villany which could be devised, like a child who is always readiest to rush into the mire when he has got his Sunday's clean jerkin on."

"Trouble not thyself about my conscience," said Foster; "it is a thing thou canst not understand, having never had one of thine own; but let us rather to the point, and say to me, in one word, what is thy business with me, and what hopes have drawn thee hither?"

"The hope of bettering myself, to be sure," answered Lambourne, "as the old woman said, when she leapt over the bridge at Kingston. Look you, this purse has all that is left of as round a sum as a man would wish to carry in his slop-pouch. You are here well established, it would seem, and, as I think, well befriended, for men talk of thy being under some special protection; thou canst not dance in a net and they not see thee. Now I know such protection is not purchased for nought; you must have services to render for it, and in these I propose to help thee."

"But how if I lack no assistance from thee, Mike? I think thy modesty might suppose that were a case possible."

"That is to say," retorted Lambourne, "that you would engross the whole work, rather than divide the reward—but be not over-greedy, Anthony. Covetousness bursts the sack and spills the grain. Look you, when the huntsman goes to kill a stag, he takes with him more dogs than one—He has the staunch lyme-hound to track the wounded buck over hill and dale, but he hath also the fleet gaze-hound to kill him at view. Thou art the lyme-hound, I am the gaze-hound, and thy patron will need the aid of both, and can well afford to requite it. Thou hast deep sagacity—an unrelenting purpose—a steady long-breathed malignity of nature that surpasses mine. But then, I am the bolder, the quicker, the more ready, both at action and expedient. Separate, our properties are not so perfect; but unite them, and we drive the world before us. How say'st thou—shall we hunt in couples?"

"It is a currish proposal—thus to thrust thyself upon my private matters," replied Foster; "but thou wert ever an ill-nurtured whelp."

"You shall have no cause to say so, unless you spurn my courtesy," said Michael Lambourne; "but if so, keep thee well from me, Sir Knight, as the romance has it. I will either share your counsels or traverse them; for I have come here to be busy, either with thee or against thee."

"Well," said Anthony Foster, "since thou dost leave me so fair a choice, I will rather be thy friend than thine enemy. Thou art right, I can prefer thee to the service of a patron, who has enough of means to make us both, and an hundred more. And, to say truth, thou art well qualified for his service. Boldness and dexterity he demands—the justice-books

bear witness in thy favour—no starting at scruples in his service—why, who ever suspected thee of a conscience?—an assurance he must have who would follow a courtier—and thy brow is as impenetrable as a Milan visor. There is but one thing I would fain see amended in thee."

"And what is that, my most precious friend Anthony?" replied Lambourne; "for I swear by the pillow of the Seven Sleepers, I will not be slothful in amending it."

"Why, you gave a sample of it even now," said Foster. "Your speech twangs too much of the old stamp, and you garnish it ever and anon with singular oaths, that savour of papistrie. Besides, your exterior man is altogether too deboshed and irregular to become one of his lordship's followers, since he has a reputation to keep up in the eye of the world. You must somewhat reform your dress, upon a more grave and composed fashion; wear your cloak on both shoulders, and your falling band unrumpled and well-starched—You must enlarge the brim of your beaver, and diminish the superfluity of your trunk-hose—go to church, or, which will be better, to meeting, at least once a month—protest only upon your faith and conscience—lay aside your swashing look, and never touch the hilt of your sword, but when you would draw the carnal weapon in good earnest."

"By this light, Anthony, thou art mad," answered Lambourne, "and hast described rather the gentleman-usher to a puritan's wife, than the follower of an ambitious courtier! Yes, such a thing as thou wouldst make of me, should wear a book at his girdle instead of a poniard, and might just be suspected of manhood enough to squire a proud dame-citizen to the lecture at Saint Antonie's, and quarrel in her cause with any flat-cap'd thread-maker that would take the wall of her. He must ruffle it in another sort that would walk to court in a nobleman's train."

"O, content you, sir," replied Foster, "there is a change since you knew the English world; and there are those who can hold their way through the boldest courses, and the most secret, and yet never a swaggering word, or an oath, or a profane word in their conversation."

"That is to say," replied Lambourne, "they are in a trading copartnery, to do the devil's business without mentioning his name in the firm?—Well, I will do my best to counterfeit, rather than lose ground in this new world, since thou sayest it is so precise. But, Anthony, what is the name of this nobleman, in whose service I am to turn hypocrite?"

"Aha! Master Michael, are you there with your bears?" said Foster, with a grim smile; "and is this the knowledge you pretend of my concernments?—How know you now there is such a person in *re-rum natura*, and that I have not been putting a jape upon you all this time?"

"Thou put a jape on me, thou sodden-brained gull!" answered Lambourne, nothing daunted; "why, dark and muddy as thou think'st thyself, I would engage in a day's space to see as clear through thee and thy concernments, as thou call'st them, as through the filthy horn of an old stable lantern."

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

"By the holy Cross of Abingdon!" said Anthony Foster, forgetting his protestantism in his alarm, "I am a ruined man!"

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the sound issued, followed by Michael Lambourne. But to account for the sounds which interrupted their conversation, it is necessary to recede a little way in our narrative.

It has been already observed, that when Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlour. His dark eye followed them forth of the apartment with a glance of contempt, a part of which his mind instantly transferred to himself, for having stooped to be even for a moment their familiar companion. "These are the associates, Amy,"—it was thus he communed with himself,—“to which thy cruel levity—thine unthinking and most unmerited falsehood, has condemned him, of whom his friends once hoped far other things, and who now scorns himself as he will be scorned by others, for the baseness he stoops to for the love of thee! But I will not leave the pursuit of thee, once the object of my purest and most devoted affection, though to me thou canst henceforth be nothing but a thing to weep over—I will save thee from thy betrayer, and from thyself—I will restore thee to thy parents—to thy God. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but—”

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie; he looked around, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side-door, he recognised the object of his search. The first impulse arising from this discovery, urged him to conceal his own face with the collar of his cloak, until he should find a favourable moment of making himself known. But his purpose was disconcerted by the young lady (she was not above eighteen years old), who ran joyfully towards him, and, pulling him by the cloak, said playfully—“Nay, my sweet friend, after I have waited for you so long, you come not to my bower to play the masquer—You are arraigned of treason to true love and fond affection; and you must stand up at the bar, and answer it with face uncovered—how say you, guilty or not?”

“Alas, Amy!” said Tressilian in a low and melancholy tone, as he suffered her to draw the mantle from his face. The sound of his voice, and still more the unexpected sight of his face, changed in an instant the lady’s playful mood—she staggered back, turned as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian was himself for a moment much overcome, but seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not again occur, he said in a low tone, “Amy, fear me not.”

“Why should I fear you?” said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her beautiful face, which was now covered with crimson,—“why should I fear you, Mr Tressilian?—or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, sir, and unwished for?”

“Your dwelling, Amy!” said Tressilian. “Alas!

is a prison your dwelling?—a prison, guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer.”

“This house is mine,” said Amy, “mine while I chuse to inhabit it—If it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who shall gainsay me?”

“Your father, maiden,” answered Tressilian, “your broken-hearted father; who dispatched me in quest of you with that authority which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his pain of body which somewhat stunned the agony of his mind.”

“The pain—is my father then ill?” said the lady.

“So ill,” answered Tressilian, “that even your utmost haste may not restore him to health; but all shall be instantly prepared for your departure, the instant you yourself will give consent.”

“Tressilian,” answered the lady, “I cannot, I must not, I dare not leave this place. Go back to my father—tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve hours from hence. Go back, Tressilian—tell him I am well, I am happy—happy could I think he was so—tell him not to fear that I will come, and in such a manner that all the grief Amy has given him shall be forgotten—the poor Amy is now greater than she dare name.—Go, good Tressilian—I have injured thee too, but believe me I have power to heal the wounds I have caused—I robbed you of a childish heart, which was not worthy of you, and I can repay the loss with honours and advancement.”

“Do you say this to me, Amy?—Do you offer me pageants of idle ambition, for the quiet peace you have robbed me of?—But be it so—I came not to upbraid, but to serve and to free you.—You cannot disguise it from me; you are a prisoner. Otherwise your kind heart—for it was once a kind heart—would have been already at your father’s bed-side.—Come, poor, deceived, unhappy maiden—all shall be forgot—all shall be forgiven. Fear not my importunity for what regarded our contract—it was a dream, and I have awaked—But come—your father yet lives—Come, and one word of affection—one tear of penitence, will efface the memory of all that has passed.”

“Have I not already said, Tressilian,” replied she, “that I will surely come to my father, and that without farther delay than is necessary to discharge other and equally binding duties?—Go, carry him the news—I come as sure as there is light in heaven—that is, when I obtain permission.”

“Permission?—permission to visit your father on his sick-bed, perhaps on his death-bed!” repeated Tressilian, impatiently; “and permission from whom?—From the villain, who, under disguise of friendship, abused every duty of hospitality, and stole thee from thy father’s roof!”

“Do him no slander, Tressilian!—He whom thou speakest of wears a sword as sharp as thine—sharper, vain man—for the best deeds thou hast ever done in peace or war, were as unworthy to be named with his, as thy obscure rank to match itself with the sphere he moves in—Leave me! Go, do mine errand to my father, and when he next sends to me, let him chuse a more welcome messenger.”

"Amy, replied Tressilian, calmly, "thou canst not move me by thy reproaches.—Tell me one thing, that I may bear at least one ray of comfort to my aged friend—This rank of his which thou doest boast—doest thou share it with him, Amy?—Does he claim a husband's right to control thy motions?"

"Stop thy base unmannered tongue!" said the lady; "to no question that derogates from my honour, do I deign an answer."

"You have said enough in refusing to reply," answered Tressilian; "and mark me, unhappy as thou art, I am armed with thy father's full authority to command thy obedience, and I will save thee from the slavery of sin and of sorrow, even despite of thyself, Amy."

"Menace no violence here!" exclaimed the lady, drawing back from him, and alarmed at the determination expressed in his look and manner; "threaten me not, Tressilian, for I have means to repel force."

"But not, I trust, the wish to use them in so evil a cause," said Tressilian. "With thy will—thine uninfluenced, free, and natural will, Amy, thou canst not chuse this state of slavery and dishonour—thou hast been bound by some spell—entrapped by some art—art now detained by some compelled vow.—But thus I break the charm—Amy, in the name of thine excellent, thy broken-hearted father, I command thee to follow me."

As he spoke, he advanced and extended his arm, as with the purpose of laying hold upon her. But she shrunk back from his grasp, and uttered the scream, which, as we before noticed, brought into the apartment Lambourne and Foster.

The latter exclaimed, so soon as he entered, "Fire and fagot! what have we here!" Then addressing the lady in a tone betwixt entreaty and command, he added, "Uds precious! Madam, what make you here out of bounds?—Retire—retire—there is life and death in this matter.—And you, friend, whoever you may be, leave this house—out with you, before my dagger's hilt and your costard become acquainted—Draw, Mike, and rid us of the knave."

"Not I, on my soul," replied Lambourne; "he came hither in my company, and he is safe from me by cutter's law, at least till we meet again.—But hark ye, my Cornish comrade, you have brought a Cornish flaw with you hither, a hurricanoe as they call it in the Indies. Make yourself scarce—depart—vanish—or we'll have you summoned before the Mayor of Halgaver, and that before Dudman and Ramhead meet."*

"Away, base groom!" said Tressilian—"And you, madam, fare you well—what life is left in your father's bosom will depart at the news I have to tell him."

He departed, the lady saying faintly as he left the room, "Tressilian, be not rash—say no scandal of me."

"Here is proper gear," said Foster. "I pray you go to your chamber, my lady, and let us consider how this is to be answered—nay, tarry not."

"I move not at your command, sir," answered the lady.

"Nay, but you must, fair lady," replied Foster;

* Two headlands on the Cornish coast.

"excuse my freedom, but, by blood and nails, this is no time to strain courtesies—you must go to your chamber.—Mike, follow that meddling coxcomb, and, as you desire to thrive, see him safely clear of the premises, while I bring this headstrong lady to reason—Draw thy tool, man, and after him."

"I'll follow him," said Michael Lambourne, "and see him fairly out of Flanders—But for hurting a man I have drunk my morning's draught withal, 'tis clean against my conscience." So saying, he left the apartment.

Tressilian, meanwhile, with hasty steps, pursued the first path which promised to conduct him through the wild and overgrown park in which the mansion of Foster was situated. Haste and distress of mind led his steps astray, and instead of taking the avenue which led towards the village, he chose another, which, after he had pursued it for some time with a hasty and reckless step, conducted him to the other side of the demesne, where a postern-door opened through the wall, and led into the open country.

Tressilian paused an instant. It was indifferent to him by what road he left a spot now so odious to his recollections; but it was probable that the postern-door was locked, and his retreat by that pass rendered impossible.

"I must make the attempt, however," he said to himself; "the only means of reclaiming this lost—this miserable—this still most lovely and most unhappy girl—must rest in her father's appeal to the broken laws of his country—I must haste to apprise him of this heart-breaking intelligence."

As Tressilian, thus conversing with himself, approached to try some means of opening the door, or climbing over it, he perceived there was a key put into the lock from the outside. It turned round, the bolt revolved, and a cavalier, who entered, muffled in his riding-cloak, and wearing a slouched hat with a drooping feather, stood at once within four yards of him who was desirous of going out. They exclaimed at once, in tones of resentment and surprise, the one "Varney!" the other "Tressilian!"

"What make you here?" was the stern question put by the stranger to Tressilian, when the moment of surprise was past,— "What make you here, where your presence is neither expected nor desired?"

"Nay, Varney," replied Tressilian, "what make you here? Are you come to triumph over the innocence you have destroyed, as the vulture or carrion-crow comes to batten on the lamb, whose eyes it has first plucked out?—Or are you come to encounter the merited vengeance of an honest man?—Draw, dog, and defend thyself!"

Tressilian drew his sword as he spoke, but Varney only laid his hand on the hilt of his own, as he replied, "Thou art mad, Tressilian—I own appearances are against me, but by every oath a priest can make, or a man can swear, Mistress Amy Robsart hath had no injury from me, and in truth I were somewhat loth to hurt you in this cause—Thou know'st I can fight."

"I have heard thee say so, Varney," replied Tressilian; "but now, methinks, I would fain have some better evidence than thine own word."

"That shall not be lacking, if blade and hilt be but true to me," answered Varney; and drawing his sword with the right hand, he threw his cloak around his left, and attacked Tressilian with a vigour which, for a moment, seemed to give him the advantage of the combat. But this advantage lasted not long. Tressilian added to a spirit determined on revenge, a hand and eye admirably well adapted to the use of the rapier; so that Varney, finding himself hard pressed in his turn, endeavoured to avail himself of his superior strength, by closing with his adversary. For this purpose, he hazarded the receiving one of Tressilian's passes in his cloak, wrapt as it was around his arm, and ere his adversary could extricate his rapier thus entangled, he closed with him, shortening his own sword at the same time, with the purpose of dispatching him. But Tressilian was on his guard, and unsheathing his poniard, parried with the blade of that weapon the home-thrust, which would otherwise have finished the combat, and in the struggle which followed, displayed so much address, as might have confirmed the opinion that he drew his origin from Cornwall, whose natives are such masters in the art of wrestling, as, were the games of antiquity revived, might enable them to challenge all Europe to the ring. Varney, in his ill-advised attempt, received a fall so sudden and violent, that his sword flew several paces from his hand, and ere he could recover his feet, that of his antagonist was pointed to his throat.

"Give me the instant means of relieving the victim of thy treachery," said Tressilian, "or take the last look of your Creator's blessed sun."

And while Varney, too confused or too sullen to reply, made a sudden effort to arise, his adversary drew back his arm, and would have executed his threat, but that the blow was arrested by the grasp of Michael Lambourne, who, directed by the clashing of swords, had come up just in time to save the life of Varney.

"Come, come, comrade," said Lambourne, "here is enough done, and more than enough—put up your fox, and let us be jogging—The Black Bear growls for us."

"Off, abject!" said Tressilian, striking himself free of Lambourne's grasp; "darest thou come betwixt me and mine enemy?"

"Abject! abject!" repeated Lambourne; "that shall be answered with cold steel whenever a bowl of sack has washed out memory of the morning's draught that we had together. In the meanwhile, do you see, shog—tramp—begone—we are two to one."

He spoke truth, for Varney had taken the opportunity to regain his weapon, and Tressilian perceived it was madness to press the quarrel farther against such odds. He took his purse from his side, and taking out two gold nobles, flung them to Lambourne; "There, caitiff, is thy morning wage—thou shalt not say thou hast been my guide unhired—Varney, farewell—we shall meet where there are none to come betwixt us." So saying, he turned round and departed through the postern-door.

Varney seemed to want the inclination, or perhaps the power (for his fall had been a severe one) to follow his retreating enemy. But he glared

darkly as he disappeared, and then addressed Lambourne; "Art thou a comrade of Foster's, good fellow?"

"Sworn friends, as the haft is to the knife," replied Michael Lambourne.

"Here is a broad piece for thee—follow yonder fellow, and see where he takes earth, and bring me word up to the mansion-house here. Cautious and silent, thou knave, as thou valuest thy throat."

"Enough said," replied Lambourne; "I can draw on a scent as well as a sleuth-hound."

"Begone, then," said Varney, sheathing his rapier; and, turning his back on Michael Lambourne, he walked slowly towards the house. Lambourne stopped but an instant to gather the nobles which his late companion had flung towards him so unceremoniously, and muttered to himself, while he put them up in his purse, along with the gratuity of Varney; "I spoke to yonder gulls of El dorado—By Saint Anthony, there is no El dorado for men of our stamp equal to bonny old England. It rains nobles, by heaven—they lie on the grass as thick as dew-drops—you may have them for gathering. And if I have not my share of such glittering dew-drops, may my sword melt like an icicle!"

CHAPTER V.

— He was a man

Versed in the world as pilot in his compass

The needle pointed ever to that interest

Which was his load-star, and he spread his sails

With vantage to the gale of others' passion.

The Deceiver—a Tragedy.

ANTHONY FOSTER was still engaged in debate with his fair guest, who treated with scorn every entreaty and request that she would retire to her own apartment, when a whistle was heard at the entrance-door of the mansion.

"We are fairly sped now," said Foster; "yonder is thy lord's signal, and what to say about the disorder which has happened in this household, by my conscience, I know not. Some evil fortune dogs the heels of that unhangd rogue Lambourne, and he has 'scaped the gallows against every chance to come back and be the ruin of me!"

"Peace, sir," said the lady, "and undo the gate to your master.—My lord! my dear lord!" she then exclaimed, hastening to the entrance of the apartment, then added, with a voice expressive of disappointment,—*"Pooh! it is but Richard Varney."*

"Ay, madam," said Varney, entering and saluting the lady with a respectful obeisance, which she returned with a careless mixture of negligence and of displeasure, "it is but Richard Varney; but even the first grey cloud should be acceptable, when it lightens in the east, because it announces the approach of the blessed sun."

"How! comes my lord hither to-night?" said the lady, in joyful, yet startled agitation, and Anthony Foster caught up the word, and echoed the question. Varney replied to the lady, that his lord purposed to attend her, and would have proceeded with some compliment, when, running to the door of the parlour, she called aloud, "*Janet—Janet—come to my tiring-room instantly!*" Then returning to Varney,

she asked if her lord sent any farther commendations to her.

"This letter, honoured madam," said he, taking from his bosom a small parcel wrapt in scarlet silk, "and with it a token to the queen of his affections." With eager speed the lady hastened to undo the silken string which surrounded the little packet, and failing to unloose readily the knot with which it was secured, she again called loudly on Janet, "Bring me a knife—scissars—ought that may undo this envious knot!"

"May not my poor poniard serve, honoured madam," said Varney, presenting a small dagger of exquisite workmanship, which hung in his Turkey-leather sword-belt.

"No, sir," replied the lady, rejecting the instrument which he offered—"Steel poniard shall cut no true-love knot of mine."

"It has cut many, however," said Anthony Foster, half aside, and looking at Varney. By this time the knot was disentangled without any other help than the neat and nimble fingers of Janet, a simply-attired pretty maiden, the daughter of Anthony Foster, who came running at the repeated call of her mistress. A necklace of orient pearl, the companion of a perfumed billet, was now hastily produced from the packet. The lady gave the one, after a slight glance, to the charge of her attendant, while she read, or rather devoured, the contents of the other.

"Surely, lady," said Janet, gazing with admiration at the neck-string of pearls, "the daughters of Tyre wore no fairer neck-jewels than those—And then the posey, 'For a neck that is fairer,'—each pearl is worth a freehold."

"Each word in this dear paper is worth the whole string, my girl—But come to my tiring-room, girl; we must be brave, my lord comes hither to-night.—He bids me grace you, Master Varney, and to me his wish is a law—I bid you to a collation in my bower this afternoon, and you too, Master Foster. Give orders that all is fitting, and that suitable preparations be made for my lord's reception to-night."—With these words she left the apartment.

"She takes state on her already," said Varney, "and distributes the favour of her presence, as if she were already the partner of his dignity.—Well—it is wise to practise beforehand the part which fortune prepares us to play—the young eagle must gaze at the sun, ere he soars on strong wing to meet it."

"If holding her head aloft," said Foster, "will keep her eyes from dazzling, I warrant you the dame will not stoop her crest. She will presently soar beyond reach of my whistle, Master Varney. I promise you, she holds me already in slight regard."

"It is thine own fault, thou sullen uninventive companion," answered Varney, "who know'st no mode of control, save downright brute force. Canst thou not make home pleasant to her, with music and toys? Canst thou not make the out-of-doors frightful to her, with tales of goblins?—Thou livest here by the church-yard, and hast not even wit enough to raise a ghost to scare thy females into good discipline."

"Speak not thus, Master Varney," said Foster; "the living I fear not, but I trifle not nor toy with

my dead neighbours of the church-yard. I promise you, it requires a good heart to live so near it; worthy Master Holdforth, the afternoon's lecturer of Saint Antholine's, had a sore fright there the last time he came to visit me."

"Hold thy superstitious tongue!" answered Varney: "and while thou talk'st of visiting, answer me, thou paltering knave, how came Tressilian to be at the postern-door?"

"Tressilian!" answered Foster, "what know I of Tressilian?—I never heard his name."

"Why, villain, it was the very Cornish chough, to whom old Sir Hugh Robsart destined his pretty Amy, and hither the hot-brained fool has come to look after his fair run-away; there must be some order taken with him, for he thinks he hath wrong, and is not the mean hind that will sit down with it. Luckily he knows nought of my lord, but thinks he has only me to deal with. But how, in the fiend's name, came he hither?"

"Why, with Mike Lambourne, an you must know," answered Foster.

"And who is Mike Lambourne?" demanded Varney. "By Heaven! thou wert best set up a bush over thy door, and invite every stroller who passes by, to see what thou shouldst keep secret even from the sun and air."

"Ay! ay! this is a court-like requital of my service to you, Master Richard Varney," replied Foster. "Didst thou not charge me to seek out for thee a fellow who had a good sword, and an unscrupulous conscience? and was I not busying myself to find a fit man?—for, thank Heaven, my acquaintance lies not amongst such companions—when, as Heaven would have it, this tall fellow, who is in all his qualities the very flashing knave thou didst wish, came hither to fix acquaintance upon me in the plenitude of his impudence, and I admitted his claim, thinking to do you a pleasure—and now see what thanks I get for disgracing myself by converse with him!"

"And did he," said Varney, "being such a fellow as thyself, only lacking, I suppose, thy present humour of hypocrisy, which lies as thin over thy hard ruffianly heart as gold lacquer upon rusty iron—did he, I say, bring the saintly, sighing Tressilian in his train?"

"They came together, by Heaven!" said Foster; "and Tressilian—to speak Heaven's truth—obtained a moment's interview with our pretty moppet, while I was talking apart with Lambourne."

"Improvident villain! we are both undone," said Varney. "She has of late been casting many a backward look to her father's halls, whenever her lordly lover leaves her alone. Should this preaching fool whistle her back to her old perch, we were but lost men."

"No fear of that, my master," replied Anthony Foster; "she is in no mood to stoop to his lure, for she yelled out on seeing him as if an adder had stung her."

"That is good.—Canst thou not get from thy daughter an inkling of what passed between them, good Foster?"

"I tell you plain, Master Varney," said Foster; "my daughter shall not enter our purposes, or walk in our paths. They may suit me well enough, who

know how to repent of my misdoings; but I will not have my child's soul committed to peril either for your pleasure or my lord's. I may walk among snares and pitfalls myself, because I have discretion, but I will not trust the poor child among them."

"Why, thou suspicious fool, I were as averse as thou art that thy baby-faced girl should enter into my plans, or walk to hell at her father's elbow. But indirectly thou mightst gain some intelligence of her?"

"And so I did, Master Varney," answered Foster; "and she said her lady called out upon the sickness of her father."

"Good!" replied Varney; "that is a hint worth catching, and I will work upon it. But the country must be rid of this Tressilian—I would have cumbered no man about the matter, for I hate him like strong poison—his presence is hemlock to me—and this day I had been rid of him, but that my foot slipped, when, to speak truth, had not thy comrade yonder come to my aid, and held his hand, I should have known by this time whether you and I have been treading the path to heaven or hell."

"And you can speak thus of such a risk!" said Foster; "you keep a stout heart, Master Varney—for me, if I did not hope to live many years, and to have time for the great work of repentance, I would not go forward with you."

"O! thou shalt live as long as Methuselah," said Varney, "and amass as much wealth as Solomon; and thou shalt repent so devoutly, that thy repentance shall be more famous than thy villany,—and that is a bold word. But for all this, Tressilian must be looked after. Thy ruffian yonder is gone to dog him. It concerns our fortunes, Anthony."

"Ay, ay," said Foster, sullenly, "this it is to be leagued with one who knows not even so much of Scripture, as that the labourer is worthy of his hire. I must, as usual, take all the trouble and risk."

"Risk! and what is the mighty risk, I pray you? This fellow will come prowling again about your demesne or into your house, and if you take him for a house-breaker or a park-breaker, is it not most natural you should welcome him with cold steel or hot lead? Even a mastiff will pull down those who come near his kennel; and who shall blame him?"

"Ay, I have a mastiff's work and a mastiff's wage among you," said Foster. "Here have you, Master Varney, secured a good freehold estate out of this old superstitious foundation; and I have but a poor lease of this mansion under you, voidable at your honour's pleasure."

"Ay, and thou wouldst fain convert thy leasehold into a copyhold—the thing may chance to happen, Anthony Foster, if thou doest good service for it.—But softly, good Anthony—it is not the lending a room or two of this old house for keeping my lord's pretty paroquet—nay, it is not the shutting thy doors and windows to keep her from flying off, that may deserve it. Remember, the manor and tithes are rated at the clear annual value of seventy-nine pounds five shillings and five-pence halfpenny, besides the value of the wood. Come, come, thou must be conscionable; great and secret service may deserve both this and a better thing.—And now let thy knave

come and pluck off my boots.—Get us some dinner, and a cup of thy best wine.—I must visit this mavis, brave in apparel, unruffled in aspect, and gay in temper."

They parted, and at the hour of noon, which was then that of dinner, they again met at their meal, Varney gaily dressed like a courtier of the time, and even Anthony Foster improved in appearance, as far as dress could amend an exterior so unfavourable.

This alteration did not escape Varney. When the meal was finished, the cloth removed, and they were left to their private discourse—"Thou art gay as a goldfinch, Anthony," said Varney, looking at his host; "methinks thou wilt whistle a jig anon—but I crave your pardon, that would secure your ejection from the congregation of the zealous botchers, the pure-hearted weavers, and the sanctified bakers of Abingdon, who let their ovens cool while their brains get heated."

"To answer you in the spirit, Master Varney," said Foster, "were—excuse the parable—to fling sacred and precious things before swine. So I will speak to thee in the language of the world, which he who is king of the world hath taught thee to understand, and to profit by in no common measure."

"Say what thou wilt, honest Tony," replied Varney; "for be it according to thine absurd faith, or according to thy most villanous practice, it cannot chuse but be rare matter to qualify this cup of Alicante. Thy conversation is relishing and poignant, and beats caviar, dried neat's-tongue, and all other provocatives that give savour to good liquor."

"Well, then, tell me," said Anthony Foster, "is not our good lord and master's turn better served, and his ante-chamber more suitably filled with decent, God-fearing men, who will work his will and their own profit quietly, and without worldly scandal, than that he should be manned, and attended, and followed by such open debauchers and ruffianly swordsmen as Tidesly, Killigrew, this fellow Lambourne, whom you have put me to seek out for you, and other such, who bear the gallows in their face and murder in their right hand—who are a terror to peaceable men, and a scandal to my lord's service?"

"Oh, content you, good Master Anthony Foster," answered Varney; "he that flies at all manner of game must keep all kinds of hawks, both short and long-winged. The course my lord holds is no easy one, and he must stand provided at all points with trusty retainers to meet each sort of service. He must have his gay courtier, like myself, to ruffle it in the presence-chamber, and to lay hand on hilt when any speaks in disparagement of my lord's honour"—

"Ay," said Foster, "and to whisper a word for him into a fair lady's ear, when he may not approach her himself."

"Then," said Varney, going on without appearing to notice the interruption, "he must have his lawyers—deep subtle pioneers—to draw his contracts—his pre-contracts, and his post-contracts, and to find the way to make the most of grants of church lands, and commons, and licenses for monopoly—And he must have physicians who can spice a cup or a caudle—And he must have his cabalists, like Dee and Allan, for conjuring up the devil—And he must have ruffling swordsmen who would fight the

devil when he is raised and at the wildest—And above all, without prejudice to others, he must have such godly, innocent, puritanic souls as thou, honest Anthony, who defy Satan, and do his work at the same time.”

“You would not say, Master Varney,” said Foster, “that our good lord and master, whom I hold to be fulfilled in all nobleness, would use such base and sinful means to rise, as thy speech points at?”

“Tush, man!” said Varney, “never look at me with so sad a brow—you trap me not—nor am I in your power, as your weak brain may imagine, because I name to you freely the engines, the springs, the screws, the tackle, and braces, by which great men rise in stirring times.—Sayest thou our good lord is fulfilled of all nobleness?—Amen, and so be it—he has the more need to have those about him who are unscrupulous in his service, and who, because they know that his fall will overwhelm and crush them, must wager both blood and brain, soul and body, in order to keep him aloft; and this I tell thee, because I care not who knows it.”

“You speak truth, Master Varney,” said Anthony Foster; “he that is head of a party, is but a boat on a wave, that raises not itself, but is moved upward by the billow which it floats upon.”

“Thou art metaphorical, honest Anthony,” replied Varney; “that velvet doublet hath made an oracle of thee—we will have thee to Oxford to take the degrees in the arts.—And, in the meantime, hast thou arranged all the matters which were sent from London, and put the western chambers into such fashion as may answer my lord’s humour?”

“They may serve a king on his bridal day,” said Anthony; “and I promise you that Dame Amy sits in them yonder, as proud and gay as if she were the Queen of Sheba.”

“’Tis the better, good Anthony,” answered Varney; “we must found our future fortunes on her good liking.”

“We build on sand then,” said Anthony Foster; “for supposing that she sails away to court in all her lord’s dignity and authority, how is she like to look back upon me, who am her jailer as it were, to detain her here against her will, keeping her a caterpillar on an old wall, when she would fain be a painted butterfly in a court garden?”

“Fear not her displeasure, man,” said Varney. “I will show her that all thou hast done in this matter was good service, both to my lord and her; and when she chips the egg-shell and walks alone, she shall own we have hatched her greatness.”

“Look to yourself, Master Varney,” said Foster; “you may misreckon foully in this matter—She gave you but a frosty reception this morning, and, I think, looks on you, as well as me, with an evil eye.”

“You mistake her, Foster—you mistake her utterly—To me she is bound by all the ties which can secure her to one who has been the means of gratifying both her love and ambition. Who was it that took the obscure Amy Robsart, the daughter of an impoverished and dotard knight—the destined bride of a moon-struck, moping enthusiast, like Edmund Tressilian—from her lowly fates, and held

out to her in prospect, the brightest fortune in England, or perchance in Europe? Why, man, it was I—as I have often told thee—that found opportunity for their secret meetings—It was I who watched the wood while he beat for the deer—It was I who, to this day, am blamed by her family as companion of her flight; and were I in their neighbourhood, would be fain to wear a shirt of better stuff than Holland linen, lest my ribs should be acquainted with Spanish steel. Who carried their letters?—I. Who amused the old knight and Tressilian?—I. Who planned her escape?—it was I. It was I, in short, who pulled this pretty little daisy from its lowly nook, and placed it in the proudest bonnet in Britain.”

“Ay, Master Varney,” said Foster, “but it may be, she thinks that had the matter remained with you, the flower had been stuck so slightly into the cap, that the first breath of a changeable breeze of passion had blown the poor daisy to the common.”

“She should consider,” said Varney, smiling, “the true faith I owed my lord and master prevented me at first from counseling marriage—and yet I did counsel marriage when I saw she would not be satisfied without the—sacrament or the ceremony—which callest thou it, Anthony?”

“Still she has you at feud on another score,” said Foster; “and I tell it you that you may look to yourself in time—She would not hide her splendour in this dark lantern of an old monastic house, but would fain shine a countess amongst countesses.”

“Very natural, very right,” answered Varney; “but what have I to do with that?—she may shine through horn or through crystal at my lord’s pleasure; I have nought to say against it.”

“She deems that you have an oar upon that side of the boat, Master Varney,” replied Foster, “and that you can pull it or no, at your good pleasure. In a word, she ascribes the secrecy and obscurity in which she is kept, to your secret counsel to my lord, and to my strict agency; and so she loves us both as a sentenced man loves his judge and his jailer.”

“She must love us better ere she leave this place, Anthony,” answered Varney. “If I have counseled for weighty reasons that she remain here for a season, I can also advise her being brought forth in the full blow of her dignity. But I were mad to do so, holding so near a place to my lord’s person, were she mine enemy. Bear this truth in upon her as occasion offers, Anthony, and let me alone for extolling you in her ear, and exalting you in her opinion—Ka me, ka thee—it is a proverb all over the world—The lady must know her friends, and be made to judge of the power they have of being her enemies—meanwhile, watch her strictly, but with all the outward observance that thy rough nature will permit. ’Tis an excellent thing that sullen look and bull-dog humour of thine; thou shouldst thank God for it, and so should my lord; for when there is aught harsh or hard-natured to be done, thou doest it as if it flowed from thine own natural doggedness, and not from orders, and so my lord escapes the scandal.—But hark—some one knocks at the gate—Look out at the window—let

no one enter—this were an ill night to be interrupted."

"It is he whom we spoke of before dinner," said Foster, as he looked through the casement; "it is Michael Lambourne."

"Oh, admit him, by all means," said the courtier, "he comes to give some account of his guest—it imports us much to know the movements of Edmund Tressilian—Admit him, I say, but bring him not hither—I will come to you presently in the abbot's library."

Foster left the room, and the courtier, who remained behind, paced the parlour more than once in deep thought, his arms folded on his bosom, until at length he gave vent to his meditations in broken words, which we have somewhat enlarged and connected, that his soliloquy may be intelligible to the reader.

"'Tis true," he said, suddenly stopping, and resting his right hand on the table at which they had been sitting, "this base churl hath fathomed the very depth of my fear, and I have been unable to disguise it from him—She loves me not—I would it were as true that I loved not her—Idiot that I was, to move her in my own behalf, when wisdom bade me be a true broker to my lord!—And this fatal error has placed me more at her discretion than a wise man would willingly be at that of the best piece of painted Eve's flesh of them all. Since the hour that my policy made so perilous a slip, I cannot look at her without fear, and hate, and fondness, so strangely mingled, that I know not whether, were it at my choice, I would rather possess or ruin her. But she must not leave this retreat until I am assured on what terms we are to stand. My lord's interest—and so far it is mine own—for if he sinks, I fall in his train—demands concealment of this obscure marriage—and besides, I will not lend her my arm to climb to her chair of state, that she may set her foot on my neck when she is fairly seated. I must work an interest in her, either through love or through fear—and who knows but I may yet reap the sweetest and best revenge for her former scorn?—that were indeed a masterpiece of courtlike art! Let me but once be her counsel-keeper—let her confide to me a secret, did it but concern the robbery of a linnet's nest, and, fair countess, thou art mine own." He again paced the room in silence, stopped, filled, and drank a cup of wine, as if to compose the agitation of his mind, and muttering, "Now for a close heart, and an open and unruffled brow," he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

The dews of summer night did fall,
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silvered the walls of Cumnor-hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

MICKLE'S *Cumnor-hall*.

FOUR apartments, which occupied the western side of the old quadrangle at Cumnor Place, had been fitted up with extraordinary splendour. This had been the work of several days prior to that on which our story opened. Workmen sent from

London, and not permitted to leave the premises until the work was finished, had converted the apartments in that whole side of the building from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic house, into the semblance of a royal palace. A mystery was observed in all these arrangements; the workmen came thither and returned by night, and all measures were taken to prevent the prying curiosity of the villagers from observing or speculating upon the changes which were taking place in the mansion of their once indigent, but now wealthy neighbour, Anthony Foster. Accordingly, the secrecy desired was so far preserved, that nothing got abroad but vague and uncertain reports, which were received and repeated, but without much credit being attached to them.

On the evening of which we treat, the new and highly decorated suite of rooms were, for the first time, illuminated, and that with a brilliancy which might have been visible half-a-dozen miles off, had not oaken shutters, carefully secured with bolt and padlock, and mantled with long curtains of silk and of velvet, deeply fringed with gold, prevented the radiance from being seen without.

The principal apartments, as we have seen, were four in number, each opening into the other. Access was given to them by a large scale staircase, as they were then called, of unusual length and height, which had its landing-place at the door of an ante-chamber, shaped somewhat like a gallery. This apartment the abbot had used as an occasional council-room, but it was now beautifully wainscoted with dark foreign wood of a brown colour, and bearing a high polish, said to have been brought from the Western Indies, and to have been wrought in London with infinite difficulty, and much damage to the tools of the workmen. The dark colour of this finishing was relieved by the number of lights in silver sconces, which hung against the walls, and by six large and richly-framed pictures, by the first masters of the age. A massy oaken table, placed at the lower end of the apartment, served to accommodate such as chose to play at the then fashionable game of shovel-board; and there was at the other end an elevated gallery for the musicians or minstrels, who might be summoned to increase the festivity of the evening.

From this ante-chamber opened a banqueting-room of moderate size, but brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes of the spectator with the richness of its furniture. The walls, lately so bare and ghastly, were now clothed with hangings of sky-blue velvet and silver; the chairs were of ebony, richly carved, with cushions corresponding to the hangings, and the place of the silver sconces which enlightened the ante-chamber, was supplied by a huge chandelier of the same precious metal. The floor was covered with a Spanish foot-cloth, or carpet, on which flowers and fruits were represented in such glowing and natural colours, that you hesitated to place the foot on such exquisite workmanship. The table, of old English oak, stood ready covered with the finest linen, and a large portable court-cupboard was placed with the leaves of its embossed folding-doors displayed, showing the shelves within, decorated with a full display of plate and porcelain. In the midst of the table stood a salt-cellar of Italian

workmanship, a beautiful and splendid piece of plate about two feet high, moulded into a representation of the giant Briareus, whose hundred hands of silver presented to the guest various sorts of spices, or condiments, to season their food withal.

The third apartment was called the withdrawing-room. It was hung with the finest tapestry, representing the Fall of Phaeton; for the looms of Flanders were now much occupied on classical subjects. The principal seat of this apartment was a chair of state, raised a step or two from the floor, and large enough to contain two persons. It was surmounted by a canopy, which, as well as the cushions, side-curtains, and the very foot-cloth, was composed of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed-pearl. On the top of the canopy were two coronets, resembling those of an earl and countess. Stools covered with velvet, and some cushions disposed in the Moorish fashion, and ornamented with arabesque needle-work, supplied the place of chairs in this apartment, which contained musical instruments, embroidery frames, and other articles for ladies' pastime. Besides lesser lights, the withdrawing-room was illuminated by four tall torches of virgin wax, each of which was placed in the grasp of a statue, representing an armed Moor, who held in his left arm a round buckler of silver, highly polished, interposed betwixt his breast and the light, which was thus brilliantly reflected as from a crystal mirror.

The sleeping-chamber belonging to this splendid suite of apartments, was decorated in a taste less showy, but not less rich, than had been displayed in the others. Two silver lamps, fed with perfumed oil, diffused at once a delicious odour and a trembling twilight-seeming shimmer through the quiet apartment. It was carpeted so thick, that the heaviest step could not have been heard, and the bed, richly heaped with down, was spread with an ample coverlet of silk and gold; from under which peeped forth cambric sheets, and blankets as white as the lambs which yielded the fleece that made them. The curtains were of blue velvet, lined with crimson silk, deeply festooned with gold, and embroidered with the loves of Cupid and Psyche. On the toilet was a beautiful Venetian mirror, in a frame of silver filagree, and beside it stood a gold posset-dish to contain the night-draught. A pair of pistols and a dagger, mounted with gold, were displayed near the head of the bed, being the arms for the night, which were presented to honoured guests, rather, it may be supposed, in the way of ceremony, than from any apprehension of danger. We must not omit to mention, what was more to the credit of the manners of the time, that in a small recess, illuminated by a taper, were disposed two hassocks of velvet and gold, corresponding with the bed furniture, before a desk of carved ebony. This recess had formerly been the private oratory of the abbot; but the crucifix was removed, and instead there were placed on the desk two Books of Common Prayer, richly bound, and embossed with silver. With this enviable sleeping apartment, which was so far removed from every sound save that of the wind sighing among the oaks of the park, that Morpheus might have coveted it for his own proper repose, corresponded two wardrobes, or dressing-rooms as they

are now termed, suitably furnished, and in a style of the same magnificence which we have already described. It ought to be added, that a part of the building in the adjoining wing was occupied by the kitchen and its offices, and served to accommodate the personal attendants of the great and wealthy nobleman for whose use these magnificent preparations had been made.

The divinity for whose sake this temple had been decorated was well worthy the cost and pains which had been bestowed. She was seated in the withdrawing-room which we have described, surveying, with the pleased eye of natural and innocent vanity, the splendour which had been so suddenly created, as it were, in her honour. For, as her own residence at Cumnor Place formed the cause of the mystery observed in all the preparations for opening these apartments, it was sedulously arranged, that until she took possession of them, she should have no means of knowing what was going forward in that part of the ancient building, or of exposing herself to be seen by the workmen engaged in the decorations. She had been, therefore, introduced upon that evening to a part of the mansion which she had never yet seen, so different from all the rest, that it appeared, in comparison, like an enchanted palace. And when she first examined and occupied these splendid rooms, it was with the wild and unrestrained joy of a rustic beauty, who finds herself suddenly invested with a splendour which her most extravagant wishes had never shaped for her, and at the same time with the keen feeling of an affectionate heart, which knows that all the enchantment which surrounds her is the work of the great magician Love.

The Countess Amy, therefore,—for to that rank she was exalted by her private but solemn union with England's proudest earl,—had for a time flitted hastily from room to room, admiring each new proof of her lover and her bridegroom's taste, and feeling that admiration enhanced, as she recollected that all she gazed upon was one continued proof of his ardent and devoted affection.—“How beautiful are these hangings!—How natural these paintings, which seem to contend with life!—How richly wrought is that plate, which looks as if all the galleons of Spain had been intercepted on the broad seas to furnish it forth!—And oh, Janet!” she exclaimed repeatedly to the daughter of Anthony Foster, the close attendant, who, with equal curiosity, but somewhat less ecstatic joy, followed on her mistress's footsteps—“O Janet! how much more delightful to think, that all these fair things have been assembled by his love, for the love of me! and that this evening—this very evening, which wears darker and darker every instant—I shall thank him more for the love that has created such an unimaginable paradise, than for all the wonders it contains.”

“The Lord is to be thanked first,” said the pretty puritan, “who gave thee, lady, the kind and courteous husband whose love has done so much for thee. I, too, have done my poor share. But if you thus run wildly from room to room, the toil of my crimping and my curling pins will vanish like the frost-work on the window when the sun is high.”

“Thou sayest true, Janet,” said the young and

beautiful countess, stopping suddenly from her tripping race of enraptured delight, and looking at herself from head to foot in a large mirror, such as she had never before seen, and which, indeed, had few to match it even in the queen's palace—"Thou sayest true, Janet," she answered, as she saw, with pardonable self-applause, the noble mirror reflect such charms as were seldom presented to its fair and polished surface; "I have more of the milk-maid than the countess, with these cheeks flushed with haste, and all these brown curls, which you laboured to bring to order, straying as wild as the tendrils of an unpruned vine—My falling ruff is chafed too, and shows the neck and bosom more than is modest and seemly—Come, Janet—we will practise state—we will go to the withdrawing-room, my good girl, and thou shalt put these rebel locks in order, and imprison within lace and cambric the bosom that beats too high."

They went to the withdrawing apartment accordingly, where the countess playfully stretched her upon the pile of Moorish cushions, half sitting, half reclining, half wrapt in her own thoughts, half listening to the prattle of her attendant.

While she was in this attitude, and with a corresponding expression betwixt listlessness and expectation on her fine and expressive features, you might have searched sea and land without finding any thing half so expressive or half so lovely. The wreath of brilliants which mixed with her dark-brown hair, did not match in lustre the hazel eye which a light-brown eye-brow, penciled with exquisite delicacy, and long eye-lashes of the same colour, relieved and shaded. The exercise she had just taken, her excited expectation and gratified vanity, spread a glow over her fine features, which had been sometimes censured for being rather too pale. The necklace of milk-white pearls which she wore, the same which she had just received as a true-love token from her husband, were excelled in purity by her teeth, and by the colour of her skin, saving where the blush of pleasure and self-satisfaction had somewhat stained the neck with a shade of light crimson.—"Now have done with these busy fingers, Janet," she said to her busy handmaiden, who was still officiously employed in bringing her hair and her dress into order—"Have done, I say—I must see your father ere my lord arrives, and also Master Richard Varney, whom my lord has highly in his esteem—but I could tell that of him would lose him favour."

"O do not do so, good my lady!" replied Janet; "leave him to God, who punishes the wicked in his own time; but do not you cross Varney's path, for so thoroughly hath he my lord's ear, that few have thriven who have thwarted his courses."

"And from whom had you this, my most righteous Janet?" said the countess; "or why should I keep terms with so mean a gentleman as Varney, being, as I am, wife to his master and patron?"

"Nay, madam," replied Janet Foster, "your ladyship knows better than I.—But I have heard my father say, he would rather cross a hungry wolf, than thwart Richard Varney in his projects—And he has oft charged me to have a care of holding commerce with him."

"Thy father said well, girl, for thee," replied the lady, "and I dare swear meant well. It is a pity, though, his face and manner do little match his true purpose—for I think his purpose may be true."

"Doubt it not, my lady," answered Janet—"Doubt not that my father purposes well, though he is a plain man, and his blunt looks may belie his heart."

"I will not doubt it, girl, were it only for thy sake; and yet he has one of those faces which men tremble when they look on—I think even thy mother, Janet—nay, have done with that poking-iron—could hardly look upon him without quaking."

"If it were so, madam," answered Janet Foster, "my mother had those who could keep her in honourable countenance. Why, even you, my lady, both trembled and blushed when Varney brought the letter from my lord."

"You are bold, damsel," said the countess, rising from the cushions on which she sate half-reclined in the arms of her attendant—"Know, that there are causes of trembling which have nothing to do with fear.—But, Janet," she added, immediately relapsing into the good-natured and familiar tone which was natural to her, "believe me, I will do what credit I can to your father, and the rather that you, sweetheart, are his child.—Alas! alas!" she added, a sudden sadness passing over her fine features, and her eyes filling with tears, "I ought the rather to hold sympathy with thy kind heart, that my own poor father is uncertain of my fate, and they say lies sick and sorrowful for my worthless sake—But I will soon cheer him—the news of my happiness and advancement will make him young again.—And that I may cheer him the sooner"—she wiped her eyes as she spoke—"I must be cheerful myself—My lord must not find me insensible to his kindness, or sorrowful when he snatches a visit to his recluse, after so long an absence.—Be merry, Janet, the night wears on, and my lord must soon arrive.—Call thy father hither, and call Varney also—I cherish resentment against neither; and though I may have some room to complain of both, it shall be their own fault if ever a complaint against them reaches the earl through my means.—Call them hither, Janet."

Janet Foster obeyed her mistress; and in a few minutes after, Varney entered the withdrawing-room with the graceful ease and unclouded front of an accomplished courtier, skilled, under the veil of external politeness, to disguise his own feelings, and to penetrate into those of others. Anthony Foster plodded into the apartment after him, his natural gloomy vulgarity of aspect seeming to become yet more remarkable, from his clumsy attempt to conceal the anxious mixture of anxiety and dislike with which he looked on her, over whom he had hitherto exercised so severe a control, now so splendidly attired, and decked with so many pledges of the interest which she possessed in her husband's affections. The blundering reverence which he made, rather *at* than *to* the countess, had confession in it—It was like the reverence which the criminal makes to the judge, when he at once confesses his guilt and implores mercy,—which is at the same time an impudent and embarrassed attempt at defence or ex-

tenuation, a confession of a fault, and an entreaty for lenity.

Varney, who, in right of his gentle blood, had pressed into the room before Anthony Foster, knew better what to say than he, and said it with more assurance and a better grace.

The countess greeted him indeed with an appearance of cordiality, which seemed a complete amnesty for whatever she might have to complain of. She rose from her seat, and advanced two steps towards him, holding forth her hand as she said, "Master Richard Varney, you brought me this morning such welcome tidings, that I fear surprise and joy made me neglect my lord and husband's charge to receive you with distinction. We offer you our hand, sir, in reconciliation."

"I am unworthy to touch it," said Varney, dropping on one knee, "save as a subject honours that of a prince."

He touched with his lips those fair and slender fingers, so richly loaded with rings and jewels; then rising with graceful gallantry, was about to hand her to the chair of state, when she said, "No, good Master Richard Varney, I take not my place there until my lord himself conducts me. I am for the present but a disguised countess, and will not take dignity on me until authorized by him whom I derive it from."

"I trust, my lady," said Foster, "that in doing the commands of my lord your husband, in your restraint and so forth, I have not incurred your displeasure, seeing that I did but my duty towards your lord and mine; for Heaven, as holy writ saith, hath given the husband supremacy and dominion over the wife—I think it runs so, or something like it."

"I receive at this moment so pleasant a surprise, Master Foster," answered the countess, "that I cannot but excuse the rigid fidelity which secluded me from these apartments, until they had assumed an appearance so new and so splendid."

"Ay, lady," said Foster, "it hath cost many a fair crown; and that more need not be wasted than is absolutely necessary, I leave you till my lord's arrival with good Master Richard Varney, who, as I think, hath somewhat to say to you from your most noble lord and husband.—Janet, follow me, to see that all be in order."

"No, Master Foster," said the countess, "we will your daughter remains here in our apartment; out of earshot, however, in case Varney hath aught to say to me from my lord."

Foster made his clumsy reverence, and departed, with an aspect that seemed to grudge the profuse expense which had been wasted upon changing his house from a bare and ruinous grange to an Asiatic palace. When he was gone, his daughter took her embroidery frame, and went to establish herself at the bottom of the apartment, while Richard Varney, with a profoundly humble courtesy, took the lowest stool he could find, and placing it by the side of the pile of cushions on which the countess had now again seated herself, sate with his eyes for a time fixed on the ground, and in profound silence. "I thought, Master Varney," said the countess, when she saw he was not likely to open the conversation, "that you had something to communicate from my lord and

husband; so at least I understood Master Foster, and therefore I removed my waiting-maid. If I am mistaken, I will recal her to my side; for her needle is not so absolutely perfect in tent and cross-stitch, but what my superintendence is advisable."

"Lady," said Varney, "Foster was partly mistaken in my purpose. It was not *from*, but *of*, your noble husband, and my approved and most noble patron, that I am led, and indeed bound to speak."

"The theme is most welcome, sir," said the countess, "whether it be of or from my noble husband. But be brief, for I expect his hasty approach."

"Briefly, then, madam," replied Varney, "and boldly, for my argument requires both haste and courage—You have this day seen Tressilian."

"I have, sir, and what of that?"

"Nothing that concerns me, lady. But think you, honoured madam, that your lord will hear it with equal equanimity?"

"And wherefore should he not?—To me alone was Tressilian's visit embarrassing and painful, for he brought news of my good father's illness."

"Of your father's illness, madam?" answered Varney. "It must have been sudden then—very sudden; for the messenger whom I dispatched, at my lord's instance, found the good knight on the hunting-field, cheering his beagles with his wonted jovial field-cry. I trust Tressilian has but forged this news—He hath his reasons, madam, as you well know, for disquieting your present happiness."

"You do him injustice, Master Varney," replied the countess, with animation—"You do him much injustice. He is the freest, the most open, the most gentle heart that breathes—My honourable lord ever excepted, I know not one to whom falsehood is more odious than to Tressilian."

"I crave your pardon, madam," said Varney, "I meant the gentleman no injustice—I knew not how nearly his cause affected you. A man may, in some circumstances, disguise the truth for fair and honest purpose; for, were it to be for ever spoken, and upon all occasions, this were no world to live in."

"You have a courtly conscience, Master Varney," said the countess, "and your veracity will not, I think, interrupt your preferment in the world, such as it is.—But touching Tressilian—I must do him justice, for I have done him wrong, as none knows better than thou.—Tressilian's conscience is of other mould—The world thou speakest of has not that which could bribe him from the way of truth and honour; and for living in it with a soiled fame, the ermine would as soon seek to lodge in the den of the foul pole-cat. For this my father loved him—For this I would have loved him—if I could.—And yet in this case he had what seemed to him, unknowing alike of my marriage and to whom I was united, such powerful reasons to withdraw me from this place, that I well trust he exaggerated much my father's indisposition, and that thy better news may be the truer."

"Believe me they are, madam," answered Varney; "I pretend not to be a champion of that same naked virtue called truth, to the very outrance. I can consent that her charms be hidden with a veil, were it but for decency's sake. But you must think

lower of my head and heart, than is due to one whom my noble lord calls his friend, if you suppose I could wilfully and unnecessarily palm upon your ladyship a falsehood, so soon to be detected, in a matter which concerns your happiness.

"Master Varney," said the countess, "I know that my lord esteems you, and holds you a faithful and a good pilot in those seas in which he has spread so high and so venturous a sail. Do not suppose, therefore, I meant hardly by you, when I spoke the truth in Tressilian's vindication—I am, as you well know, country-bred, and like plain rustic truth better than courtly compliment; but I must change my fashions with my sphere, I presume."

"True, madam," said Varney, smiling; "and though you speak now in jest, it will not be amiss that in earnest your present speech had some connexion with your real purpose.—A court-dame—take the most noble—the most virtuous—the most unimpeachable that stands around our queen's throne—would, for example, have shunned to speak the truth, or what she thought such, in praise of a discarded suitor, before the dependent and confidant of her noble husband."

"And wherefore," said the countess, colouring impatiently, "should I not do justice to Tressilian's worth before my husband's friend—before my husband himself—before the whole world?"

"And with the same openness," said Varney, "your ladyship will this night tell my noble lord your husband, that Tressilian has discovered your place of residence, so anxiously concealed from the world, and that he has had an interview with you?"

"Unquestionably. It will be the first thing I tell him, together with every word that Tressilian said, and that I answered. I shall speak my own shame in this; for Tressilian's reproaches, less just than he esteemed them, were not altogether unmerited—I will speak therefore, with pain—but I will speak, and speak all."

"Your ladyship will do your pleasure," answered Varney; "but methinks it were as well, since nothing calls for so frank a disclosure, to spare yourself this pain, and my noble lord the disquiet, and Master Tressilian, since belike he must be thought of in the matter, the danger which is like to ensue."

"I can see nought of all these terrible consequences," said the lady, composedly, "unless by imputing to my noble lord unworthy thoughts, which I am sure never harboured in his generous heart."

"Far be it from me to do so," said Varney—And then, after a moment's silence, he added, with a real or affected plainness of manner, very different from his usual smooth courtesy—"Come, madam, I will show you that a courtier dare speak truth as well as another, when it concerns the weal of those whom he honours and regards, ay, and although it may infer his own danger."—He waited as if to receive commands, or at least permission to go on, but as the lady remained silent, he proceeded, but obviously with caution—"Look around you," he said, "noble lady, and observe the barriers with which this place is surrounded, the studious mystery with which the brightest jewel that England possesses is secluded from the admiring gaze—See

with what rigour your walks are circumscribed, and your movements restrained, at the beck of yonder churlish Foster. Consider all this, and judge for yourself what can be the cause."

"My lord's pleasure," answered the countess; "and I am bound to seek no other motive."

"His pleasure it is indeed," said Varney; "and his pleasure arises out of a love worthy of the object which inspires it. But he who possesses a treasure, and who values it, is oft anxious, in proportion to the value he puts upon it, to secure it from the depredations of others."

"What needs all this talk, Master Varney?" said the lady, in reply; "you would have me believe that my noble lord is jealous—Suppose it true, I know a cure for jealousy."

"Indeed, madam!" said Varney.

"It is," replied the lady, "to speak the truth to my lord at all times, to hold up my mind and my thoughts before him as pure as that polished mirror; so that when he looks into my heart, he shall only see his own features reflected there."

"I am mute, madam," answered Varney; "and as I have no reason to grieve for Tressilian, who would have my heart's blood were he able, I shall reconcile myself easily to what may befall the gentleman, in consequence of your frank disclosure of his having presumed to intrude upon your solitude.—You, who know my lord so much better than I, will judge if he be like to bear the insult unavenged."

"Nay, if I could think myself the cause of Tressilian's ruin," said the countess,—"I who have already occasioned him so much distress, I might be brought to be silent.—And yet what will it avail, since he was seen by Foster, and I think by some one else?—No, no, Varney, urge it no more; I will tell the whole matter to my lord; and with such pleading for Tressilian's folly, as shall dispose my lord's generous heart rather to serve than to punish him."

"Your judgment, madam," said Varney, "is far superior to mine, especially as you may, if you will, prove the ice before you step on it, by mentioning Tressilian's name to my lord, and observing how he endures it. For Foster and his attendant, they know not Tressilian by sight, and I can easily give them some reasonable excuse for the appearance of an unknown stranger."

The lady paused for an instant, and then replied, "If, Varney, it be indeed true that Foster knows not as yet that the man he saw was Tressilian, I own I were unwilling he should learn what no ways concerns him. He bears himself already with austerity enough, and I wish him not to be judge or privy-councillor in my affairs."

"Tush!" said Varney; "what has the surly groom to do with your ladyship's concerns?—No more, surely, than the ban-dog which watches his court-yard. If he is in aught distasteful to your ladyship, I have interest enough to have him exchanged for a seneschal that shall be more agreeable to you."

"Master Varney," said the countess, "let us drop this theme—when I complain of the attendants whom my lord has placed around me, it must be to my lord himself.—Hark! I hear the trampling of

horse—He comes! he comes!" she exclaimed, jumping up in ecstasy.

"I cannot think it is he," said Varney; "or that you can hear the tread of his horse through the closely mantled casements."

"Stop me not, Varney—my ears are keener than thine—it is he!"

"But, madam!—but, madam!" exclaimed Varney, anxiously, and still placing himself in her way—"I trust that what I have spoken in humble duty and service, will not be turned to my ruin?—I hope that my faithful advice will not be bewrayed to my prejudice?—I implore that——"

"Content thee, man—content thee!" said the countess, "and quit my skirt—you are too bold to detain me—Content thyself, I think not of thee."

At this moment the folding-doors flew wide open, and a man of majestic mien, muffled in the folds of a long dark riding-cloak, entered the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

— This is he

Who rides on the court-gale; controls its tides;
Knows all their secret shoals and fatal eddies;
Whose frown abases, and whose smile exalts.
He shines like any rainbow—and, perchance,
His colours are as transient.

Old Play.

THERE was some little displeasure and confusion on the countess's brow, owing to her struggle with Varney's pertinacity; but it was exchanged for an expression of the purest joy and affection, as she threw herself into the arms of the noble stranger who entered, and clasping him to her bosom, exclaimed, "At length—at length thou art come!"

Varney discreetly withdrew as his lord entered, and Janet was about to do the same, when her mistress signed to her to remain. She took her place at the farther end of the apartment, and remained standing, as if ready for attendance.

Meanwhile, the earl, for he was of no inferior rank, returned his lady's caress with the most affectionate ardour, but affected to resist when she strove to take his cloak from him.

"Nay," she said, "but I will unmantle you—I must see if you have kept your word to me, and come as the great earl men call thee, and not as heretofore like a private cavalier."

"Thou art like the rest of the world, Amy," said the earl, suffering her to prevail in the playful contest; "the jewels, and feathers, and silk, are more to them than the man whom they adorn—many a poor blade looks gay in a velvet scabbard."

"But so cannot men say of thee, thou noble earl," said his lady, as the cloak dropped on the floor, and showed him dressed as princes when they ride abroad; "thou art the good and well-tried steel, whose inly worth deserves, yet disdains, its outward ornaments. Do not think Amy can love thee better in this glorious garb, than she did when she gave her heart to him who wore the russet brown cloak in the woods of Devon."

"And thou too," said the earl, as, gracefully and majestically, he led his beautiful countess toward the chair of state which was prepared for them both,

VOL. III.

—"thou too, my love, hast donned a dress which becomes thy rank, though it cannot improve thy beauty. What think'st thou of our court taste?"

The lady cast a sidelong glance upon the great mirror as they passed it by, and then said, "I know not how it is, but I think not of my own person, while I look at the reflection of thine. Sit thou there," she said, as they approached the chair of state, "like a thing for men to worship and to wonder at."

"Ay, love," said the earl, "if thou wilt share my state with me."

"Not so," said the countess; "I will sit on this footstool at thy feet, that I may spell over thy splendour, and learn, for the first time, how princes are attired."

And with a childish wonder, which her youth and rustic education rendered not only excusable but becoming, mixed as it was with a delicate show of the most tender conjugal affection, she examined and admired from head to foot the noble form and princely attire of him, who formed the proudest ornament of the court of England's maiden queen, renowned as it was for splendid courtiers, as well as for wise counsellors. Regarding affectionately his lovely bride, and gratified by her unrepressed admiration, the dark eye and noble features of the earl expressed passions more gentle than the commanding and aspiring look, which usually sat upon his broad forehead and in the piercing brilliancy of his dark eye; and he smiled at the simplicity which dictated the questions she put to him concerning the various ornaments with which he was decorated.

"The embroidered strap, as thou callest it, around my knee," he said, "is the English garter, an ornament which kings are proud to wear. See, here is the star which belongs to it, and here the diamond George, the jewel of the order. You have heard how King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury——"

"O, I know all that tale," said the countess, slightly blushing, "and how a lady's garter became the proudest badge of English chivalry."

"Even so," said the earl; "and this most honourable order I had the good hap to receive at the same time with three most noble associates, the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton, and the Earl of Rutland. I was the lowest of the four in rank—but what then?—he that climbs a ladder must begin at the first round."

"But this other fair collar, so richly wrought, with some jewel like a sheep hung by the middle attached to it, what," said the young countess, "does that emblem signify?"

"This collar," said the earl, "with its double fusilles interchanged with these knobs, which are supposed to present flint-stones, sparkling with fire, and sustaining the jewel you inquire about, is the badge of the noble order of the Golden Fleece, once appertaining to the house of Burgundy. It hath high privileges, my Amy, belonging to it, this most noble order; for even the King of Spain himself, who hath now succeeded to the honours and demesnes of Burgundy, may not sit in judgment upon a knight of the Golden Fleece, unless by assistance and consent of the great chapter of the order."

"And is this an order belonging to the cruel King of Spain?" said the countess. "Alas! my noble lord, that you will defile your noble English breast by bearing such an emblem! Bethink you of the most unhappy Queen Mary's days, when this same Philip held sway with her in England, and of the piles which were built for our noblest, and our wisest, and our most truly sanctified prelates and divines—And will you, whom men call the standard-bearer of the true protestant faith, be contented to wear the emblem and mark of such a Romish tyrant as he of Spain?"

"O, content you, my love," answered the earl; "we who spread our sails to gales of court-favour cannot always display the ensigns we love the best, or at all times refuse sailing under colours which we like not. Believe me, I am not the less good protestant, that for policy I must accept the honour offered me by Spain, in admitting me to this his highest order of knighthood. Besides, it belongs properly to Flanders; and Egmont, Orange, and others, have pride in seeing it displayed on an English bosom."

"Nay, my lord, you know your own path best," replied the countess.—"And this other collar, to what country does this fair jewel belong?"

"To a very poor one, my love," replied the earl; "this is the order of Saint Andrew, revived by the last James of Scotland. It was bestowed on me when it was thought the young widow of France and Scotland would gladly have wedded an English baron; but a free coronet of England is worth a crown matrimonial held at the humour of a woman, and owning only the poor rocks and bogs of the north."

The countess paused, as if what he last said had excited some painful but interesting train of thought; and, as she still remained silent, the earl proceeded.

"And now, loveliest, your wish is gratified, and you have seen your vassal in such of his trim array as accords with riding vestments; for robes of state and coronets are only for princely halls."

"Well, then," said the countess, "my gratified wish has, as usual, given rise to a new one."

"And what is it thou canst ask that I can deny?" said the fond husband.

"I wished to see my earl visit this obscure and secret bower," said the countess, "in all his princely array, and now, methinks, I long to sit in one of his princely halls, and see him enter dressed in sober russet, as when he won poor Amy Robsart's heart."

"That is a wish easily granted," said the earl—"the sober russet shall be donned to-morrow if you will."

"But shall I," said the lady, "go with you to one of your castles, to see how the richness of your dwelling will correspond with your peasant habit?"

"Why, Amy," said the earl, looking around, "are not these apartments decorated with sufficient splendour? I gave the most unbounded order, and, methinks, it has been indifferently well obeyed—but if thou canst tell me aught which remains to be done, I will instantly give direction."

"Nay, my lord, now you mock me," replied the countess; "the gaiety of this rich lodging exceeds

my imagination as much as it does my desert. But shall not your wife, my love—at least one day soon—be surrounded with the honour which arises neither from the toils of the mechanic who decks her apartment, nor from the silks and jewels with which your generosity adorns her, but which is attached to her place among the matronage, as the avowed wife of England's noblest earl?"

"One day?" said her husband,—"Yes, Amy, my love, one day this shall surely happen; and, believe me, thou canst not wish for that day more fondly than I. With what rapture could I retire from labours of state, and cares and toils of ambition, to spend my life in dignity and honour on my own broad domains, with thee, my lovely Amy, for my friend and companion! But, Amy, this cannot yet be; and these dear but stolen interviews, are all I can give to the loveliest and the best-beloved of her sex."

"But *why* can it not be?" urged the countess, in the softest tones of persuasion,—"*why* can it not immediately take place—this more perfect, this uninterrupted union, for which you say you wish, and which the laws of God and man alike command?—Ah! did you but desire it half so much as you say, mighty and favoured as you are, who, or what, should bar your attaining your wish?"

The earl's brow was overcast.

"Amy," he said, "you speak of what you understand not. We that toil in courts are like those who climb a mountain of loose sand—we dare make no halt until some projecting rock afford us a secure stance and resting-place—if we pause sooner, we slide down by our own weight, an object of universal derision. I stand high, but I stand not secure enough to follow my own inclination. To declare my marriage, were to be the artificer of my own ruin. But, believe me, I will reach a point, and that speedily, when I can do justice to thee and to myself. Meantime, poison not the bliss of the present moment, by desiring that which cannot at present be. Let me rather know whether all here is managed to thy liking. How does Foster bear himself to you?—in all things respectful I trust, else the fellow shall dearly rue it."

"He reminds me sometimes of the necessity of this privacy," answered the lady with a sigh; "but that is reminding me of your wishes, and therefore I am rather bound to him than disposed to blame him for it."

"I have told you the stern necessity which is upon us," replied the earl. "Foster is, I note, somewhat sullen of mood, but Varney warrants to me his fidelity and devotion to my service. If thou hast aught, however, to complain of the mode in which he discharges his duty, he shall abye it."

"O, I have nought to complain of," answered the lady, "so he discharges his task with fidelity to you; and his daughter Janet is the kindest and best companion of my solitude—her little air of precision sits so well upon her."

"Is she indeed?" said the earl; "she who gives you pleasure must not pass unrewarded—Come hither, damsel."

"Janet," said the lady, "come hither to my lord." Janet, who, as we already noticed, had discreetly

retired to some distance, that her presence might be no check upon the private conversation of her lord and lady, now came forward; and as she made her reverential curtsy, the earl could not help smiling at the contrast which the extreme simplicity of her dress, and the prim demureness of her looks, made with a very pretty countenance and a pair of black eyes, that laughed in spite of their mistress's desire to look grave.

"I am bound to you, pretty damsel," said the earl, "for the contentment which your service hath given to this lady." As he said this, he took from his finger a ring of some price, and offered it to Janet Foster, adding, "Wear this, for her sake and for mine."

"I am well pleased, my lord," answered Janet, demurely, "that my poor service hath gratified my lady, whom no one can draw nigh to without desiring to please; but we, of the precious Mr Holdforth's congregation, seek not, like the gay daughters of this world, to twine gold around our fingers, or wear stones upon our necks, like the vain women of Tyre and of Sidon."

"O, what! you are a grave professor of the precise sisterhood, pretty Mrs Janet," said the earl, "and I think your father is of the same congregation in sincerity. I like you both the better for it; for I have been prayed for and wished well to in your congregations. And you may the better afford the lack of ornament, Mrs Janet, because your fingers are slender, and your neck white. But here is what neither papist nor puritan, latitudinarian nor precisionian, ever boggles or makes mouths at. E'en take it, my girl, and employ it as you list."

So saying, he put into her hand five broad gold pieces of Philip and Mary.

"I would not accept this gold neither," said Janet, "but that I hope to find a use for it will bring a blessing on us all."

"Even please thyself, pretty Janet," said the earl, "and I will be well satisfied—And I prithee let them hasten the evening collation."

"I have bidden Master Varney and Master Foster to sup with us, my lord," said the countess, as Janet retired to obey the earl's commands; "has it your approbation?"

"What you do ever must have so, my sweet Amy," replied her husband; "and I am the better pleased thou hast done them this grace, because Richard Varney is my sworn man, and a close brother of my secret council; and, for the present, I must needs repose much trust in this Anthony Foster."

"I had a boon to beg of thee, and a secret to tell thee, my dear lord," said the countess, with a faltering accent.

"Let both be for to-morrow, my love," replied the earl. "I see they open the folding-doors into the banqueting-parlour, and as I have ridden far and fast, a cup of wine will not be unacceptable."

So saying, he led his lovely wife into the next apartment, where Varney and Foster received them with the deepest reverences, which the first paid after the fashion of the court, and the second after that of the congregation. The earl returned their salutation with the negligent courtesy of one long

used to such homage; while the countess repaid it with a punctilious solicitude, which showed it was not quite so familiar to her.

The banquet, at which the company seated themselves, corresponded in magnificence with the splendour of the apartment in which it was served up, but no domestic gave his attendance. Janet alone stood ready to wait upon the company; and, indeed, the board was so well supplied with all that could be desired, that little or no assistance was necessary. The earl and his lady occupied the upper end of the table, and Varney and Foster sate beneath the salt, as was the custom with inferiors. The latter, overawed, perhaps, by society to which he was altogether unused, did not utter a single syllable during the repast; while Varney, with great tact and discernment, sustained just so much of the conversation, as, without the appearance of intrusion on his part, prevented it from languishing, and maintained the good humour of the earl at the highest pitch. This man was indeed highly qualified by nature to discharge the part in which he found himself placed, being discreet and cautious on the one hand, and on the other, quick, keen-witted, and imaginative; so that even the countess, prejudiced as she was against him on many accounts, felt and enjoyed his powers of conversation, and was more disposed than she had ever hitherto found herself, to join in the praises which the earl lavished on his favourite. The hour of rest at length arrived, the earl and countess retired to their apartment, and all was silent in the castle for the rest of the night.

Early on the ensuing morning, Varney acted as the earl's chamberlain as well as his master of horse, though the latter was his proper office in that magnificent household, where knights and gentlemen of good descent were well contented to hold such menial situations, as nobles themselves held in that of the sovereign. The duties of each of these charges were familiar to Varney, who, sprung from an ancient but somewhat decayed family, was the earl's page during his earlier and more obscure fortunes, and, faithful to him in adversity, had afterwards contrived to render himself no less useful to him in his rapid and splendid advance to fortune; thus establishing in him an interest, resting both on present and past services, which rendered him an almost indispensable sharer of his confidence.

"Help me to do on a plainer riding-suit, Varney," said the earl, as he laid aside his morning-gown, flowered with silk, and lined with sables, "and put these chains and fetters there (pointing to the collars of the various orders which lay on the table) into their place of security—my neck last night was well nigh broke with the weight of them. I am half resolved they shall gall me no more. They are bonds which knaves have invented to fetter fools. How think'st thou, Varney?"

"Faith, my good lord," said his attendant, "I think fetters of gold are like no other fetters—they are ever the weightier the welcomer."

"For all that, Varney," replied his master, "I am half resolved they shall bind me to the court no longer. What can further service and higher favour give me, beyond the high rank and large estate which I have already secured?—What brought my

father to the block, but that he could not bound his wishes within right and reason?—I have, you know, had mine own ventures and mine own escapes; I am well nigh resolved to tempt the sea no farther, but sit me in quiet down on the shore.”

“And gather cockle-shells, with Dan Cupid to aid you,” said Varney.

“How mean you by that, Varney?” said the earl, somewhat hastily.

“Nay, my lord,” said Varney, “be not angry with me. If your lordship is happy in a lady so rarely lovely, that in order to enjoy her company with somewhat more freedom, you are willing to part with all you have hitherto lived for, some of your poor servants may be sufferers; but your bounty hath placed me so high, that I shall ever have enough to maintain a poor gentleman in the rank befitting the high office he has held in your lordship’s family.”

“Yet you seem discontented when I propose throwing up a dangerous game, which may end in the ruin of both of us.”

“I, my lord?” said Varney; “surely I have no cause to regret your lordship’s retreat?—It will not be Richard Varney who will incur the displeasure of majesty and the ridicule of the court, when the stateliest fabric that ever was founded upon a prince’s favour, melts away like a morning frost-work.—I would only have you yourself be assured, my lord, ere you take a step which cannot be retracted, that you consult your fame and happiness in the course you propose.”

“Speak on then, Varney,” said the earl; “I tell thee I have determined nothing, and will weigh all considerations on either side.”

“Well then, my lord,” replied Varney, “we will suppose the step taken, the frown frowned, the laugh laughed, and the moan moaned. You are retired, we will say, to some one of your most distant castles, so far from court that you hear neither the sorrow of your friends, nor the glee of your enemies. We will suppose, too, that your successful rival will be satisfied (a thing greatly to be doubted) with abridging and cutting away the branches of the great tree, which so long kept the sun from him, and that he does not insist upon tearing you up by the roots. Well, the late prime favourite of England, who wielded her general’s staff and controlled her parliaments, is now a rural baron, hunting, hawking, drinking fat ale with country esquires, and mustering his men at the command of the high sheriff”——

“Varney, forbear!” said the earl.

“Nay, my lord, you must give me leave to conclude my picture.—Sussex governs England—the queen’s health fails—the succession is to be settled—a road is opened to ambition more splendid than ambition ever dreamed.—You hear all this as you sit by the hob, under the shade of your hall chimney—You then begin to think what hopes you have fallen from, and what insignificance you have embraced—and all that you might look babies in the eyes of your fair wife oftener than once a fortnight.”

“I say, Varney,” said the earl, “no more of this. I said not that the step, which my own ease and comfort would urge me to, was to be taken hastily, or without due consideration to the public safety.

Bear witness to me, Varney, I subdue my wishes of retirement, not because I am moved by the call of private ambition, but that I may preserve the position in which I may best serve my country at the hour of need.—Order our horses presently—I will wear, as formerly, one of the livery cloaks, and ride before the portmantle.—Thou shalt be master for the day, Varney—neglect nothing that can blind suspicion. We will to horse ere men are stirring. I will but take leave of my lady, and be ready. I impose a restraint on my own poor heart, and wound one yet more dear to me; but the patriot must subdue the husband.”

Having said this in a melancholy but firm accent, he left the dressing apartment.

“I am glad thou art gone,” thought Varney, “or, practised as I am in the follies of mankind, I had laughed in the very face of thee! Thou mayst tire as thou wilt of thy new bauble, thy pretty piece of painted Eve’s flesh there, I will not be thy hindrance. But of thine old bauble, ambition, thou shalt not tire, for as you climb the hill, my lord, you must drag Richard Varney up with you; and if he can urge you to the ascent he means to profit by, believe me, he will spare neither whip nor spur.—And for you, my pretty lady, that would be countess outright, you were best not thwart my courses, lest you are called to an old reckoning on a new score. ‘Thou shalt be master,’ did he say—By my faith, he may find that he spoke truer than he is aware of—And thus he, who in the estimation of so many wise-judging men can match Burleigh and Walsingham in policy, and Sussex in war, becomes pupil to his own menial; and all for a hazel eye and a little cunning red and white, and so falls ambition. And yet, if the charms of mortal woman could excuse a man’s politic pate for becoming bewildered, my lord had the excuse at his right hand on this blessed evening that has last passed over us. Well—let things roll as they may, he shall make me great, or I will make myself happy; and for that softer piece of creation, if she speak not out her interview with Tressilian, as well I think she dare not, she also must traffic with me for concealment and mutual support, in spite of all this scorn.—I must to the stables.—Well, my lord, I order your retinue now; the time may soon come that *my* master of the horse shall order mine own.”

So saying, he left the apartment.

In the meanwhile the earl had re-entered the bed-chamber, bent on taking a hasty farewell of the lovely countess, and scarce daring to trust himself in private with her, to hear requests again urged, which he found it difficult to parry, yet which his recent conversation with his master of horse had determined him not to grant.

He found her in a white cymar of silk lined with furs, her little feet unstocking’d and hastily thrust into slippers; her unbraided hair escaping from under her midnight coif, with little array but her own loveliness, rather augmented than diminished by the grief which she felt at the approaching moment of separation.

“Now, God be with thee, my dearest and loveliest!” said the earl, scarce tearing himself from her embrace, yet again returning to fold her again and

again in his arms, and again bidding farewell, and again returning to kiss and bid adieu once more. "The sun is on the verge of the blue horizon—I dare not stay.—Ere this I should have been ten miles from hence."

Such were the words, with which at length he strove to cut short their parting interview.

"You will not grant my request then," said the countess. "Ah, false knight! did ever lady, with bare foot in slipper, seek boon of a brave knight, yet return with denial?"

"Any thing, Amy, any thing thou canst ask I will grant," answered the earl—"always excepting," he said, "that which might ruin us both."

"Nay," said the countess, "I urge not my wish to be acknowledged in the character which would make me the envy of England—as the wife, that is, of my brave and noble lord, the first as the most fondly beloved of English nobles.—Let me but share the secret with my dear father!—Let me but end his misery on my unworthy account—they say he is ill, the good old kind-hearted man."

"They say?" asked the earl, hastily; "who says? Did not Varney convey to Sir Hugh all we dare at present tell him concerning your happiness and welfare? and has he not told you that the good old knight was following, with good heart and health, his favourite and wonted exercise? Who has dared put other thoughts into your head?"

"O, no one, my lord, no one," said the countess, something alarmed at the tone in which the question was put; "but yet, my lord, I would fain be assured by mine own eye-sight that my father is well."

"Be contented, Amy—thou canst not now have communication with thy father or his house. Were it not a deep course of policy to commit no secret unnecessarily to the custody of more than must needs be, it were sufficient reason for secrecy that yonder Cornish man, yonder Trevanion or Tressilian, or whatsoever his name is, haunts the old knight's house, and must necessarily know whatever is communicated there."

"My lord," answered the countess, "I do not think it so. My father has been long noted a worthy and honourable man; and for Tressilian, if we can pardon ourselves the ill we have wrought him, I will wager the coronet I am to share with you one day, that he is incapable of returning injury for injury."

"I will not trust him, however, Amy," said her husband; "by my honour I will not trust him—I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than this Tressilian!"

"And why, my lord?" said the countess, though she shuddered slightly at the tone of determination in which he spoke; "let me but know why you think thus hardly of Tressilian?"

"Madam," replied the earl, "my will ought to be a sufficient reason.—If you desire more, consider how this Tressilian is leagued, and with whom—He stands high in the opinion of this Radcliffe, this Sussex, against whom I am barely able to maintain my ground in the opinion of our suspicious mistress; and if he had me at such advantage, Amy, as to become acquainted with the tale of our marriage, before Elizabeth were fitly prepared, I were an out-

cast from her grace for ever—a bankrupt at once in favour and in fortune, perhaps—for she hath in her a touch of her father Henry,—a victim, a very victim, to her offended and jealous resentment."

"But why, my lord?" again replied his lady, "should you deem thus injuriously of a man of whom you know so little? What you do know of Tressilian is through me, and it is I who assure you that in no circumstances will he betray your secret. If I did him wrong in your behalf, my lord, I am now the more concerned you should do him justice.—You are offended at my speaking of him, what would you say had I actually myself seen him?"

"If you had," replied the earl, "you would do well to keep that interview as secret as that which is spoken in a confessional. I seek no one's ruin; but he who thrusts himself on my secret privacy, were better look well to his future walk. The bear brooks no one to cross his awful path."

"Awful, indeed!" said the countess, turning very pale.

"You are ill, my love," said the earl, supporting her in his arms; "stretch yourself on your couch again, it is but early day for you to leave it. Have you aught else, involving less than my fame, my fortune, and my life, to ask of me?"

"Nothing my lord and love," answered the countess, faintly; "something there was that I would have told you, but your anger has driven it from my recollection."

"Reserve it till our next meeting, my love," said the earl fondly, and again embracing her; "and barring only those requests which I cannot and dare not grant, thy wish must be more than England and all its dependencies can fulfil, if it is not gratified to the letter."

Thus saying, he took a final farewell. At the bottom of the staircase he received from Varney an ample livery cloak and slouched hat, in which he wrapped himself so as to disguise his person, and completely conceal his features. Horses were ready in the court-yard for himself and Varney; for one or two of his train, entrusted with the secret so far as to know or guess that the earl intrigued with a beautiful lady at that mansion, though her name and quality were unknown to them, had already been dismissed over night.

Anthony Foster himself held the rein of the earl's palfrey, a stout and able nag for the road, while his old serving-man held the bridle of the more showy and gallant steed which Richard Varney was to occupy in the character of master.

As the earl approached, however, Varney advanced to hold his master's bridle, and to prevent Foster from paying that duty to the earl, which he probably considered as belonging to his own office. Foster scowled at an interference which seemed intended to prevent his paying his court to his patron, but gave place to Varney; and the earl, mounting without farther observation, and forgetting that his assumed character of a domestic threw him into the rear of his supposed master, rode pensively out of the quadrangle, not without waving his hand repeatedly in answer to the signals which were made by the countess with her kerchief, from the windows of her apartment.

While his stately form vanished under the dark archway which led out of the quadrangle, Varney muttered, "There goes fine policy—the servant before the master;" then, as he disappeared, seized the moment to speak a word with Foster. "Thou look'st dark on me, Anthony," he said, "as if I had deprived thee of a parting nod of my lord; but I have moved him to leave thee a better remembrance for thy faithful service. See here! a purse of as good gold as ever chinked under a miser's thumb and forefinger. Ay, count them, lad," said he, as Foster received the gold with a grim smile, "and add to them the goodly remembrance he gave last night to Janet."

"How's this! how's this!" said Anthony Foster, hastily; "gave he gold to Janet?"

"Ay, man, wherefore not?—does not her service to his fair lady require guerdon?"

"She shall have none on't," said Foster; "she shall return it. I know his dotage on one face is as brief as it is deep. His affections are as fickle as the moon."

"Why, Foster, thou art mad—thou doest not hope for such good fortune, as that my lord should cast an eye on Janet?—Who, in the fiend's name, would listen to the thrush when the nightingale is singing?"

"Thrush or nightingale, all is one to the fowler; and, Master Varney, you can sound the quail-pipe most daintily to wile wantons into his nets. I desire no such devil's preferment for Janet as you have brought many a poor maiden to—Doest thou laugh?—I will keep one limb of my family, at least, from Satan's clutches, that thou mayst rely on—She shall restore the gold."

"Ay, or give it to thy keeping, Tony, which will serve as well," answered Varney; "but I have that to say which is more serious.—Our lord is returning to court in an evil humour for us."

"How meanest thou? Is he tired already of his pretty toy—his plaything yonder. He has purchased her at a monarch's ransom, and I warrant me he rues his bargain."

"Not a whit, Tony; he doats on her, and will forsake the court for her—then down go hopes, possessions, and safety—church lands are resumed, Tony, and well if the holders be not called to account in Exchequer."

"That were ruin," said Foster, his brow darkening with apprehension; "and all this for a woman!—Had it been for his soul's sake, it were something; and I sometimes wish I myself could fling away the world that cleaves to me, and be as one of the poorest of our church."

"Thou art like enough to be so, Tony," answered Varney; "but I think the devil will give thee little credit for thy compelled poverty, and so thou lovest on all hands. But follow my counsel, and Cumnor Place shall be thy copyhold yet—Say nothing of this Tressilian's visit—not a word until I give thee notice."

"And wherefore, I pray you?" said Foster, suspiciously.

"Dull beast!" replied Varney; "in my lord's present humour it were the ready way to confirm him in his resolution of retirement, should he know that his lady was haunted with such a spectre in his absence.

He would be for playing the dragon himself over his golden fruit, and then, Tony, thy occupation is ended. A word to the wise—Farewell—I must follow him."

He turned his horse, struck him with the spurs, and rode off under the archway in pursuit of his lord.

"Would thy occupation were ended, or thy neck broken, damned pander!" said Anthony Foster. "But I must follow his beck, for his interest and mine are the same, and he can wind the proud earl to his will. Janet shall give me these pieces though—they shall be laid out in some way for God's service, and I will keep them separate in my strong chest, till I can fall upon a fitting employment for them. No contagious vapour shall breathe on Janet—she shall remain pure as a blessed spirit, were it but to pray God for her father. I need her prayers, for I am at a hard pass—Strange reports are abroad concerning my way of life. The congregation look cold on me, and when Master Holdforth spoke of hypocrites being like a whited sepulchre, which within was full of dead men's bones, methought he looked full at me. The Romish was a comfortable faith; Lambourne spoke true in that. A man had but to follow his thrift by such ways as offered—tell his beads—hear a mass—confess, and be absolved. These puritans tread a harder and a rougher path; but I will try—I will read my bible for an hour, ere I again open mine iron chest."

Varney, meantime, spurred after his lord, whom he found waiting for him at the postern-gate of the park.

"You waste time, Varney," said the earl; "and it presses. I must be at Woodstock before I can safely lay aside my disguise; and till then, I journey in some peril."

"It is but two hours' brisk riding, my lord," said Varney; "for me, I only stopped to enforce your commands of care and secrecy on yonder Foster, and to inquire about the abode of the gentleman whom I would promote to your lordship's train, in the room of Trevors."

"Is he fit for the meridian of the ante-chamber, think'st thou?" said the earl.

"He promises well, my lord," replied Varney; "but if your lordship were pleased to ride on, I could go back to Cumnor, and bring him to your lordship at Woodstock before you are out of bed."

"Why, I am asleep there, thou know'st, at this moment," said the earl; "and I pray you not to spare horse-flesh, that you may be with me at my levee."

So saying, he gave his horse the spur, and proceeded on his journey, while Varney rode back to Cumnor by the public road, avoiding the park. The latter alighted at the door of the bonny Black Bear, and desired to speak with Master Michael Lambourne. That respectable character was not long of appearing before his new patron, but it was with downcast looks.

"Thou hast lost the scent," said Varney, "of thy comrade Tressilian.—I know it by thy hang-dog visage. Is this thy alacrity, thou impudent knave?"

"Cogswounds!" said Lambourne, "there was never a trail so finely hunted. I saw him to earth at mine uncle's here—stuck to him like bees'-wax—

saw him at supper—watched him to his chamber, and presto—he is gone next morning, the very hostler knows not where.”

“This sounds like practice upon me, sir,” replied Varney; “and if it prove so, by my soul you shall repent it.”

“Sir, the best hound will be sometimes at fault,” answered Lambourne; “how should it serve me that this fellow should have thus vanished? You may ask mine host, Giles Gosling—ask the tapster and hostler—ask Cicely, and the whole household, how I kept eyes on Tressilian while he was on foot—On my soul, I could not be expected to watch him like a sick nurse, when I had seen him fairly abed in his chamber. That will be allowed me, surely?”

Varney did, in fact, make some inquiry among the household, which confirmed the truth of Lambourne’s statement. Tressilian, it was unanimously agreed, had departed suddenly and unexpectedly, betwixt night and morning.

“But I will wrong no one,” said mine host; “he left on the table in his lodging the full value of his reckoning, with some allowance to the servants of the house, which was the less necessary, that he saddled his own gelding, as it seems, without the hostler’s assistance.”

Thus satisfied of the rectitude of Lambourne’s conduct, Varney began to talk to him upon his future prospects, and the mode in which he meant to bestow himself, intimating that he understood from Foster, he was not disinclined to enter into the household of a nobleman.

“Have you,” said he, “ever been at court?”

“No,” replied Lambourne; “but ever since I was ten years old, I have dreamt once a-week that I was there, and made my fortune.”

“It may be your own fault if your dream comes not true,” said Varney; “are you needy?”

“Um!” replied Lambourne; “I love pleasure.”

“That is a sufficient answer, and an honest one,” said Varney. “Know you aught of the requisites expected from the retainer of a rising courtier?”

“I have imagined them to myself, sir,” answered Lambourne; “as for example, a quick eye—a close mouth—a ready and bold hand—a sharp wit, and a blunt conscience.”

“And thine, I suppose,” said Varney, “has had its edge blunted long since.”

“I cannot remember, sir, that its edge was ever over keen,” replied Lambourne. “When I was a youth, I had some few whimsies, but I ground them partly out of my recollection on the rough grindstone of the wars, and what remained, I washed out in the broad waves of the Atlantic.”

“Thou hast served, then, in the Indies?”

“In both East and West,” answered the candidate for court-service, “by both sea and land; I have served both the Portugal and the Spaniard—both the Dutchman and the Frenchman, and have made war on our own account with a crew of jolly fellows, who held there was no peace beyond the Line.”

“Thou mayst do me, and my lord, and thyself, good service,” said Varney, after a pause. “But observe, I know the world—and, answer me truly, canst thou be faithful?”

“Did you not know the world,” answered Lambourne, “it were my duty to say ay, without further circumstance, and to swear to it with life and honour, and so forth.—But as it seems to me that your worship is one who desires rather honest truth than politic falsehood—I reply to you, that I can be faithful to the gallows’ foot, ay, to the loop that dangles from it, if I am well used and well recompensed;—not otherwise.”

“To thy other virtues thou canst add, no doubt,” said Varney, in a jeering tone, “the knack of seeming serious and religious, when the moment demands it?”

“It would cost me nothing,” said Lambourne, “to say yes—but to speak on the square, I must needs say no. If you want a hypocrite, you may take Anthony Foster, who, from his childhood, had some sort of phantom haunting him, which he called religion, though it was that sort of godliness which always ended in being great gain. But I have no such knack of it.”

“Well,” replied Varney, “if thou hast no hypocrisy, hast thou not a nag here in the stable?”

“Ay, sir,” said Lambourne, “that shall take hedge and ditch with my lord duke’s best hunters. When I made a little mistake on Shooter’s Hill, and stopped an acient grazier, whose pouches were better lined than his brain-pan, the bonny bay nag carried me sheer off, in spite of the whole hue and cry.”

“Saddle him then, instantly, and attend me,” said Varney. “Leave thy clothes and baggage under charge of mine host, and I will conduct thee to a service, in which if thou do not better thyself, the fault shall not be fortune’s, but thine own.”

“Brave and hearty!” said Lambourne, “and I am mounted in an instant—Knave hostler, saddle my nag without the loss of one instant, as thou dost value the safety of thy noddle.—Pretty Cicely, take half this purse to comfort thee for my sudden departure.”

“Gogsnouns!” replied the father, “Cicely wants no such token from thee—Go away, Mike, and gather grace if thou canst, though I think thou goest not to the land where it grows.”

“Let me look at this Cicely of thine, mine host,” said Varney; “I have heard much talk of her beauty.”

“It is a sunburnt beauty,” said mine host, “well qualified to stand out rain and wind, but little calculated to please such critical gallants as yourself. She keeps her chamber, and cannot encounter the glance of such sunny-day courtiers, my noble guest.”

“Well, peace be with her, my good host,” answered Varney; “our horses are impatient—we bid you good day.”

“Does my nephew go with you, so please you?” said Gosling.

“Ay, such is his purpose,” answered Richard Varney.

“You are right—fully right,” replied mine host—“you are, I say, fully right, my kinsman. Thou hast got a gay horse—see thou light not unaware upon a halter—or if thou wilt needs be made immortal by means of a rope, which thy purpose of following this gentleman renders not unlikely, I charge thee to find a gallows as far from Cumnor as thou

conveniently mayst; and so I commend you to your saddle."

The master of the horse and his new retainer took horse accordingly, leaving the landlord to conclude his ill-omened farewell, to himself and at leisure; and set off together at a rapid pace, which prevented conversation until the ascent of a steep sandy hill permitted them to resume it.

"You are contented then," said Varney, to his companion, "to take court-service?"

"Ay, worshipful sir, if you like my terms as well as I like yours."

"And what are your terms?" demanded Varney.

"If I am to have a quick eye for my patron's interest, he must have a dull one towards my faults," said Lambourne.

"Ay," said Varney, "so they lie not so grossly open that he must needs break his shins over them."

"Agreed," said Lambourne. "Next, if I run down game, I must have the picking of the bones."

"That is but reason," replied Varney, "so that your betters are served before you."

"Good!" said Lambourne; "and it only remains to be said, that if the law and I quarrel, my patron must bear me out, for that is a chief point."

"Reason again," said Varney, "if the quarrel hath happened in your master's service."

"For the wage and so forth, I say nothing," replied Lambourne; "it is the secret guerdon that I must live by."

"Never fear," said Varney, "thou shalt have clothes and spending-money to ruffle it with the best of thy degree; for thou goest to a household where you have gold, as they say, by the eye."

"That jumps all with my humour," replied Michael Lambourne; "and it only remains that you tell me my master's name."

"My name is Master Richard Varney," answered his companion.

"But I mean," said Lambourne, "the name of the noble lord to whose service you are to prefer me."

"How, knave! art thou too good to call *me* master?" said Varney, hastily; "I would have thee bold to others, but not saucy with me."

"I crave your worship's pardon," said Lambourne; "but you seemed familiar with Anthony Foster; now I am familiar with Anthony myself."

"Thou art a shrewd knave, I see," replied Varney. "Mark me—I do indeed propose to introduce thee into a nobleman's household; but it is upon my person thou wilt chiefly wait, and upon my countenance that thou wilt depend. I am his master of horse—Thou wilt soon know his name—it is one that shakes the council and wields the state."

"By this light, a brave spell to conjure with," said Lambourne, "if a man would discover hidden treasures!"

"Used with discretion, it may prove so," replied Varney; "but mark—if thou conjure with it at thine own hand, it may raise a devil who will tear thee in fragments."

"Enough said," replied Lambourne; "I will not exceed my limits."

The travellers then resumed the rapid rate of travelling, which their discourse had interrupted, and

soon arrived at the royal park of Woodstock. This ancient possession of the crown of England was then very different from what it had been when it was the residence of the fair Rosamond, and the scene of Henry the Second's secret and illicit amours; and yet more unlike to the scene which it exhibits in the present day, when Blenheim House commemorates the victory of Marlborough, and no less the genius of Vanburgh, though decried in his own time by men of taste far inferior to his own. It was, in Elizabeth's time, an ancient mansion in bad repair, which had long ceased to be honoured with the royal residence, to the great impoverishment of the adjacent village. The inhabitants, however, had made several petitions to the queen to have the favour of the sovereign's countenance occasionally bestowed upon them; and upon this very business, ostensibly at least, was the noble lord, whom we have already introduced to our readers, a visitor at Woodstock.

Varney and Lambourne galloped without ceremony into the court-yard of the ancient and dilapidated mansion, which presented on that morning a scene of bustle which it had not exhibited for two reigns. Officers of the earl's household, liverymen and retainers, went and came with all the insolent fracas which attaches to their profession. The neigh of horses and the baying of hounds were heard; for my lord, in his occupation of inspecting and surveying the manor and demesne, was, of course, provided with the means of following his pleasure in the chase or park, said to have been the earliest that was enclosed in England, and which was well stocked with deer which had long roamed there unmolested. Several of the inhabitants of the village, in anxious hope of a favourable result from this unwonted visit, loitered about the court-yard, and awaited the great man's coming forth. Their attention was excited by the hasty arrival of Varney, and a murmur ran amongst them, "The earl's master of the horse!" while they hastened to bespeak favour by hastily unbonneting, and proffering to hold the bridle and stirrup of the favoured retainer and his attendant.

"Stand somewhat aloof, my masters!" said Varney, haughtily, "and let the domestics do their office."

The mortified peasants fell back at the signal; while Lambourne, who had his eye upon his superior's deportment, repelled the services of those who offered to assist him, with yet more discourtesy—"Stand back, Jack peasant, with a murrain to you, and let these knave footmen do their duty!"

While they gave their nags to the attendants of the household, and walked into the mansion with an air of superiority which long practice and consciousness of birth rendered natural to Varney, and which Lambourne endeavoured to imitate as well as he could, the poor inhabitants of Woodstock whispered to each other, "Well-a-day—God save us from all such misproud princexes! An the master be like the men, why the fiend may take all, and yet have no more than his due."

"Silence, good neighbours!" said the bailiff, "keep tongue betwixt teeth—we shall know more by and by.—But never will a lord come to Wood-

stock so welcome as bluff old King Harry! He would horsewhip a fellow one day with his own royal hand, and then fling him an handful of silver groats, with his own broad face on them, to 'noint the sore withal."

"Ay, rest be with him!" echoed the auditors; "it will be long ere this Lady Elizabeth horsewhip any of us."

"There is no saying," answered the bailiff. "Meanwhile, patience, good neighbours, and let us comfort ourselves by thinking that we deserve such notice at her grace's hands."

Meanwhile, Varney, closely followed by his new dependent, made his way to the hall, where men of more note and consequence than those left in the court-yard awaited the appearance of the earl, who as yet kept his chamber. All paid court to Varney, with more or less deference, as suited their own rank, or the urgency of the business which brought them to his lord's levee. To the general question of, "When comes my lord forth, Master Varney?" he gave brief answers, as, "See you not my boots? I am but just returned from Oxford, and know nothing of it," and the like, until the same query was put in a higher tone by a personage of more importance. "I will inquire at the chamberlain, Sir Thomas Copely," was the reply. The chamberlain, distinguished by his silver key, answered, that the earl only awaited Master Varney's return to come down, but that he would first speak with him in his private chamber. Varney, therefore, bowed to the company, and took leave, to enter his lord's apartment.

There was a murmur of expectation which lasted a few minutes, and was at length hushed by the opening of the folding-doors at the upper end of the apartment, through which the earl made his entrance, marshaled by his chamberlain and the steward of his family, and followed by Richard Varney. In his noble mien and princely features, men read nothing of that insolence which was practised by his dependents. His courtesies were indeed measured by the rank of those to whom they were addressed, but even the meanest person present had a share of his gracious notice. The inquiries which he made respecting the condition of the manor, of the queen's rights there, and of the advantages and disadvantages which might attend her occasional residence at the royal seat of Woodstock, seemed to show that he had most earnestly investigated the matter of the petition of the inhabitants, and with a desire to forward the interest of the place.

"Now the lord love his noble countenance," said the bailiff, who had thrust himself into the presence-chamber; "he looks somewhat pale. I warrant him he hath spent the whole night in perusing our memorial. Master Toughyarn, who took six months to draw it up, said it would take a week to understand it; and see if the earl hath not knocked the marrow out of it in twenty-four hours!"

The earl then acquainted them that he should move their sovereign to honour Woodstock occasionally with her residence during her royal progresses, that the town and its vicinity might derive from her countenance and favour the same advantages as from those of her predecessors. Meanwhile, he rejoiced to be the expounder of her gracious

VOL. III.

pleasure, in assuring them that, for the increase of trade and encouragement of the worthy burgesses of Woodstock, her majesty was minded to erect the town into a staple for wool.

This joyful intelligence was received with the acclamations not only of the better sort who were admitted to the audience-chamber, but of the commons who waited without.

The freedom of the corporation was presented to the earl upon knee by the magistrates of the place, together with a purse of gold pieces, which the earl handed to Varney, who, on his part, gave a share to Lambourne, as the most acceptable earnest of his new service.

The earl and his retinue took horse soon after, to return to court, accompanied by the shouts of the inhabitants of Woodstock, who made the old oaks ring with re-echoing, "Long live Queen Elizabeth, and the noble Earl of Leicester!" The urbanity and courtesy of the earl even threw a gleam of popularity over his attendants, as their haughty deportment had formerly obscured that of their master; and men shouted, "Long life to the earl, and to his gallant followers!" as Varney and Lambourne, each in his rank, rode proudly through the streets of Woodstock.

CHAPTER VIII.

Host. I will hear you, Master Fenton;
And I will, at least, keep your counsel.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

It becomes necessary to return to the detail of those circumstances which accompanied, and indeed occasioned, the sudden disappearance of Tressilian from the sign of the Black Bear, at Cumnor. It will be recollected that this gentleman, after his encounter with Varney, had returned to Giles Gosling's caravansary, where he shut himself up in his own chamber, demanded pen, ink, and paper, and announced his purpose to remain private for the day; in the evening he appeared again in the public room, where Michael Lambourne, who had been on the watch for him, agreeably to his engagement to his old friend and associate Foster, endeavoured to renew his acquaintance with him, and hoped he retained no unfriendly recollection of the part he had taken in the morning's scuffle.

But Tressilian repelled his advances firmly, though with civility—"Master Lambourne," he said, "I trust I have recompensed to your pleasure the time you have wasted on me. Under the show of wild bluntness which you exhibit, I know you have sense enough to understand me, when I say frankly, that the object of our temporary acquaintance having been accomplished, we must be strangers to each other in future."

"*Voto!*" said Lambourne, twirling his whiskers with one hand, and grasping the hilt of his weapon with the other; "if I thought that this usage was meant to insult me"—

"You would bear it with discretion, doubtless," replied Tressilian, "as you must do at any rate. You know too well the distance that is betwixt us,

to require me to explain myself farther—Good evening.”

So saying, he turned his back upon his former companion, and entered into discourse with the landlord. Michael Lambourne felt strongly disposed to bully; but his wrath died away in a few incoherent oaths and ejaculations, and he sank unresistingly under the ascendancy which superior spirits possess over persons of his habits and description. He remained moody and silent in a corner of the apartment, paying the most marked attention to every motion of his late companion, against whom he began now to nourish a quarrel on his own account, which he trusted to avenge by the execution of Varney's directions. The hour of supper arrived, and was followed by that of repose, when Tressilian, like others, retired to his sleeping apartment.

He had not been in bed long, when the train of sad reveries, which supplied the place of rest in his disturbed mind, was suddenly interrupted by the jar of a door on its hinges, and a light was seen to glimmer in the apartment. Tressilian, who was as brave as steel, sprang from his bed at this alarm, and had laid hand upon his sword, when he was prevented from drawing it by a voice which said, “Be not too rash with your rapier, Master Tressilian—It is I, your host, Giles Gosling.”

At the same time, unshrouding the dark lantern, which had hitherto only emitted an indistinct glimmer, the goodly aspect and figure of the landlord of the Black Bear was visibly presented to his astonished guest.

“What mummery is this, mine host?” said Tressilian; “have you supped as jollily as last night, and so mistaken your chamber? or is midnight a time for masquerading in your guest's lodging?”

“Master Tressilian,” replied mine host, “I know my place and my time as well as e'er a merry landlord in England. But here has been my hang-dog kinsman watching you as close as ever cat watched a mouse; and here have you, on the other hand, quarreled and fought, either with him or with some other person, and I fear that danger will come of it.”

“Go to, thou art but a fool, man,” said Tressilian; “thy kinsman is beneath my resentment; and besides, why shouldst thou think I had quarreled with any one whomsoever?”

“Oh! sir,” replied the innkeeper, “there was a red spot on thy very cheek-bone, which boded of a late brawl, as sure as the conjunction of Mars and Saturn threatens misfortune—and when you returned, the buckles of your girdle were brought forward, and your step was quick and hasty, and all things showed your hand and your hilt had been lately acquainted.”

“Well, good mine host, if I have been obliged to draw my sword,” said Tressilian, “why should such a circumstance fetch thee out of thy warm bed at this time of night? Thou seest the mischief is all over.”

“Under favour, that is what I doubt. Anthony Foster is a dangerous man, defended by strong court patronage, which hath borne him out in matters of very deep concernment. And then, my kinsman—why, I have told you what he is, and if these two

old cronies have made up their old acquaintance, I would not, my worshipful guest, that it should be at thy cost. I promise you, Mike Lambourne has been making very particular inquiries at mine hostler, when and which way you ride. Now, I would have you think, whether you may not have done or said something for which you may be waylaid, and taken at disadvantage.”

“Thou art an honest man, mine host,” said Tressilian, after a moment's consideration, “and I will deal frankly with thee. If these men's malice is directed against me—as I deny not but it may—it is because they are the agents of a more powerful villain than themselves.”

“You mean Master Richard Varney, do you not?” said the landlord; “he was at Cumnor Place yesterday, and came not thither so private but what he was espied by one who told me.”

“I mean the same, mine host.”

“Then, for God's sake, worshipful Master Tressilian,” said honest Gosling, “look well to yourself. This Varney is the protector and patron of Anthony Foster, who holds under him, and by his favour, some lease of yonder mansion and the park. Varney got a large grant of the lands of the Abbey of Abingdon, and Cumnor Place amongst others, from his master, the Earl of Leicester. Men say he can do every thing with him, though I hold the earl too good a nobleman to employ him as some men talk of.—And then the earl can do any thing (that is any thing right or fitting) with the queen, God bless her; so you see what an enemy you have made yourself.”

“Well—it is done, and I cannot help it,” answered Tressilian.

“Uds precious! but it must be helped in some manner!” said the host. “Richard Varney—why, what between his influence with my lord, and his pretending to so many old and vexatious claims in right of the abbot here, men fear almost to mention his name, much more to set themselves against his practices. You may judge by our discourses the last night. Men said their pleasure of Tony Foster, but not a word of Richard Varney, though all men judge him to be at the bottom of yonder mystery about the pretty wench. But perhaps you know more of that matter than I do, for women, though they wear not swords, are occasion for many a blade's exchanging a sheath of neat's leather for one of flesh and blood.”

“I do indeed know more of that poor unfortunate lady than thou doest, my friendly host; and so bankrupt am I, at this moment, of friends and advice, that I will willingly make a counsellor of thee, and tell thee the whole history, the rather that I have a favour to ask when my tale is ended.”

“Good Master Tressilian,” said the landlord, “I am but a poor innkeeper, little able to adjust or counsel such a guest as yourself. But as sure as I have risen decently above the world, by giving good measure and reasonable charges, I am an honest man; and as such, if I may not be able to assist you, I am not, at least, capable to abuse your confidence. Say away, therefore, as confidently as if you spoke to your father; and thus far at least be certain, that my curiosity, for I will not deny that

which belongs to my calling, is joined to a reasonable degree of discretion."

"I doubt it not, mine host," answered Tressilian; and while his auditor remained in anxious expectation, he meditated for an instant how he should commence his narrative. "My tale," he at length said, "to be quite intelligible, must begin at some distance back.—You have heard of the battle of Stoke, my good host, and perhaps of old Sir Roger Robsart, who, in that battle, valiantly took part with Henry VII., the queen's grandfather, and routed the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Geraldin and his wild Irish, and the Flemings, whom the Duchess of Burgundy had sent over, in the quarrel of Lambert Simnel?"

"I remember both one and the other," said Giles Gosling, "it is sung of a dozen times a-week on my ale-bench below.—Sir Roger Robsart of Devon—O, ay,—'tis him of whom minstrels sing to this hour,

He was the flower of Stoke's red field,
When Martin Swart on ground lay slain;
In raging rout he never reel'd,
But like a rock did firm remain.

Ay, and then there was Martin Swart I have heard my grandfather talk of, and of the jolly Almain whom he commanded, with their slashed doublets and quaint hose, all frounced with ribbons above the nether stocks. Here's a song goes of Martin Swart, too, an I had but memory for it:—

Martin Swart and his men,
Saddle them, saddle them,
Martin Swart and his men,
Saddle them well."

"True, good mine host—the day was long talked of; but if you sing so loud, you will awake more listeners than I care to commit my confidence unto."

"I crave pardon, my worshipful guest," said mine host, "I was oblivious. When an old song comes across us merry old knights of the spiggot, it runs away with discretion."

"Well, mine host, my grandfather, like some other Cornishmen, kept a warm affection to the house of York, and espoused the quarrel of this Simnel, assuming the title of Earl of Warwick, as the county afterwards, in great numbers, countenanced the cause of Perkiu Warbeck, calling himself the Duke of York. My grandsire joined Simnel's standard, and was taken fighting desperately at Stoke, where most of the leaders of that unhappy army were slain in their harness. The good knight, to whom he rendered himself, Sir Roger Robsart, protected him from the immediate vengeance of the king, and dismissed him without ransom. But he was unable to guard him from other penalties of his rashness, being the heavy fines by which he was impoverished, according to Henry's mode of weakening his enemies. The good knight did what he might to mitigate the distresses of my ancestor; and their friendship became so strict, that my father was bred up as the sworn brother and intimate of the present Sir Hugh Robsart, the only son of Sir Roger, and the heir of his honest, and generous, and hospitable temper, though not equal to him in martial achievements."

"I have heard of good Sir Hugh Robsart," interrupted the host, "many a time and oft. His huntsman and sworn servant, Will Badger, hath spoke of him an hundred times in this very house—a jovial knight he is, and hath loved hospitality and open housekeeping more than the present fashion, which lays as much gold-lace on the seams of a doublet as would feed a dozen of tall fellows with beef and ale for a twelvemonth, and let them have their evening at the alehouse once a week, to do good to the publican."

"If you have seen Will Badger, mine host," said Tressilian, "you have heard enough of Sir Hugh Robsart; and, therefore, I will but say, that the hospitality you boast of hath proved somewhat detrimental to the estate of his family, which is perhaps of the less consequence, as he has but one daughter to whom to bequeath it. And here begins my share in the tale. Upon my father's death, now several years since, the good Sir Hugh would willingly have made me his constant companion. There was a time, however, at which I felt the kind knight's excessive love for field-sports detained me from studies, by which I might have profited more; but I ceased to regret the leisure which gratitude and hereditary friendship compelled me to bestow on these rural avocations. The exquisite beauty of Mistress Amy Robsart, as she grew up from childhood to woman, could not escape one whom circumstances obliged to be so constantly in her company—I loved her, in short, my host, and her father saw it."

"And crossed your true loves, no doubt?" said mine host; "it is the way in all such cases, and I judge it must have been so in your instance, from the heavy sigh you uttered even now."

"The cause was different, mine host. My suit was highly approved by the generous Sir Hugh Robsart—it was his daughter who was cold to my passion."

"She was the more dangerous enemy of the two," said the innkeeper. "I fear your suit proved a cold one."

"She yielded me her esteem," said Tressilian, "and seemed not unwilling that I should hope it might ripen into a warmer passion. There was a contract of future marriage executed betwixt us, upon her father's intercession; but to comply with her anxious request, the execution was deferred for a twelvemonth. During this period, Richard Varney appeared in the country, and, availing himself of some distant family connexion with Sir Hugh Robsart, spent much of his time in his company, until, at length, he almost lived in the family."

"That could bode no good to the place he honoured with his residence," said Gosling.

"No, by the rood!" replied Tressilian. "Misunderstanding and misery followed his presence, yet so strangely, that I am at this moment at a loss to trace the gradations of their encroachment upon a family, which had, till then, been so happy. For a time Amy Robsart received the attentions of this man Varney with the indifference attached to common courtesies; then followed a period in which she seemed to regard him with dislike, and even with disgust; and then an extraordinary species of

connexion appeared to grow up betwixt them. Varney dropped those airs of pretension and gallantry, which had marked his former approaches; and Amy, on the other hand, seemed to renounce the ill-disguised disgust with which she had regarded them. They seemed to have more of privacy and confidence together than I fully liked; and I suspected that they met in private, where there was less restraint than in our presence. Many circumstances, which I noticed but little at the time—for I deemed her heart as open as her angelic countenance—have since arisen on my memory, to convince me of their private understanding. But I need not detail them—the fact speaks for itself. She vanished from her father's house—Varney disappeared at the same time—and this very day I have seen her in the character of his paramour, living in the house of his sordid dependent Foster, and visited by him, muffled, and by a secret entrance."

"And this, then, is the cause of your quarrel? Methinks, you should have been sure that the fair lady either desired or deserved your interference."

"Mine host," answered Tressilian, "my father, such I must ever consider Sir Hugh Robsart, sits at home struggling with his grief, or if so far recovered, vainly attempting to drown, in the practice of his field-sports, the recollection that he had once a daughter—a recollection which ever and anon breaks from him under circumstances the most pathetic. I could not brook the idea that he should live in misery, and Amy in guilt; and I endeavoured to seek her out, with the hope of inducing her to return to her family. I have found her, and when I have either succeeded in my attempt, or have found it altogether unavailing, it is my purpose to embark for the Virginia voyage."

"Be not so rash, good sir," replied Giles Gosling; "and cast not yourself away because a woman—to be brief—is a woman, and changes her lovers like her suit of ribbons, with no better reason than mere phantasy. And ere we probe this matter further, let me ask you what circumstances of suspicion directed you so truly to this lady's residence, or rather to her place of concealment?"

"The last is the better chosen word, mine host," answered Tressilian; "and touching your question, the knowledge that Varney held large grants of the demesnes formerly belonging to the monks of Abingdon, directed me to this neighbourhood; and your nephew's visit to his old comrade Foster gave me the means of conviction on the subject."

"And what is now your purpose, worthy sir?—excuse my freedom in asking the question so broadly."

"I purpose, mine host," said Tressilian, "to renew my visit to the place of her residence to-morrow, and to seek a more detailed communication with her than I have had to-day. She must, indeed, be widely changed from what she once was, if my words make no impression upon her."

"Under your favour, Master Tressilian," said the landlord, "you can follow no such course. The lady, if I understand you, has already rejected your interference in the matter."

"It is but too true," said Tressilian; "I cannot deny it."

"Then, marry, by what right or interest do you process a compulsory interference with her inclination, disgraceful as it may be to herself and to her parents? Unless my judgment gulls me, those under whose protection she has thrown herself, would have small hesitation to reject your interference, even if it were that of a father or brother; but as a discarded lover, you expose yourself to be repelled with the strong hand, as well as with scorn. You can apply to no magistrate for aid or countenance; and you are hunting, therefore, a shadow in water, and will only (excuse my plainness) come by ducking and danger in attempting to catch it."

"I will appeal to the Earl of Leicester," said Tressilian, "against the infamy of his favourite.—He courts the severe and strict sect of puritans—He dare not, for sake of his own character, refuse my appeal, even although he were destitute of the principles of honour and nobleness with which fame invests him. Or I will appeal to the queen herself."

"Should Leicester," said the landlord, "be disposed to protect his dependent (as indeed Varney is said to be very confident with him) the appeal to the queen may bring them both to reason. Her majesty is strict in such matters, and (if it be not treason to speak it) will rather, it is said, pardon a dozen courtiers for falling in love with herself, than one for giving preference to another woman. Coraggio then, my brave guest! for if thou layest a petition from Sir Hugh at the foot of the throne, bucklered by the story of thine own wrongs, the favourite earl dared as soon leap into the Thames at the fullest and deepest, as offer to protect Varney in a cause of this nature. But to do this with any chance of success, you must go formally to work, and without staying here to tilt with the master of horse to a privy councillor, and expose yourself to the dagger of his cameradoes, you should hie you to Devonshire, get a petition drawn up for Sir Hugh Robsart, and make as many friends as you can to forward your interest at court."

"You have spoken well, mine host," said Tressilian, "and I will profit by your advice, and leave you to-morrow early."

"Nay, leave me to-night, sir, before to-morrow comes," said the landlord. "I never prayed for a guest's arrival more eagerly than I do to have you safely gone. My kinsman's destiny is most like to be hanged for something, but I would not that the cause were the murder of an honoured guest of mine. 'Better ride safe in the dark,' says the proverb, 'than in day-light with a murderer at your elbow.' Come, sir, I move you for your own safety. Your horse and all is ready, and here is your score."

"It is somewhat under a noble," said Tressilian, giving one to the host; "give the balance to pretty Cicely, your daughter, and the servants of the house."

"They shall taste of your bounty, sir," said Gosling, "and you should taste of my daughter's lips in grateful acknowledgment, but at this hour they cannot fill the porch to greet your departure."

"Do not trust your daughter too far with your guests, my good landlord," said Tressilian.

"O, sir, we will keep measure; but I wonder not that you are jealous of them all.—May I crave to

know with what aspect the fair lady at the Place yesterday received you?"

"I own," said Tressilian, "it was angry as well as confused, and affords me little hope that she is yet awakened from her unhappy delusion."

"In that case, sir, I see not why you should play the champion of a wench that will none of you, and incur the resentment of a favourite's favourite, as dangerous a monster as ever a knight-adventurer encountered in the old story books."

"You do me wrong—gross wrong," said Tressilian; "I do not desire that Amy should ever turn thought upon me more. Let me but see her restored to her father, and all I have to do in Europe—perhaps in the world—is over and ended."

"A wiser resolution were to drink a cup of sack, and forget her," said the landlord. "But five-and-twenty and fifty look on those matters with other eyes, especially when one case of peepers is set in the skull of a young gallant, and the other in those of an old publican. I pity you, Master Tressilian, but I see not how I can aid you in the matter."

"Only thus far, mine host," replied Tressilian—"Keep a watch on the motions of those at the Place, which thou canst easily learn without suspicion, as all men's news fly to the ale-bench; and be pleased to communicate the tidings in writing to such person, and to no other, who shall bring you this ring as a special token—look at it—it is of value, and I will freely bestow it on you."

"Nay, sir," said the landlord, "I desire no recompense—But it seems an unadvised course in me, being in a public line, to connect myself in a matter of this dark and perilous nature.—I have no interest in it."

"You, and every father in the land, who would have his daughter released from the snares of shame, and sin, and misery, have an interest deeper than aught concerning earth only could create."

"Well, sir," said the host, "these are brave words; and I do pity in my soul the frank-hearted old gentleman, who has minished his estate in good housekeeping for the honour of his country, and now has his daughter, who should be the stay of his age, and so forth, whisked up by such a kite as Varney is. And though your part in the matter is somewhat of the wildest, yet I will e'en be a madcap for company, and help you in your honest attempt to get back the good man's child, so far as being your faithful intelligencer can serve. And as I shall be true to you, I pray you to be trusty to me, and keep my secret; for it were bad for the custom of the Black Bear, should it be said its keeper interfered in such matters. Varney has interest enough with the justices to dismount my noble emblem from the post on which he swings so gallantly, to call in my license, and ruin me from garret to cellar."

"Do not doubt my secrecy, mine host," said Tressilian; "I will retain, besides, the deepest sense of thy service, and of the risk thou doest run—remember the ring is my sure token.—And now, farewell—for it was thy wise advice that I should tarry here as short a time as may be."

"Follow me, then, Sir Guest," said the landlord, "and tread as gently as if eggs were under your foot, instead of deal boards.—No one must know where or how you departed."

By the aid of his dark lantern he conducted Tressilian, as soon as he had made himself ready for his journey, through a long intricacy of passages, which opened to an outer court, and from thence to a remote stable, where he had already placed his guest's horse. He then aided him to fasten on the saddle the small portmantle which contained his necessities, opened a postern-door, and with a hearty shake of the hand, and a reiteration of his promise to attend to what went on at Cumnor Place, he dismissed his guest to his solitary journey.

CHAPTER IX.

Far in the lane a lonely hut he found,
No tenant ventured on the unwholesome ground;
Here smokes his forge, he bares his sinewy arm,
And early strokes the sounding anvil warm;
Around his shop the steely sparkles flew,
As for the steed he shaped the bending shoe.

GAY'S *Trivia*.

As it was deemed proper by the traveller himself, as well as by Giles Gosling, that Tressilian should avoid being seen in the neighbourhood of Cumnor by those whom accident might make early stirrers, the landlord had given him a route, consisting of various bye-ways and lanes, which he was to follow in succession, and which, all the turns and short-cuts duly observed, was to conduct him to the public road to Marlborough.

But, like counsel of every other kind, this species of direction is much more easily given than followed; and what betwixt the intricacy of the way, the darkness of the night, Tressilian's ignorance of the country, and the sad and perplexing thoughts with which he had to contend, his journey proceeded so slowly, that morning found him only in the Vale of Whitehorse, memorable for the defeat of the Danes in former days, with his horse deprived of a fore-foot shoe, an accident which threatened to put a stop to his journey, by laming the animal. The residence of a smith was his first object of inquiry, in which he received little satisfaction from the dulness or sullenness of one or two peasants, early bound for their labour, who gave brief and indifferent answers to his questions on the subject. Anxious at length, that the partner of his journey should suffer as little as possible from the unfortunate accident, Tressilian dismounted, and led his horse in the direction of a little hamlet, where he hoped either to find or hear tidings of such an artificer as he now wanted. Through a deep and muddy lane, he at length waded on to the place, which proved only an assemblage of five or six miserable huts, about the doors of which one or two people, whose appearance seemed as rude as that of their dwellings, were beginning the toils of the day. One cottage, however, seemed of rather superior aspect, and the old dame, who was sweeping her threshold, appeared something less rude than her neighbours. To her, Tressilian addressed the oft-repeated question, whether there was a smith in this neighbourhood, or any place where he could refresh his horse? The dame looked him in the face with a peculiar expression, as she replied, "Smith! ay,

truly, is there a smith—what wouldst ha' wi' un, mon?"

"To shoe my horse, good dame," answered Tressilian: "you may see that he has thrown a fore-foot shoe."

"Master Holiday!" exclaimed the dame, without returning any direct answer—"Master Herasmus Holiday, come and speak to mon, and please you."

"*Favete linguis*," answered a voice from within; "I cannot now come forth, Gammer Sludge, being in the very sweetest bit of my morning studies."

"Nay, but, good now Master Holiday, come ye out, do ye—Here's a mon would to Wayland Smith, and I care not to show him way to devil—his horse hath cast shoe."

"*Quid mihi cum caballo?*" replied the man of learning from within; "I think there is but one wise man in the hundred, and they cannot shoe a horse without him!"

And forth came the honest pedagogue, for such his dress bespoke him. A long, lean, shambling, stooping figure, was surmounted by a head thatched with lank black hair somewhat inclining to grey. His features had the cast of habitual authority, which I suppose Dionysius carried with him from the throne to the schoolmaster's pulpit, and bequeathed as a legacy to all of the same profession. A black buckram cassock was gathered at his middle with a belt, at which hung, instead of knife or weapon, a goodly leathern pen-and-ink case. His ferula was stuck on the other side, like Harlequin's wooden sword; and he carried in his hand the tattered volume which he had been busily perusing.

On seeing a person of Tressilian's appearance, which he was better able to estimate than the country-folks had been, the schoolmaster unbanned, and accosted him with, "*Salve, domine. Intelligisne linguam Latinam?*"

Tressilian mustered his learning to reply, "*Linguae Latinae haud penitus ignarus, venia tua, domine eruditissime, vernaculam libentius loquor.*"

The Latin reply had upon the schoolmaster the effect which the mason's sign is said to produce on the brethren of the trowel. He was at once interested in the learned traveller, listened with gravity to his story of a tired horse and a lost shoe, and then replied with solemnity, "It may appear a simple thing, most worshipful, to reply to you that there dwells, within a brief mile of these *tuguria*, the best *faber ferrarius*, the most accomplished blacksmith that ever nailed iron upon horse. Now, were I to say so, I warrant me you would think yourself *compos voti*, or, as the vulgar have it, a made man."

"I should at least," said Tressilian, "have a direct answer to a plain question, which seems difficult to be obtained in this country."

"It is a mere sending of a sinful soul to the evil un," said the old woman, "the sending a living creature to Wayland Smith."

"Peace, Gammer Sludge?" said the pedagogue; "*pauca verba*, Gammer Sludge; look to the furmity, Gammer Sludge, *curetur jentaculum*, Gammer Sludge, this gentleman is none of thy gossips." Then

turning to Tressilian, he resumed his lofty tone, "And so, most worshipful, you would really think yourself *felix bis terque*, should I point out to you the dwelling of this same smith?"

"Sir," replied Tressilian, "I should in that case have all that I want at present—a horse fit to carry me—out of hearing of your learning." The last words he muttered to himself.

"*O, caeca mens mortalium!*" said the learned man; "well was it sung by Junius Juvenalis, '*numinibus vota exaudita malignis.*'"

"Learned magister," said Tressilian, "your erudition so greatly exceeds my poor intellectual capacity, that you must excuse my seeking elsewhere for information which I can better understand."

"There again now," replied the pedagogue, "how fondly you fly from him that would instruct you! Truly says Quintilian"—

"I pray, sir, let Quintilian be for the present, and answer, in a word, and in English, if your learning can condescend so far, whether there is any place here where I can have opportunity to refresh my horse, until I can have him shod?"

"Thus much courtesy, sir," said the schoolmaster, "I can readily render you, that although there is in this poor hamlet (*nostra paupera regna*) no regular hospitium, as my namesake Erasmus calleth it, yet, forasmuch as you are somewhat embued, or at least tinged as it were, with good letters, I will use my interest with the good woman of the house to accommodate you with a platter of furmity—an wholesome food, for which I have found no Latin phrase—your horse shall have a share of the cow-house, with a bottle of sweet hay, in which the good woman Sludge so much abounds, that it may be said of her cow, *faenum habet in cornu*; and if it please you to bestow on me the pleasure of your company, the banquet shall cost you *ne semissem quidem*, so much is Gammer Sludge bound to me for the pains I have bestowed on the top and bottom of her hopeful heir Dickie, whom I have painfully made to travel through the accidens."

"Now, God yield ye for it, Mr Herasmus," said the good Gammer, "and grant that little Dickie may be the better for his accident!—and for the rest, if the gentleman list to stay, breakfast shall be on the board in the wringing of a dish-clout; and for horse-meat and man's-meat, I bear no such base mind as to ask a penny."

Considering the state of his horse, Tressilian, upon the whole, saw no better course than to accept the invitation thus learnedly made and hospitably confirmed, and take chance that when the good pedagogue had exhausted every species of conversation, he might possibly condescend to tell him where he could find the smith they spoke of. He entered the hut accordingly, and sat down with the learned Magister Erasmus Holiday, partook of his furmity, and listened to his learned account of himself for a good half hour, ere he could get him to talk upon any other topic. The reader will readily excuse our accompanying this man of learning into all the details with which he favoured Tressilian, of which the following sketch may suffice.

He was born at Hogs Norton, where, according to popular saying, the pigs play upon the organ; a

proverb which he interpreted allegorically, as having reference to the herd of Epicurus, of which Horace confessed himself a partner. His name of Erasmus, he derived partly from his father having been the son of a renowned washerwoman, who had held that great scholar in clean linen all the while he was at Oxford; a task of some difficulty, as he was only possessed of two shirts, "the one," as she expressed herself, "to wash the other." The vestiges of one of these *camiciæ*, as Master Holiday boasted, were still in his possession, having fortunately been detained by his grandmother to cover the balance of her bill. But he thought there was a still higher and overruling cause for his having had the name of Erasmus conferred on him, namely, the secret presentiment of his mother's mind, that, in the babe to be christened, was a hidden genius, which should one day lead him to rival the fame of the great scholar of Amsterdam. The schoolmaster's surname led him as far into dissertation as his christian appellative. He was inclined to think that he bore the name of Holiday *quasi lucus a non lucendo*, because he gave such few holidays to his school; "Hence," said he, "the schoolmaster is termed, classically, *Ludi Magister*, because he deprives boys of their play." And yet, on the other hand, he thought it might bear a very different interpretation, and refer to his own exquisite art in arranging pageants, morris-dances, May-day festivities, and such like holiday delights, for which he assured Tressilian he had positively the purest and the most inventive brain in England; insomuch, that his cunning in framing such pleasures had made him known to many honourable persons, both in country and court, and especially to the noble Earl of Leicester—"And although he may now seem to forget me," he said, "in the multitude of state affairs, yet I am well assured, that had he some pretty pastime to array for entertainment of the queen's grace, horse and man would be seeking the humble cottage of Erasmus Holiday. *Parvo contentus*, in the meanwhile, I hear my pupils parse, and construe, worshipful sir, and drive away my time with the aid of the muses. And I have at all times, when in correspondence with foreign scholars, subscribed myself Erasmus ab Die Fausto, and have enjoyed the distinction due to the learned under that title; witness the erudite Diedrichus Buckerschockius, who dedicated to me under that title his treatise on the letter *Tau*. In fine, sir, I have been a happy and distinguished man."

"Long may it be so, sir," said the traveller; "but permit me to ask, in your own learned phrase, *Quid hoc ad Iphyli boves*, what has all this to do with the shoeing of my poor nag?"

"*Festina lente*," said the man of learning, "we will presently come to that point. You must know that some two or three years past, there came to these parts one who called himself Doctor Doboobie, although it may be he never wrote even *Magister artium*, save in right of his hungry belly. Or it may be, that if he had any degrees, they were of the devil's giving, for he was what the vulgar call a white witch—a cunning man, and such like.—Now, good sir, I perceive you are impatient; but if a

man tell not his tale his own way, how have you warrant that he can tell it yours?"

"Well, then, learned sir, take your way," answered Tressilian; "only let us travel at a sharper pace, for my time is somewhat of the shortest."

"Well, sir," resumed Erasmus Holiday, with the most provoking perseverance, "I will not say that this same Demetrius, for so he wrote himself when in foreign parts, was an actual conjurer, but certain it is, that he professed to be a brother of the mystical order of the Rosy Cross, a disciple of Geber (*ex nomine cujus venit verbum vernaculum*, gibberish). He cured wounds by salving the weapon instead of the sore—told fortunes by palmistry—discovered stolen goods by the sieve and shears—gathered the right maddow and the male-fern seed, through use of which men walk invisible—pretended some advances towards the panacea, or universal elixir, and affected to convert good lead into sorry silver."

"In other words," said Tressilian, "he was a quack salver and common cheat; but what has all this to do with my nag, and the shoe which he has lost?"

"With your worshipful patience," replied the diffusive man of letters, "you shall understand that presently—*patientia* then, right worshipful, which word, according to our Marcus Tullius, is '*difficilium rerum diurna perpessio*.' This same Demetrius Doboobie, after dealing with the country, as I have told you, began to acquire fame *inter magnates*, among the prime men of the land, and there is likelihood he might have aspired to great matters, had not, according to vulgar fame (for I aver not the thing as according with my certain knowledge), the devil claimed his right one dark night, and flown off with Demetrius, who was never seen or heard of afterwards. Now here comes the *medulla*, the very marrow of my tale. This Doctor Doboobie had a servant, a poor snake, whom he employed in trimming his furnace, regulating it by just measure—compounding his drugs—tracing his circles—cajoling his patients, *et sic de cæteris*.—Well, right worshipful, the doctor being removed thus strangely, and in a way which struck the whole country with terror, this poor Zany thinks to himself, in the words of Maro, '*Uno avulso, non deficit alter*;' and, even as a tradesman's apprentice sets himself up in his master's shop when he is dead, or hath retired from business, so doth this Wayland assume the dangerous trade of his defunct master. But although, most worshipful sir, the world is ever prone to listen to the pretensions of such unworthy men, who are, indeed, mere *salim banqui* and *charlatani*, though usurping the style and skill of doctors of medicine, yet the pretensions of this poor Zany, this Wayland, were too gross to pass on them, nor was there a mere rustic, a villager, who was not ready to accost him in the sense of Persius, though in their own rugged words,—

Diluis helleborum, certo compescere puncto
Nescius examen? vetat hoc natura medendi—

which I have thus rendered in a poor paraphrase of mine own,—

Wilt thou mix hellebore, who doth not know
How many grains doth to the mixture go?
The art of medicine this forbids, I trow.

Moreover, the evil reputation of the master, and his strange and doubtful end, or, at least, sudden disappearance, prevented any, excepting the most desperate of men, to seek any advice or opinion from the servant; wherefore, the poor vermin was likely at first to swarf for very hunger. But the devil that serves him, since the death of Demetrius or Doboobie, put him on a fresh device. This knave, whether from the inspiration of the devil, or from early education, shoes horses better than e'er a man betwixt us and Iceland; and so he gives up his practice on the bipeds, the two-legged and unfledged species, called mankind, and betakes him entirely to shoeing of horses."

"Indeed! and where does he lodge all this time?" said Tressilian. "And does he shoe horses well?—show me his dwelling presently."

The interruption pleased not the magister, who exclaimed, "*O, cæca mens hominum!* though, by the way, I used that quotation before. But I would the classics could afford me any sentiment, of power to stop those who are so willing to rush upon their own destruction. Hear but, I pray you, the conditions of this man," said he, in continuation, "ere you are so willing to place yourself within his danger"—

"A' takes no money for a's work," said the dame, who stood by, enraptured as it were with the fine words and learned apophthegms, which glided so fluently from her erudite inmate, Master Holiday. But this interruption pleased not the magister, more than that of the traveller.

"Peace," said he, "Gammer Sludge; know your place, if it be your will. *Sufflamina*, Gammer Sludge, and allow me to expound this matter to our worshipful guest.—Sir," said he, again addressing Tressilian, "this old woman speaks true, though in her own rude style; for certainly this *faber ferrarius*, or blacksmith, takes money of no one."

"And that is a sure sign he deals with Satan," said Dame Sludge; "since no good christian would ever refuse the wages of his labour."

"The old woman hath touched it again," said the pedagogue; "*rem acu tetigit*—she hath pricked it with her needle's point.—This Wayland takes no money, indeed, nor doth he show himself to any one."

"And can this madman, for such I hold him," said the traveller, "know aught like good skill of his trade?"

"O, sir, in that let us give the devil his due—Mulciber himself, with all his Cyclops, could hardly amend him. But assuredly there is little wisdom in taking counsel or receiving aid from one who is but too plainly in league with the author of evil."

"I must take my chance of that, good Master Holiday," said Tressilian, rising; "and as my horse must now have eaten his provender, I must needs thank you for your good cheer, and pray you to show me this man's residence, that I may have the means of proceeding on my journey."

"Ay, ay, do ye show him, Master Herasmus,"

said the old dame, who was, perhaps, desirous to get her house freed of her guest; "a' must needs go, when the devil drives."

"*Do manus*," said the magister, "I submit—taking the world to witness, that I have possessed this honourable gentleman with the full injustice which he has done and shall do to his own soul, if he becomes thus a trinketer with Satan. Neither will I go forth with our guest myself, but rather send my pupil. *Ricarde! Adsis, nebulo.*"

"Under your favour, not so," answered the old woman; "you may peril your own soul, if you list, but my son shall budge on no such errand; and I wonder at you, Domine Doctor, to propose such a piece of service for little Dickie."

"Nay, my good Gammer Sludge," answered the preceptor, "Ricardus shall go but to the top of the hill, and indicate with his digit to the stranger the dwelling of Wayland Smith. Believe not that any evil can come to him, he having read this morning, fasting, a chapter of the Septuagint, and, moreover, having had his lesson in the Greek Testament."

"Ay," said his mother, "and I have sown a sprig of witch's elm in the neck of up's doublet, ever since that foul thief has begun his practices on man and beast in these parts."

"And as he goes oft (as I hugely suspect) towards this conjurer for his own pastime, he may for once go thither, or near it, to pleasure us, and to assist this stranger. *Ergo, heus Ricarde! adsis quæso, mi didascale.*"

The pupil, thus affectionately invoked, at length came stumbling into the room; a queer, shambling, ill-made urchin, who, by his stunted growth, seemed about twelve or thirteen years old, though he was probably, in reality, a year or two older, with a caroty pate in huge disorder, a freckled sunburnt visage, with a snub nose, a long chin, and two peery grey eyes, which had a droll obliquity of vision, approaching to a squint, though perhaps not a decided one. It was impossible to look at the little man without some disposition to laugh, especially when Gammer Sludge, seizing upon and kissing him, in spite of his struggling and kicking in reply to her caresses, termed him her own precious pearl of beauty.

"*Ricarde*," said the preceptor, "you must forthwith (which is *profecto*) set forth so far as the top of the hill, and show this man of worship Wayland Smith's work-shop."

"A proper errand of a morning," said the boy, in better language than Tressilian expected; "and who knows but the devil may fly away with me before I come back?"

"Ay, marry may un," said Dame Sludge, "and you might have thought twice, Master Domine, ere you sent my dainty darling on arrow such errand. It is not for such doings I feed your belly and clothe your back, I warrant you."

"Pshaw—*nugæ*, good Gammer Sludge," answered the preceptor; "I insure you that Satan, if there be Satan in the case, shall not touch a thread of his garment; for Dickie can say his *pater* with the best, and may defend the foul fiend—*Eumenides Stygiumque nefas.*"

"Ay, and I have sowed a sprig of the mountain-

ash into his collar," said the good woman, "which will avail more than your clerkship, I wus; but for all that, it is ill to seek the devil or his mates either."

"My good boy," said Tressilian, who saw, from a grotesque sneer on Dickie's face, that he was more like to act upon his own bottom, than by the instruction of his elders, "I will give thee a silver groat, my pretty fellow, if you will but guide me to this man's forge."

The boy gave him a knowing side-look, which seemed to promise acquiescence, while at the same time he exclaimed, "I be your guide to Wayland Smith's! Why, man, did I not say that the devil might fly off with me, just as the kite there (looking to the window) is flying off with one of grandame's chicks."

"The kite! the kite!" exclaimed the old woman in return, and forgetting all other matters in her alarm, hastened to the rescue of her chicken as fast as her old legs could carry her.

"Now for it," said the urchin to Tressilian; "snatch your beaver, get out your horse, and have at the silver groat you spoke of."

"Nay, but tarry, tarry," said the preceptor, "*Sufflamina, Ricarde.*"

"Tarry yourself," said Dickie, "and think what answer you are to make to grannie for sending me post to the devil."

The teacher, aware of the responsibility he was incurring, bustled up in great haste to lay hold of the urchin, and to prevent his departure; but Dickie slipped through his fingers, bolted from the cottage, and sped him to the top of a neighbouring rising ground; while the preceptor, despairing, by well-taught experience, of recovering his pupil by speed of foot, had recourse to the most honied epithets the Latin vocabulary affords, to persuade his return. But to *mi anime, corculum meum*, and all such classical endearments, the truant turned a deaf ear, and kept frisking on the top of the rising ground like a goblin by moon-light, making signs to his new acquaintance, Tressilian, to follow him.

The traveller lost no time in getting out his horse, and departing to join his elfish guide, after half-forcing on the poor deserted teacher a recompense for the entertainment he had received, which partly allayed the terror he had for facing the return of the old lady of the mansion. Apparently this took place soon afterwards, for ere Tressilian and his guide had proceeded far on their journey, they heard the screams of a cracked female voice, intermingled with the classical objurgations of Master Erasmus Holiday. But Dickie Sludge, equally deaf to the voice of maternal tenderness and of magisterial authority, skipped on unconsciously before Tressilian, only observing, that "if they cried themselves hoarse, they might go lick the honey-pot, for he had eaten up all the honey-comb himself on yesterday even."

CHAPTER X.

There entering in, they found the goodman selfe
Full busylie unto his work ybent,
Who was to weete a wretched wearish elf,
With hollow eyes and rawbone cheeks forspent,
As if he had been long in prison pent.

SPENSER'S *Faery Queen*.

"ARE we far from the dwelling of this smith, my pretty lad?" said Tressilian to his young guide.

"How is it you call me?" said the boy, looking askew at him with his sharp grey eyes.

"I call you my pretty lad—is there any offence in that, my boy?"

"No—but were you with my grandame and Dominie Holiday, you might sing chorus to the old song of

We three
Tom-fools be."

"And why so, my little man?" said Tressilian.

"Because," answered the ugly urchin, "you are the only three ever called me pretty lad—Now my grandame does it because she is parcel blind by age, and whole blind by kindred—and my master, the poor Dominie, does it to curry favour, and have the fullest platter of furmity, and the warmest seat by the fire. But what you call me pretty lad for, you know best yourself."

"Thou art a sharp wag at least, if not a pretty one. But what do thy play-fellows call thee?"

"Hobgoblin," answered the boy, readily; "but for all that, I would rather have my own ugly viznomy than any of their jolterheads, that have no more brains in them than a brick-bat."

"Then you fear not this smith, whom you are going to see?"

"Me fear him!" answered the boy; "if he were the devil folks think him, I would not fear him; but though there is something queer about him he's no more a devil than you are, and that's what I would not tell to every one."

"And why do you tell it to me then, my boy," said Tressilian.

"Because you are another guess gentleman than those we see here every day," replied Dickie; "and though I am as ugly as sin, I would not have you think me an ass, especially as I may have a boon to ask of you one day."

"And what is that, my lad, whom I must not call pretty?" replied Tressilian.

"O, if I were to ask it just now," said the boy, "you would deny it me—but I will wait till we meet at court."

"At court, Richard! are you bound for court?" said Tressilian.

"Ay, ay, that's just like the rest of them," replied the boy; "I warrant me you think, what should such an ill-favoured, scrambling urchin do at court? But let Richard Sludge alone; I have not been cock of the roost here for nothing. I will make sharp wit mend foul feature."

"But what will your grandame say, and your tutor, Dominie Holiday?"

"E'en what they like," replied Dickie; "the one

has her chickens to reckon, and the other has his boys to whip; I would have given them the candle to hold long since, and shown this trumpery hamlet a fair pair of heels, but that dominie promises I should go with him to bear share in the next pageant he is to set forth, and they say there are to be great revels shortly."

"And whereabouts are they to be held, my little friend?" said Tressilian.

"O, at some castle far in the north," answered his guide—"a world's breadth from Berkshire. But our old dominie holds that they cannot go forward without him; and it may be he is right, for he has put in order many a fair pageant. He is not half the fool you would take him for, when he gets to work he understands; and so he can spout verses like a play-actor, when, God wot, if you set him to steal a goose's egg, he would be drubbed by the gander."

"And you are to play a part in his next show?" said Tressilian, somewhat interested by the boy's boldness of conversation, and shrewd estimate of character.

"In faith," said Richard Sludge, in answer, "he hath so promised me; and if he break his word, it will be the worse for him; for let me take the bit between my teeth, and turn my head down hill, and I will shake him off with a fall that may harm his bones—And I should not like much to hurt him neither," said he, "for the tiresome old fool has painfully laboured to teach me all he could.—But enough of that—here are we at Wayland Smith's forge-door."

"You jest, my little friend," said Tressilian; "here is nothing but a bare moor, and that ring of stones, with a great one in the midst, like a Cornish barrow."

"Ay, and that great flat stone in the midst, which lies across the top of these uprights," said the boy, "is Wayland Smith's counter, that you must tell down your money upon."

"What do you mean by such folly?" said the traveller, beginning to be angry with the boy, and vexed with himself for having trusted such a hair-brained guide.

"Why," said Dickie, with a grin, "you must tie your horse to that upright stone that has the ring in't, and then you must whistle three times, and lay me down your silver groat on that other flat stone, walk out of the circle, sit down on the west side of that little thicket of bushes, and take heed you look neither to right nor to left for ten minutes, or so long as you shall hear the hammer clink, and whenever it ceases, say your prayers for the space you could tell a hundred,—or count over a hundred, which will do as well—and then come into the circle, you will find your money gone and your horse shod."

"My money gone to a certainty!" said Tressilian; "but as for the rest—Hark ye, my lad, I am not your schoolmaster, but if you play off your waggery on me, I will take a part of his task off his hands, and punish you to purpose."

"Ay, when you can catch me!" said the boy, and presently took to his heels across the heath, with a velocity which baffled every attempt of Tressilian to overtake him, loaded as he was with his heavy

boots. Nor was it the least provoking part of the urchin's conduct, that he did not exert his utmost speed, like one who finds himself in danger, or who is frightened, but preserved just such a rate as to encourage Tressilian to continue the chase, and then darted away from him with the swiftness of the wind, when his pursuer supposed he had nearly run him down, doubling, at the same time, and winding, so as always to keep near the place from which he started.

This lasted until Tressilian, from very weariness, stood still, and was about to abandon the pursuit with a hearty curse on the ill-favoured urchin, who had engaged him in an exercise so ridiculous. But the boy, who had, as formerly, planted himself on the top of a hillock close in front, began to clap his long thin hands, point with his skinny fingers, and twist his wild and ugly features into such extravagant expression of laughter and derision, that Tressilian began half to doubt whether he had not in view an actual hobgoblin.

Provoked extremely, yet at the same time feeling an irresistible desire to laugh, so very odd were the boy's grimaces and gesticulations, he returned to his horse, and mounted him with the purpose of pursuing Dickie at more advantage.

The boy no sooner saw him mount his horse, than he hollo'd out to him, that rather than he should spoil his white-footed nag, he would come to him, on condition he would keep his fingers to himself.

"I will make no condition with thee, thou naughty varlet!" said Tressilian; "I will have thee at my mercy in a moment."

"Aha, master traveller," said the boy, "there is a marsh hard by would swallow all the horses of the queen's guard—I will into it, and see where you will go then.—You shall hear the bittern bump, and the wild-drake quack, ere you get hold of me without my consent, I promise you."

Tressilian looked out, and from the appearance of the ground behind the hillock, believed it might be as the boy said, and accordingly determined to strike up a peace with so light-footed and ready-witted an enemy—"Come down," he said, "thou mischievous brat!—Leave thy mopping and mowing, and come hither; I will do thee no harm, as I am a gentleman."

The boy answered his invitation with the utmost confidence, and danced down from his stance with a galliard sort of step, keeping his eye at the same time fixed on Tressilian's, who, once more dismounted, stood with his horse's bridle in his hand, breathless, and half exhausted with his fruitless exercise, though not one drop of moisture appeared on the freckled forehead of the urchin, which looked like a piece of dry and discoloured parchment, drawn tight across the brow of a fleshless skull.

"And tell me," said Tressilian, "why you use me thus, thou mischievous imp; or what your meaning is by telling me so absurd a legend as you wished but now to put on me! Or, rather show me, in good earnest, this smith's forge, and I will give thee what will buy thee apples through the whole winter."

"Were you to give me an orchard of apples," said Dickie Sludge, "I can guide thee no better than I

have done. Lay down the silver token on the flat stone—whistle three times—then come sit down on the western side of the thicket of gorse; I will sit by you, and give you free leave to wring my head off, unless you hear the smith at work within two minutes after we are seated."

"I may be tempted to take thee at thy word," said Tressilian, "if you make me do aught half so ridiculous for your own mischievous sport—however, I will prove your spell.—Here, then, I tie my horse to this upright stone—I must lay my silver groat here, and whistle three times, sayest thou?"

"Ay, but thou must whistle louder than an unfledged owzle," said the boy, as Tressilian, having laid down his money, and half ashamed of the folly he practised, made a careless whistle—"You must whistle louder than that, for who knows where the smith is that you call for?—He may be in the King of France's stables for what I know."

"Why, you said but now he was no devil," replied Tressilian.

"Man or devil," said Dickie, "I see that I must summon him for you;" and therewithal he whistled sharp and shrill, with an acuteness of sound that almost thrilled through Tressilian's brain—"That is what I call whistling," said he, after he had repeated the signal thrice; "and now to cover, to cover, or Whitefoot will not be shod this day."

Tressilian, musing what the upshot of this mummery was to be, yet satisfied there was to be some serious result, by the confidence with which the boy had put himself in his power, suffered himself to be conducted to that side of the little thicket of gorse and brushwood which was farthest from the circle of stones, and there sat down; and as it occurred to him that, after all, this might be a trick for stealing his horse, he kept his hand on the boy's collar, determined to make him hostage for its safety.

"Now, hush and listen!" said Dickie, in a low whisper; "you will soon hear the tack of a hammer that was never forged of earthly iron, for the stone it was made of was shot from the moon." And in effect Tressilian did immediately hear the light stroke of a hammer, as when a farrier is at work. The singularity of such a sound, in so very lonely a place, made him involuntarily shudder; but looking at the boy, and discovering, by the arch malicious expression of his countenance, that the urchin saw and enjoyed his slight tremor, he became convinced that the whole was a concerted stratagem, and determined to know by whom, or for what purpose, the trick was played off.

Accordingly, he remained perfectly quiet all the time that the hammer continued to sound, being about the space usually employed in fixing a horse-shoe. But the instant the sound ceased, Tressilian, instead of interposing the space of time which his guide had requested, started up with his sword in his hand, ran round the thicket, and confronted a man in a farrier's leathern apron, but otherwise fantastically attired in a bear-skin dressed with the fur on, and a cap of the same, which almost hid the sooty and begrimed features of the wearer—"Come back! come back!" cried the boy to Tressilian, "or you will be torn to pieces—no man lives that looks on him."—In fact, the invisible smith (now fully visible)

heaved up his hammer, and showed symptoms of doing battle.

But when the boy observed that neither his own entreaties nor the menaces of the farrier appeared to change Tressilian's purpose, but that, on the contrary, he confronted the hammer with his drawn sword, he exclaimed to the smith in turn, "Wayland, touch him not, or you will come by the worse!—the gentleman is a true gentleman, and a bold."

"So thou hast betrayed me, Flibbertigibbet!" said the smith; "it shall be the worse for thee."

"Be who thou wilt," said Tressilian, "thou art in no danger from me, so thou tell me the meaning of this practice, and why thou drivest thy trade in this mysterious fashion."

The smith, however, turning to Tressilian, exclaimed, in a threatening tone, "Who questions the Keeper of the Crystal Castle of Light, the Lord of the Green Lion, the Rider of the Red Dragon?—Hence!—avoid thee ere I summon Talpack with his fiery lance, to quell, crush, and consume!" These words he uttered with violent gesticulation, mouthing and flourishing his hammer.

"Peace, thou vile cozener, with thy gipsy cant!" replied Tressilian, scornfully, "and follow me to the next magistrate, or I will cut thee over the pate."

"Peace, I pray thee, good Wayland!" said the boy; "credit me the swaggering vein will not pass here, you must cut boon whids."*

"I think, worshipful sir," said the smith, sinking his hammer, and assuming a more gentle and submissive tone of voice, "that when so poor a man does his day's job, he might be permitted to work it out after his own fashion. Your horse is shod, and your farrier paid—What need you cumber yourself further, than to mount and pursue your journey?"

"Nay, friend, you are mistaken," replied Tressilian; "every man has a right to take the mask from the face of a cheat and a juggler; and your mode of living raises suspicion that you are both."

"If you are so determined, sir," said the smith, "I cannot help myself save by force, which I were unwilling to use towards you, Master Tressilian;—not that I fear your weapon, but because I know you to be a worthy, kind, and well-accomplished gentleman, who would rather help than harm a poor man that is in a strait."

"Well said, Wayland," said the boy, who had anxiously awaited the issue of their conference. "But let us to thy den, man, for it is ill for thy health to stand here talking in the open air."

"Thou art right, Hobgoblin," replied the smith; and going to the little thicket of gorse on the side nearest to the circle, and opposite to that at which his customer had so lately couched, he discovered a trap-door curiously covered with bushes, raised it, and, descending into the earth, vanished from their eyes. Notwithstanding Tressilian's curiosity, he had some hesitation at following the fellow into what might be a den of robbers, especially when he heard the smith's voice, issuing from the bowels of the earth, call out "Flibbertigibbet, do you come last, and be sure to fasten the trap!"

* "Give good words."—*Slang Dialect.*

"Have you seen enough of Wayland Smith now?" whispered the urchin to Tressilian, with an arch sneer, as if marking his companion's uncertainty.

"Not yet," said Tressilian, firmly; and shaking off his momentary irresolution, he descended into the narrow staircase to which the entrance led, and was followed by Dickie Sludge, who made fast the trap-door behind him, and thus excluded every glimmer of day-light. The descent, however, was only a few steps, and led to a level passage of a few yards' length, at the end of which appeared the reflection of a lurid and red light. Arrived at this point, with his drawn sword in his hand, Tressilian found that a turn to the left admitted him and Hobgoblin, who followed closely, into a small square vault, containing a smith's forge glowing with charcoal, the vapour of which filled the apartment with an oppressive smell, which would have been altogether suffocating, but that by some concealed vent the vault communicated with the upper air. The light afforded by the red fuel, and by a lamp suspended in an iron chain, served to show that, besides an anvil, bellows, tongs, hammers, a quantity of ready-made horse-shoes, and other articles proper to the profession of a farrier, there were also stoves, alembics, crucibles, retorts, and other instruments of alchemy. The grotesque figure of the smith, and the ugly but whimsical features of the boy, seen by the gloomy and imperfect light of the charcoal fire and the dying lamp, accorded very well with all this mystical apparatus, and in that age of superstition would have made some impression on the courage of most men.

But nature had endowed Tressilian with firm nerves; and his education, originally good, had been too sedulously improved by subsequent study to give way to any imaginary terrors; and after giving a glance around him, he again demanded of the artist who he was, and by what accident he came to know and address him by his name.

"Your worship cannot but remember," said the smith, "that about three years since, upon Saint Lucy's Eve, there came a travelling juggler to a certain hall in Devonshire, and exhibited his skill before a worshipful knight and a fair company—I see from your worship's countenance, dark as this place is, that my memory has not done me wrong."

"Thou hast said enough," said Tressilian, turning away, as wishing to hide from the speaker the painful train of recollections which his discourse had unconsciously awakened.

"The juggler," said the smith, "played his part so bravely, that the clowns and clown-like squires in the company held his art to be little less than magical; but there was one maiden of fifteen, or there-by, with the fairest face I ever looked upon, whose rosy cheek grew pale, and her bright eyes dim, at the sight of the wonders exhibited."

"Peace, I command thee, peace!" said Tressilian.

"I mean your worship no offence," said the fellow; "but I have cause to remember how, to relieve the young maiden's fears, you condescended to point out the mode in which these deceptions were practised, and to baffle the poor juggler by laying bare the mysteries of his art, as ably as if you had been

a brother of his order.—She was indeed so fair a maiden, that, to win a smile of her, a man might well"—

"Not a word more of her, I charge thee!" said Tressilian; "I do well remember the night you speak of—one of the few happy evenings my life has known."

"She is gone, then," said the smith, interpreting after his own fashion the sigh with which Tressilian uttered these words—"She is gone, young, beautiful, and beloved as she was!—I crave your worship's pardon—I would have hammered on another theme—I see I have unwarily driven the nail to the quick."

This speech was made with a mixture of rude feeling, which inclined Tressilian favourably to the poor artisan, of whom before he was inclined to judge very harshly. But nothing can so soon attract the unfortunate, as real or seeming sympathy with their sorrows. "I think," proceeded Tressilian, after a minute's silence, "thou wert in those days a jovial fellow, who could keep a company merry by song, and tale, and rebeck, as well as by thy juggling tricks—why do I find thee a laborious handicraftsman, plying thy trade in so melancholy a dwelling, and under such extraordinary circumstances?"

"My story is not long," said the artist; "but your honour had better sit while you listen to it." So saying, he approached to the fire a three-footed stool, and took another himself, while Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, as he called the boy, drew a cricket to the smith's feet, and looked up in his face with features which, as illuminated by the glow of the forge, seemed convulsed with intense curiosity—"Thou, too," said the smith to him, "shalt learn, as thou well deservest at my hand, the brief history of my life; and, in troth, it were as well tell it thee as leave thee to ferret it out, since nature never packed a shrewder wit into a more ungainly casket.—Well, sir, if my poor story may pleasure you, it is at your command—But will you not taste a stoup of liquor? I promise you that even in this poor cell I have some in store."

"Speak not of it," said Tressilian, "but go on with thy story, for my leisure is brief."

"You shall have no cause to rue the delay," said the smith, "for your horse shall be better fed in the meantime, than he hath been this morning, and made fitter for travel."

With that the artist left the vault, and returned after a few minutes' interval. Here also, we pause, that the narrative may commence in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

I say, my lord, can such a subtilty
(But all is craft ye must not wot of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working)
That all the ground on which we ben riding,
Till that we come to Canterbury town,
He can all clean turnen so up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold.

CHAUCER: *The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue.*

THE artist resumed his narrative in the following terms:—

"I was bred a blacksmith, and knew my art as

well as e'er a black-thumb'd, leathern-apron'd, swart-faced knave of that noble mystery. But I tired of ringing hammer-tunes on iron stithies, and went out into the world, where I became acquainted with a celebrated juggler, whose fingers had become rather too stiff for legerdemain, and who wished to have the aid of an apprentice in his noble mystery. I served him for six years, until I was master of my trade—I refer myself to your worship, whose judgment cannot be disputed, whether I did not learn to ply the craft indifferently well?"

"Excellently," said Tressilian; "but be brief."

"It was not long after I had performed at Sir Hugh Robsart's, in your worship's presence," said the artist, "that I took myself to the stage, and have swaggered with the bravest of them all, both at the Black Bull, the Globe, the Fortune, and elsewhere; but I know not how—apples were so plenty that year, that the lads in the twopenny gallery never took more than one bite out of them, and threw the rest of the pippin at whatsoever actor chanced to be on the stage. So I tired of it—renounced my half share in the company—gave my foil to my comrade—my buskins to the wardrobe, and showed the theatre a clean pair of heels."

"Well, friend, and what," said Tressilian, "was your next shift?"

"I became," said the smith, "half partner, half domestic, to a man of much skill and little substance, who practised the trade of a physicianer."

"In other words," said Tressilian, "you were Jack Pudding to a quack salver."

"Something beyond that, let me hope, my good Master Tressilian," replied the artist; "and yet, to say truth, our practice was of an adventurous description, and the pharmacy, which I had acquired in my first studies for the benefit of horses, was frequently applied to our human patients. But the seeds of all maladies are the same; and if turpentine, tar, pitch, and beef-suet, mingled with turmeric, gum-mastick, and one head of garlick, can cure the horse that hath been grieved with a nail, I see not but what it may benefit the man that hath been pricked with a sword. But my master's practice, as well as his skill, went far beyond mine, and dealt in more dangerous concerns. He was not only a bold adventurous practitioner in physic, but also, if your pleasure so chanced to be, an adept, who read the stars and expounded the fortunes of mankind, genethliacally, as he called it, or otherwise. He was a learned distiller of simples, and a profound chemist—made several efforts to fix mercury, and judged himself to have made a fair hit at the philosopher's stone. I have yet a program of his on that subject, which if your honour understandeth, I believe you have the better, not only of all who read, but also of him who wrote it."

He gave Tressilian a scroll of parchment, bearing at top and bottom, and down the margin, the signs of the seven planets, curiously intermingled with talismanical characters and scraps of Greek and Hebrew. In the midst were some Latin verses from a cabalistical author, written out so fairily, that even the gloom of the place did not prevent Tressilian from reading them. The tenor of the original ran as follows:—

*Si fixum solvas, faciasque volare solutum,
Et volucrum figas, facient te vivere tutum,
Si pariat ventum, valet auri pondere centum;
Ventus ubi vult spirat—Capiat qui capere potest.*

"I protest to you," said Tressilian, "all I understand of this jargon is, that the last words seem to mean, 'Catch who catch can.'"

"That," said the smith, "is the very principle that my worthy friend and master, Doctor Doboobie, always acted upon; until, being besotted with his own imaginations, and conceited of his high chemical skill, he began to spend in cheating himself the money which he had acquired in cheating others, and either discovered or built for himself, I could never know which, this secret elaboratory, in which he used to seclude himself both from patients and disciples, who doubtless thought his long and mysterious absences from his ordinary residence in the town of Farringdon were occasioned by his progress in the mystic sciences, and his intercourse with the invisible world. Me also he tried to deceive; but though I contradicted him not, he saw that I knew too much of his secrets to be any longer a safe companion. Meanwhile, his name waxed famous, or rather infamous, and many of those who resorted to him did so under persuasion that he was a sorcerer. And yet his supposed advance in the occult sciences, drew to him the secret resort of men too powerful to be named, for purposes too dangerous to be mentioned. Men cursed and threatened him, and bestowed on me, the innocent assistant of his studies, the nickname of the devil's footpost, which procured me a volley of stones as soon as ever I ventured to show my face in the street of the village. At length my master suddenly disappeared, pretending to me that he was about to visit his elaboratory in this place, and discharging me to disturb him till two days were past. When this period had elapsed, I became anxious, and resorted to this vault, where I found the fires extinguished and the utensils in confusion, with a note from the learned Doboobius, as he was wont to style himself, acquainting me that we should never meet again, bequeathing me his chemical apparatus, and the parchment which I have just put into your hands, advising me strongly to prosecute the secret which it contained, which would infallibly lead me to the discovery of the grand magisterium."

"And didst thou follow this sage advice?" said Tressilian.

"Worshipful sir, no," replied the smith; "for being by nature cautious and suspicious, from knowing with whom I had to do, I made so many perquisitions before I ventured even to light a fire, that I at length discovered a small barrel of gunpowder, carefully hid beneath the furnace, with the purpose, no doubt, that, as soon as I should commence the grand work of the transmutation of metals, the explosion should transmute the vault, and all in it, into a heap of ruins, which might serve at once for my slaughter-house and my grave. This cured me of alchemy, and fain would I have returned to the honest hammer and anvil; but who would bring a horse to be shod by the devil's

foot? Meantime, I had won the regard of my honest Flibbertigibbet here, he being then at Farringdon with his master, the sage Erasmus Holiday, by teaching him a few secrets, such as please youth at his age; and after much counsel together, we agreed, that since I could get no practice in the ordinary way, I should try how I could work out business among these ignorant boors, by practising upon their silly fears, and, thanks to Flibbertigibbet who hath spread my renown, I have not wanted custom. But it is won at too great risk, and I fear I shall be at length taken up for a wizard; so that I seek but an opportunity to leave this vault when I can have the protection of some worshipful person against the fury of the populace, in case they chance to recognize me."

"And art thou," said Tressilian, "perfectly acquainted with the roads in this country?"

"I could ride them every inch by midnight," answered Wayland Smith, which was the name this adept had adopted.

"Thou hast no horse to ride upon," said Tressilian.

"Pardon me," replied Wayland; "I have as good a tit as ever yeoman bestrode; and I forgot to say it was the best part of the mediciner's legacy to me, excepting one or two of his medical secrets, which I picked up without his knowledge and against his will."

"Get thyself washed and shaved then," said Tressilian; "reform thy dress as well as thou canst, and fling away these grotesque trappings; and, so thou wilt be secret and faithful, thou shalt follow me for a short time, till thy pranks here are forgotten. Thou hast, I think, both address and courage, and I have matter to do that may require both."

Wayland Smith eagerly embraced the proposal, and protested his devotion to his new master. In a very few minutes he had made so great a change in his original appearance, by change of dress, trimming his beard and hair, and so forth, that Tressilian could not help remarking, that he thought he would stand in little need of a protector, since none of his old acquaintance was like to recognise him.

"My debtors would not pay me money," said Wayland, shaking his head; "but my creditors of every kind would be less easily blinded. And, in truth, I hold myself not safe, unless under the protection of a gentleman of birth and character, as that of your worship."

So saying, he led the way out of the cavern. He then called loudly for Hobgoblin, who, after lingering for an instant, appeared with the horse furniture, when Wayland closed and sedulously covered up the trap-door, observing, it might again serve him at his need, besides that the tools were worth somewhat. A whistle from the owner brought to his side a nag that fed quietly on the common, and was accustomed to the signal. While he accoutred him for the journey, Tressilian drew his own girths faster, and in a few minutes both were ready to mount.

At this moment Sludge approached to bid them farewell.

"You are going to leave me then, my old play-

fellow," said the boy; "and there is an end of all our game at bo-peep with the cowardly lubbards whom I brought hither to have their broad-footed nags shod by the devil and his imps."

"It is even so," said Wayland Smith; "the best friends must part, Flibbertigibbet; but thou, my boy, art the only thing in the Vale of Whitehorse which I shall regret to leave behind me."

"Well, I bid thee not farewell," said Dickie Sludge, "for you will be at these revels, I judge, and so shall I; for if Dominie Holiday take me not thither by the light of day, which we see not in yonder dark hole, I will take myself there!"

"In good time," said Wayland; "but I pray you to do nought rashly."

"Nay, now you would make a child—a common child of me, and tell me of the risk of walking without leading strings. But before you are a mile from these stones, you shall know, by a sure token, that I have more of the hobgoblin about me than you credit; and I will so manage, that, if you take advantage, you may profit by my prank."

"What doest thou mean, boy?" said Tressilian; but Flibbertigibbet only answered with a grin and a caper, and bidding both of them farewell, and at the same time exhorting them to make the best of their way from the place, he set them the example, by running homeward with the same uncommon velocity with which he had baffled Tressilian's former attempts to get hold of him.

"It is in vain to chase him," said Wayland Smith; "for unless your worship is expert in lark-hunting, we should never catch hold of him—and besides, what would it avail? Better make the best of our way hence, as he advises."

They mounted their horses accordingly, and began to proceed at a round pace, as soon as Tressilian had explained to his guide the road in which he desired to travel.

After they had trotted nearly a mile, Tressilian could not help observing to his companion, that his horse felt more lively under him than even when he mounted in the morning.

"Are you advised of that?" said Wayland Smith, smiling. "That is owing to a little secret of mine. I mixed that with an handful of oats which shall save your worship's heels the trouble of spurring these six hours at least. Nay, I have not studied medicine and pharmacy for nought."

"I trust," said Tressilian, "your drugs will do my horse no harm."

"No more than the mare's milk which foaled him," answered the artist; and was proceeding to dilate on the excellence of his recipe, when he was interrupted by an explosion as loud and tremendous as the mine which blows up the rampart of a beleaguered city. The horses started, and the riders were equally surprised. They turned to gaze in the direction from which the thunder-clap was heard, and beheld, just over the spot they had left so recently, a huge pillar of dark smoke rising high into the clear blue atmosphere. "My habitation is gone to wrack," said Wayland, immediately conjecturing the cause of the explosion—"I was a fool to mention the doctor's kind intentions towards my mansion before that limb of mischief, Flibbertigibbet—I

might have guessed he would long to put so rare a frolic into execution. But let us hasten on, for the sound will collect the country to the spot."

So saying, he spurred his horse, and Tressilian also quickening his speed, they rode briskly forward.

"This, then, was the meaning of the little imp's token which he promised us," said Tressilian; "had we lingered near the spot, we had found it a love-token with a vengeance."

"He would have given us warning," said the smith; "I saw him look back more than once to see if we were off—'tis a very devil for mischief, yet not an ill-natured devil either. It were long to tell your honour how I became first acquainted with him, and how many tricks he played me. Many a good turn he did me too, especially in bringing me customers; for his great delight was to see them sit shivering behind the bushes when they heard the click of my hammer. I think Dame Nature, when she lodged a double quantity of brains in that miss-shapen head of his, gave him the power of enjoying other people's distresses, as she gave them the pleasure of laughing at his ugliness."

"It may be so," said Tressilian; "those who find themselves severed from society by peculiarities of form, if they do not hate the common bulk of mankind, are at least not altogether indisposed to enjoy their mishaps and calamities."

"But Flibbertigibbet," answered Wayland, "hath that about him which may redeem his turn for mischievous frolic; for he is as faithful, when attached, as he is tricky and malignant to strangers; and, as I said before, I have cause to say so."

Tressilian pursued the conversation no farther; and they continued their journey towards Devonshire without farther adventure, until they alighted at an inn in the town of Marlborough, since celebrated for having given title to the greatest general (excepting one) whom Britain ever produced. Here the travelers received, in the same breath, an example of the truth of two old proverbs, namely, that ill news fly fast, and that listeners seldom hear a good tale of themselves.

The inn-yard was in a sort of combustion when they alighted; insomuch, that they could scarce get man or boy to take care of their horses, so full were the whole household of some news which flew from tongue to tongue, the import of which they were for some time unable to discover. At length, indeed, they found it respected matters which touched them nearly.

"What is the matter, say you, master?" answered, at length, the head hostler, in reply to Tressilian's repeated questions—"Why, truly, I scarce know myself. But here was a rider but now, who says that the devil hath flown away with him they called Wayland Smith, that wonn'd about three miles from the Whitehorse of Berkshire, this very blessed morning, in a flash of fire and a pillar of smoke, and rooted up the place he dwelt in, near that old cockpit of upright stones, as cleanly as if it had all been delved up for a cropping."

"Why, then," said an old farmer, "the more is the pity—for that Wayland Smith (whether he was the devil's crony or no, I skill not) had a good notion

of horse diseases, and it's to be thought the bots will spread in the country far and near, an Satan has not gi'en un time to leave his secret behind un."

"You may say that, Gaffer Grimesby," said the hostler in return; "I have carried a horse to Wayland Smith myself, for he passed all farriers in this country."

"Did you see him?" said Dame Alison Crane, mistress of the inn bearing that sign, and deigning to term husband the owner thereof, an insignificant hop-o'-my-thumb sort of person, whose halting gait, and long neck, and meddling hen-pecked insignificance, are supposed to have given origin to the celebrated old English tune of "My dame hath a lame tame crane."

On this occasion he chirp'd out a repetition of his wife's question, "Did'st see the devil, Jack Hostler, I say?"

"And what if I did see un, Master Crane?" replied Jack Hostler,—for, like all the rest of the household, he paid as little respect to his master as his mistress herself did.

"Nay, nought, Jack Hostler," replied the pacific Master Crane; "only if you saw the devil, methinks I would like to know what un's like?"

"You will know that one day, Master Crane," said his helpmate, "an ye mend not your manners, and mind your business, leaving off such idle palabras—But truly, Jack Hostler, I should be glad to know myself what like the fellow was."

"Why, dame," said the hostler, more respectfully, "as for what he was like I cannot tell, nor no man else, for why I never saw un."

"And how didst thou get thine errand done," said Gaffer Grimesby, "if thou seed'st him not?"

"Why, I had schoolmaster to write down ailment o' nag," said Jack Hostler; "and I went wi' the ngliest slip of a boy for my guide as ever man cut out o' lime-tree root to please a child withal."

"And what was it?—and did it cure your nag, Jack Hostler?"—was uttered and echoed by all who stood around.

"Why, how can I tell you what it was?" said the hostler; "simply it smelled and tasted—for I did make bold to put a pea's substance into my mouth—like hartshorn and savin mixed with vinegar—but then no hartshorn and savin ever wrought so speedy a cure—and I am dreading that if Wayland Smith be gone, the bots will have more power over horse and cattle."

The pride of art, which is certainly not inferior in its influence to any other pride whatsoever, here so far operated on Wayland Smith, that, notwithstanding the obvious danger of his being recognized, he could not help winking to Tressilian, and smiling mysteriously, as if triumphing in the undoubted evidence of his veterinary skill. In the meanwhile, the discourse continued.

"E'en let it be so," said a grave man in black, the companion of Gaffer Grimesby; "e'en let us perish under the evil God sends us, rather than the devil be our doctor."

"Very true," said Dame Crane; "and I marvel at Jack Hostler, that he would peril his own soul to cure the bowels of a nag."

"Very true, mistress," said Jack Hostler, "but

the nag was my master's; and had it been yours, I think ye would ha' held me cheap enow an I had feared the devil when the poor beast was in such a taking—For the rest, let the clergy look to it. Every man to his craft, says the proverb; the parson to the prayer-book, and the groom to his curry-comb."

"I vow," said Dame Crane, "I think Jack Hostler speaks like a good christian and a faithful servant, who will spare neither body nor soul in his master's service. However, the devil has lifted him in time, for a constable of the hundred came hither this morning to get old Gaffer Pinniewinks, the trier of witches, to go with him to the Vale of Whitehorse to comprehend Wayland Smith, and put him to his probation. I helped Pinniewinks to sharpen his pincers and his poking-awl, and I saw the warrant from Justice Blindas."

"Pooh—pooh—the devil would laugh both at Blindas and his warrant, constable, and witchfinder to boot," said old Dame Crank, the papist laundress; "Wayland Smith's flesh would mind Pinniewinks' awl no more than a cambric ruff minds a hot piccadilloe-needle. But tell me, gentlefolks, if the devil ever had such a hand among ye, as to snatch away your smiths and your artists from under your nose, when the good Abbots of Abingdon had their own. By Our Lady, no!—they had their hallowed tapers, and their holy water, and their relics, and what not, could send the foulest fiends a-packing.—Go ask a heretic parson to do the like—But ours were a comfortable people."

"Very true, Dame Crank," said the hostler; "so said Simpkins, of Simonburn, when the curate kissed his wife,—'They are a comfortable people,' said he."

"Silence, thou foul-mouthed vermin!" said Dame Crank; "is it fit for a heretic horse-boy like thee, to handle such a text as the catholic clergy?"

"In troth no, dame," replied the man of oats; "and as you yourself are now no text for their handling, dame, whatever may have been the case in your day, I think we had e'en better leave unalone."

At this last exchange of sarcasm, Dame Crank set up her throat, and began a horrible exclamation against Jack Hostler, under cover of which Tressilian and his attendant escaped into the house.

They had no sooner entered a private chamber, to which Goodman Crane himself had condescended to usher them, and dispatched their worthy and obsequious host on the errand of procuring wine and refreshment, than Wayland Smith began to give vent to his self-importance.

"You see, sir," said he, addressing Tressilian, "that I nothing fabled in asserting that I possessed fully the mighty mystery of a farrier, or mareschal, as the French more honourably term us. These dog-hostlers, who, after all, are the better judges in such a case, know what credit they should attach to my medicaments. I call you to witness, worshipful Master Tressilian, that nought, save the voice of calumny and the hand of malicious violence, hath driven me forth from a station in which I held a place, alike useful and honoured."

"I bear witness, my friend, but will reserve my

listening," answered Tressilian, "for a safer time; unless, indeed, you deem it essential to your reputation, to be translated, like your late dwelling, by the assistance of a flash of fire. For you see your best friends reckon you no better than a mere sorcerer."

"Now, Heaven forgive them," said the artist, "who confound learned skill with unlawful magic! I trust a man may be as skilful, or more so, than the best chirurgeon ever meddled with horse-flesh, and yet, may be, upon the matter little more than other ordinary men, or at the worst no conjurer."

"God forbid else!" said Tressilian. "But be silent just for the present, since here comes mine host with an assistant, who seems something of the least."

Every body about the inn, Dame Crank herself included, had been indeed so interested and agitated by the story they had heard of Wayland Smith, and by the new, varying, and more marvelous editions of the incident, which arrived from various quarters, that mine host, in his righteous determination to accommodate his guests, had been able to obtain the assistance of none of his household, saving that of a little boy, a junior tapster, of about twelve years old, who was called Sampson.

"I wish," he said, apologizing to his guests, as he set down a flagon of sack, and promised some food immediately,—“I wish the devil had flown away with my wife and my whole family, instead of this Wayland Smith, who, I dare say, after all said and done, was much less worthy of the distinction that Satan has done him.”

"I hold opinion with you, good fellow," replied Wayland Smith; "and I will drink to you upon that argument."

"Not that I would justify any man who deals with the devil," said mine host, after having pledged Wayland in a rousing draught of sack, "but that—Saw ye ever better sack, my masters?—but that, I say, a man had better deal with a dozen cheats and scoundrel fellows, such as this Wayland Smith, rather than with a devil incarnate, that takes possession of house and home, bed and board."

The poor fellow's detail of grievances was here interrupted by the shrill voice of his helpmate, screaming from the kitchen, to which he instantly hobbled, craving pardon of his guests. He was no sooner gone, than Wayland Smith expressed, by every contemptuous epithet in the language, his utter scorn for a nincompoop, who stuck his head under his wife's apron-string; and intimated, that, saving for the sake of the horses, which required both rest and food, he would advise his worshipful master, Tressilian, to push on a stage farther, rather than pay a reckoning to such a mean-spirited, crow-trodden, hen-pecked, coxcomb, as Gaffer Crane.

The arrival of a large dish of good cow-heel and bacon something soothed the asperity of the artist, which wholly vanished before a choice capon, so delicately roasted, that the lard frothed on it, said Wayland, like May-dew on a lily; and both Gaffer Crane and his good dame became, in his eyes, very pains-taking, accommodating, obliging persons.

According to the manners of the times, the master and his attendant sate at the same table, and the

latter observed with regret, how little attention Tressilian paid to his meal. He recollected, indeed, the pain he had given by mentioning the maiden in whose company he had first seen him; but, fearful of touching upon a topic too tender to be tampered with, he chose to ascribe his abstinence to another cause.

"This fare is perhaps too coarse for your worship," said Wayland, as the limbs of the capon disappeared before his own exertions; "but had you dwelt as long as I have done in yonder dungeon, which Flibbertigibbet has translated to the upper element, a place where I dared hardly broil my food, lest the smoke should be seen without, you would think a fair capon a more welcome dainty."

"If you are pleased, friend," said Tressilian, "it is well. Nevertheless, hasten thy meal if thou canst, for this place is unfriendly to thy safety, and my concerns crave travelling."

Allowing, therefore, their horses no more rest than was absolutely necessary for them, they pursued their journey, by a forced march, as far as Bradford, where they reposed themselves for the night.

The next morning found them early travellers. And, not to fatigue the reader with unnecessary particulars, they traversed without adventure the counties of Wiltshire and Somerset, and about noon of the third day after Tressilian's leaving Cumnor, arrived at Sir Hugh Robsart's seat, called Lidcote Hall, on the frontiers of Devonshire.

CHAPTER XI.

Ah me! the flower and blossom of your house,
The wind hath blown away to other towers.

JOANNA BAILLIE'S *Family Legend*.

THE ancient seat of Lidcote Hall was situated near the village of the same name, and adjoined to the wild and extensive forest of Exmoor, plentifully stocked with game, in which some ancient rights, belonging to the Robsart family, entitled Sir Hugh to pursue his favourite amusement of the chase. The old mansion was a low, venerable building, occupying a considerable space of ground, which was surrounded by a deep moat. The approach and draw-bridge were defended by an octagonal tower, of ancient brick-work, but so clothed with ivy and other creepers, that it was difficult to discover of what materials it was constructed. The angles of this tower were each decorated with a turret, whimsically various in form and in size, and, therefore, very unlike the monotonous stone pepper-boxes, which, in modern Gothic architecture, are employed for the same purpose. One of these turrets was square, and occupied as a clock-house. But the clock was now standing still; a circumstance peculiarly striking to Tressilian, because the good old knight, among other harmless peculiarities, had a fidgetty anxiety about the exact measurement of time, very common to those who have a great deal of that commodity to dispose of, and find it lie heavy upon their hands,—just as we see shopkeepers amuse themselves with taking an exact account of their stock at the time there is least demand for it.

The entrance to the court-yard of the old mansion

VOL. III.

lay through an archway, surmounted by the foresaid tower, but the draw-bridge was down, and one leaf of the iron-studded folding-doors stood carelessly open. Tressilian hastily rode over the draw-bridge, entered the court, and began to call loudly on the domestics by their names. For some time he was only answered by the echoes and the howling of the hounds, whose kennel lay at no great distance from the mansion, and was surrounded by the same moat. At length Will Badger, the old and favourite attendant of the knight, who acted alike as squire of his body and superintendent of his sports, made his appearance. The stout, weather-beaten forester showed great signs of joy when he recognised Tressilian.

"Lord love you," he said, "Master Edmund, be it thou in flesh and fell?—Then thou mayst do some good on Sir Hugh, for it passes the wit of man, that is of mine own, and the curate's, and Master Mumblazen's, to do aught wi' un."

"Is Sir Hugh then worse since I went away, Will?" demanded Tressilian.

"For worse in body—no—he is much better," replied the domestic; "but he is clean mazed as it were—eats and drinks as he is wont—but sleeps not, or rather wakes not, for he is ever in a sort of twilight, that is, neither sleeping nor waking. Dame Swineford thought it was like the dead palsy.—But no, no, dame, said I, it is the heart—it is the heart."

"Can ye not stir his mind to any pastimes?" said Tressilian.

"He is clean and quite off his sports," said Will Badger; "hath neither touched backgammon or shovel-board—nor looked on the big book of harrotry wi' Master Mumblazen. I let the clock run down, thinking the missing the bell might somewhat move him, for you know, Master Edmund, he was particular in counting time; but he never said a word on't, so I may e'en set the old chime a towling again. I made bold to tread on Bungay's tail too, and you know what a round rating that would ha' cost me once a-day—but he minded his whine no more than a madge howlet whooping down the chimney—so the case is beyond me."

"Thou shalt tell me the rest within doors, Will.—Meanwhile, let this person be ta'en to the buttery, and used with respect—He is a man of art."

"White art or black art, I would," said Will Badger, "that he had any art which could help us.—Here, Tom Butler, look to the man of art—and see that he steals none of thy spoons, lad," he added, in a whisper to the butler, who showed himself at a low window, "I have known as honest a faced fellow have art enough to do that."

He then ushered Tressilian into a low parlour, and went, at his desire, to see in what state his master was, lest the sudden return of his darling pupil, and proposed son-in-law, should affect him too strongly. He returned immediately, and said that Sir Hugh was dozing in his elbow chair, but that Master Mumblazen would acquaint Master Tressilian the instant he awaked.

"But it is chance if he knows you," said the huntsman, "for he has forgotten the name of every hound in the pack. I thought about a week since

he had gotten a favourable turn:—"Saddle me old Sorrel," said he, suddenly, after he had taken his usual night-draught out of the great silver grace-cup, "and take the hounds to Mount Hazelhurst to-morrow." Glad men were we all, and out we had him in the morning, and he rode to cover as usual, with never a word but that the wind was south, and the scent would lie. But ere we had uncoupled the hounds, he began to stare round him, like a man that wakes suddenly out of a dream—turns bridle and walks back to hall again, and leaves us to hunt at leisure by ourselves, if we listed."

"You tell a heavy tale, Will," replied Tressilian; "but God must help us—there is no aid in man."

"Then you bring us no news of young Mistress Amy?—But what need I ask—your brow tells the story. Ever I hoped, that if any man could or would track her, it must be you. All's over and lost now. But if ever I have that Varney within reach of a flight-shot, I will bestow a forked shaft on him; and that I swear by salt and bread."

As he spoke, the door opened, and Master Mumblazen appeared; a withered, thin, elderly gentleman, with a cheek like a winter apple, and his grey hair partly concealed by a small high hat, shaped like a cone, or rather like such a strawberry-basket as London fruiterers exhibit at their windows. He was too sententious a person to waste words on mere salutation; so, having welcomed Tressilian with a nod and a shake of the hand, he beckoned him to follow to Sir Hugh's great chamber, which the good knight usually inhabited. Will Badger followed, unasked, anxious to see whether his master would be relieved from his state of apathy by the arrival of Tressilian.

In a long low parlour, amply furnished with implements of the chase, and with sylvan trophies, by a massive stone chimney, over which hung a sword and suit of armour, somewhat obscured by neglect, sate Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote, a man of large size, which had been only kept within moderate compass by the constant use of violent exercise. It seemed to Tressilian that the lethargy, under which his old friend appeared to labour, had, even during his few weeks' absence, added bulk to his person; at least it had obviously diminished the vivacity of his eye, which, as they entered, first followed Master Mumblazen slowly to a large oaken desk, on which a ponderous volume lay open, and then rested, as if in uncertainty, on the stranger who had entered along with him. The curate, a grey-headed clergyman, who had been a confessor in the days of Queen Mary, sate with a book in his hand in another recess in the apartment. He, too, signed a mournful greeting to Tressilian, and laid his book aside, to watch the effect his appearance should produce on the afflicted old man.

As Tressilian, his own eyes filling fast with tears, approached more and more nearly to the father of his betrothed bride, Sir Hugh's intelligence seemed to revive. He sighed heavily, as one who awakens from a state of stupor, a slight convulsion passed over his features, he opened his arms without speaking a word, and as Tressilian threw himself into them, he folded him to his bosom.

"There is something left to live for yet," were

the first words he uttered; and while he spoke, he gave vent to his feelings in a paroxysm of weeping, the tears chasing each other down his sunburnt cheeks and long white beard.

"I ne'er thought to have thanked God to see my master weep," said Will Badger; "but now I do, though I am like to weep for company."

"I will ask thee no questions," said the old knight; "no questions—none, Edmund—thou hast not found her, or so found her, that she were better lost."

Tressilian was unable to reply, otherwise than by putting his hands before his face.

"It is enough—it is enough. But do not thou weep for her, Edmund. I have cause to weep, for she was my daughter,—thou hast cause to rejoice, that she did not become thy wife.—Great God! thou knowest best what is good for us—It was my nightly prayer that I should see Amy and Edmund wedded,—had it been granted, it had now been gall added to bitterness."

"Be comforted, my friend," said the curate, addressing Sir Hugh, "it cannot be that the daughter of all our hopes and affections is the vile creature you would bespeak her."

"O, no," replied Sir Hugh, impatiently, "I were wrong to name broadly the base thing she is become—there is some new court name for it, I warrant me. It is honour enough for the daughter of an old De'nshire clown to be the leman of a gay courtier,—of Varney too,—of Varney, whose grandsire was relieved by my father, when his fortune was broken, at the battle of—the battle of—where Richard was slain—out on my memory—and I warrant none of you will help me."

"The battle of Bosworth," said Master Mumblazen, "stricken between Richard Crookback and Henry Tudor, grandsire of the queen that now is, *Primo Henrici Septimi*; and in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-five *post Christum natum*."

"Ay, even so," said the good knight, "every child knows it—But my poor head forgets all it should remember, and remembers only what it would most willingly forget. My brain has been at fault, Tressilian, almost ever since thou hast been away, and even yet it hunts counter."

"Your worship," said the good clergyman, "had better retire to your apartment, and try to sleep for a little space,—the physician left a composing draught,—and our Great Physician has commanded us to use earthly means, that we may be strengthened to sustain the trials he sends us."

"True, true, old friend," said Sir Hugh, "and we will bear our trials manfully—We have lost but a woman.—See, Tressilian,"—he drew from his bosom a long ringlet of fair hair,—“see this lock!—I tell thee, Edmund, the very night she disappeared, when she bid me good even, as she was wont, she hung about my neck, and fondled me more than usual; and I, like an old fool, held her by this lock until she took her scissors, severed it, and left it in my hand,—as all I was ever to see more of her!”

Tressilian was unable to reply, well judging what a complication of feelings must have crossed the bosom of the unhappy fugitive at that cruel moment.

The clergyman was about to speak, but Sir Hugh interrupted him.

"I know what you would say, Master Curate,—after all, it is but a lock of woman's tresses,—and by woman, shame, and sin, and death, came into an innocent world—And learned Master Mumblazen, too, can say scholarly things of their inferiority."

"*C'est l'homme*," said Master Mumblazen, "*qui se bat et qui conseille*."

"True," said Sir Hugh, "and we will bear us, therefore, like men who have both mettle and wisdom in us.—Tressilian, thou art as welcome as if thou hadst brought better news. But we have spoken too long dry-lipped.—Amy, fill a cup of wine to Edmund, and another to me." Then instantly recollecting that he called upon her who could not hear, he shook his head, and said to the clergyman, "This grief is to my bewildered mind what the church of Lidcote is to our park; we may lose ourselves among the briars and thickets for a little space, but from the end of each avenue we see the old grey steeple and the grave of my forefathers. I would I were to travel that road to-morrow."

Tressilian and the curate joined in urging the exhausted old man to lay himself to rest, and at length prevailed. Tressilian remained by his pillow till he saw that slumber at length sunk down on him, and then returned to consult with the curate what steps should be adopted in these unhappy circumstances.

They could not exclude from these deliberations Master Michael Mumblazen; and they admitted him the more readily, that besides what hopes they entertained from his sagacity, they knew him to be so great a friend to taciturnity, that there was no doubt of his keeping counsel. He was an old bachelor, of good family, but small fortune, and distantly related to the house of Robsart; in virtue of which connexion, Lidcote Hall had been honoured with his residence for the last twenty years. His company was agreeable to Sir Hugh, chiefly on account of his profound learning, which, though it only related to heraldry and genealogy, with such scraps of history as connected themselves with these subjects, was precisely of a kind to captivate the good old knight; besides the convenience which he found in having a friend to appeal to, when his own memory, as frequently happened, proved infirm, and played him false concerning names and dates, which, and all similar deficiencies, Master Michael Mumblazen supplied with due brevity and discretion. And, indeed, in matters concerning the modern world, he often gave, in his enigmatical and heraldic phrase, advice which was well worth attending to, or, in Will Badger's language, started the game while others beat the bush.

"We have had an unhappy time of it with the good knight, Master Edmund," said the curate. "I have not suffered so much since I was torn away from my beloved flock, and compelled to abandon them to the Romish wolves."

"That was in *tertio Mariæ*," said Master Mumblazen.

"In the name of Heaven," continued the curate, "tell us, has your time been better spent than ours, or have you any news of that unhappy maiden, who, being for so many years the principal joy of this

broken-down house, is now proved our greatest unhappiness? Have you not at least discovered her place of residence?"

"I have," replied Tressilian. "Know you Cumnor Place, near Oxford?"

"Surely," said the clergyman; "it was a cell of removal for the monks of Abingdon."

"Whose arms," said Master Michael, "I have seen over a stone chimney in the hall,—a cross patonee betwixt four martlets."

"There," said Tressilian, "this unhappy maiden resides, in company with the villain Varney. But for a strange mishap, my sword had revenged all our injuries, as well as hers, on his worthless head."

"Thank God, that kept thine hand from blood-guiltiness, rash young man," answered the curate. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it." It were better study to free her from the villain's nets of infamy."

"They are called, in heraldry, *laqueæ amoris*, or *lacs d'amour*," said Mumblazen.

"It is in that I require your aid, my friends," said Tressilian; "I am resolved to accuse this villain, at the very foot of the throne, of falsehood, seduction, and breach of hospitable laws. The queen shall hear me, though the Earl of Leicester, the villain's patron, stood at her right hand."

"Her grace," said the curate, "hath set a comely example of continence to her subjects, and will doubtless do justice on this inhospitable robber. But wert thou not better apply to the Earl of Leicester, in the first place, for justice on his servant? If he grants it, thou dost save the risk of making thyself a powerful adversary, which will certainly chance, if, in the first instance, you accuse his master of the horse, and prime favourite, before the queen."

"My mind revolts from your counsel," said Tressilian. "I cannot brook to plead my noble patron's cause—the unhappy Amy's cause—before any one save my lawful sovereign. Leicester, thou wilt say, is noble—be it so—he is but a subject like ourselves, and I will not carry my plaint to him, if I can do better. Still, I will think on what thou hast said,—but I must have your assistance to persuade the good Sir Hugh to make me his commissioner and fiduciary in this matter, for it is in his name I must speak, and not in my own. Since she is so far changed as to doat upon this empty profligate courtier, he shall at least do her the justice which is yet in his power."

"Better she died *cælebs* and *sine prole*," said Mumblazen, with more animation than he usually expressed, "than part, *per pale*, the noble coat of Robsart with that of such a miscreant."

"If it be your object, as I cannot question," said the clergyman, "to save, as much as is yet possible, the credit of this unhappy young woman, I repeat, you should apply, in the first instance, to the Earl of Leicester. He is as absolute in his household as the queen in her kingdom, and if he expresses to Varney that such is his pleasure, her honour will not stand so publicly committed."

"You are right, you are right," said Tressilian, eagerly, "and I thank you for pointing out what I overlooked in my haste. I little thought ever to

have besought grace of Leicester; but I could kneel to the proud Dudley, if doing so could remove one shade of shame from this unhappy damsel. You will assist me then to procure the necessary powers from Sir Hugh Robsart?"

The curate assured him of his assistance, and the herald nodded assent.

"You must hold yourselves also in readiness to testify, in case you are called upon, the open-hearted hospitality which our good patron exercised towards this deceitful traitor, and the solicitude with which he laboured to seduce his unhappy daughter."

"At first," said the clergyman, "she did not, as it seemed to me, much affect his company, but latterly I saw them often together."

"*Seiant* in the parlour," said Michael Mumblazen, "and *passant* in the garden."

"I once came on them by chance," said the priest, "in the South wood, in a spring evening—Varney was muffled in a russet cloak, so that I saw not his face,—they separated hastily, as they heard me rustle amongst the leaves, and I observed she turned her head and looked long after him."

"With neck *reguardant*," said the herald—"And on the day of her flight, and that was on Saint Austen's eve, I saw Varney's groom, attired in his liveries, hold his master's horse and Mistress Amy's palfrey, bridled and saddled *proper*, behind the wall of the church-yard."

"And now is she found mew'd up in her secret place of retirement," said Tressilian. "The villain is taken in the manner, and I well wish he may deny his crime, that I may thrust conviction down his false throat. But I must prepare for my journey. Do you, gentlemen, dispose my patron to grant me such powers as are needful to act in his name."

So saying, Tressilian left the room.

"He is too hot," said the curate; "and I pray to God that he may grant him the patience to deal with Varney as is fitting."

"Patience and Varney," said Mumblazen, "is worse heraldry than metal upon metal. He is more false than a siren, more rapacious than a griffin, more poisonous than a wyvern, and more cruel than a lion rampant."

"Yet I doubt much," said the curate, "whether we can with all right ask from Sir Hugh Robsart, being in his present condition, any deed deputing his paternal right in Mistress Amy to whomsoever"—

"Your reverence need not doubt that," said Will Badger, who entered as he spoke, "for I will lay my life he is another man when he wakes, than he has been these thirty days past."

"Ay, Will," said the curate, "hast thou then so much confidence in Doctor Diddleum's draught?"

"Not a whit," said Will, "because master ne'er tasted a drop on't, seeing it was emptied out by the housemaid. But here's a gentleman, who came attending on Master Tressilian, has given Sir Hugh a draught that is worth twenty of yon un. I have spoken cunningly with him, and a better farrier, or one who hath a more just notion of horse and dog ailment, I have never seen; and such a one would never be unjust to a christian man."

"A farrier! you saucy groom—And by whose authority, pray?" said the curate, rising in surprise

and indignation; "or who will be warrant for this new physician?"

"For authority, an it like your reverence, he had mine; and for warrant, I trust, I have not been five-and-twenty years in this house, without having right to warrant the giving of a draught to beast or body—I who can gie a drench, and a ball, and bleed, or blister, if need, to my very self."

The counsellors of the House of Robsart thought it meet to carry this information instantly to Tressilian, who as speedily summoned before him, Wayland Smith, and demanded of him (in private, however), by what authority he had ventured to administer any medicine to Sir Hugh Robsart?

"Why," replied the artist, "your worship cannot but remember that I told you I had made more progress into my master's—I mean the learned Doctor Doboobie's—mystery than he was willing to own; and indeed half of his quarrel and malice against me was, that, besides that I got something too deep into his secrets, several discerning persons, and particularly a buxom young widow of Abingdon, preferred my prescription to his."

"None of thy buffoonery, sir," said Tressilian, sternly. "If thou hast trifled with us—much more, if thou hast done aught that may prejudice Sir Hugh Robsart's health, thou shalt find thy grave at the bottom of a tin-mine."

"I know too little of the great *arcanum* to convert the ore to gold," said Wayland, firmly. "But truce to your apprehensions, Master Tressilian—I understood the good knight's case, from what Master William Badger told me; and I hope I am able enough to administer a poor dose of mandragora, which, with the sleep that must needs follow, is all that Sir Hugh Robsart requires to settle his distraught brains."

"I trust thou dealest fairly with me, Wayland?" said Tressilian.

"Most fairly and honestly, as the event shall show," replied the artist. "What would it avail me to harm the poor old man for whom you are interested? you, to whom I owe it, that Gaffer Pinnewinks is not even now rending my flesh and sinews with his accursed pincers, and probing every mole in my body with his sharpened awl (a murrain on the hands which forged it!), in order to find out the witch's mark!—I trust to yoke myself as a humble follower to your worship's train, and I only wish to have my faith judged of by the result of the good knight's slumbers."

Wayland Smith was right in his prognostication. The sedative draught, which his skill had prepared, and Will Badger's confidence had administered, was attended with the most beneficial effects. The patient's sleep was long and healthful, and the poor old knight awoke, humbled indeed in thought, and weak in frame, yet a much better judge of whatever was subjected to his intellect than he had been for some time past. He resisted for a while the proposal made by his friends, that Tressilian should undertake a journey to court, to attempt the recovery of his daughter, and the redress of her wrongs, in so far as they might yet be repaired. "Let her go," he said; "she is but a hawk that goes down the wind; I would not bestow even a whistle to re-

claim her." But though he, for some time, maintained this argument, he was at length convinced it was his duty to take the part to which natural affection inclined him, and consent that such efforts as could yet be made should be used by Tressilian in behalf of his daughter. He subscribed, therefore, a warrant of attorney, such as the curate's skill enabled him to draw up; for in these simple days the clergy were often the advisers of their flock in law, as well as in gospel.

All matters were prepared for Tressilian's second departure, within twenty-four hours after he had returned to Lidcote Hall; but one material circumstance had been forgotten, which was first called to the remembrance of Tressilian by Master Mumblazen. "You are going to court, Master Tressilian," said he; "you will please remember, that your blazonry must be *argent* and *or*—no other tinctures will pass current." The remark was equally just and embarrassing. To prosecute a suit at court, ready money was as indispensable, even in the golden days of Elizabeth, as at any succeeding period; and it was a commodity little at the command of the inhabitants of Lidcote Hall. Tressilian was himself poor; the revenues of good Sir Hugh Robsart were consumed, and even anticipated, in his hospitable mode of living; and it was finally necessary that the herald, who started the doubt, should himself solve it. Master Michael Mumblazen did so, by producing a bag of money, containing nearly three hundred pounds in gold and silver of various coinage, the savings of twenty years; which he now, without speaking a syllable upon the subject, dedicated to the service of the patron whose shelter and protection had given him the means of making this little hoard. Tressilian accepted it without affecting a moment's hesitation, and a mutual grasp of the hand was all that passed betwixt them, to express the pleasure which the one felt in dedicating his all to such a purpose, and that which the other received from finding so material an obstacle to the success of his journey so suddenly removed, and in a manner so unexpected.

While Tressilian was making preparations for his departure early the ensuing morning, Wayland Smith desired to speak with him; and, expressing his hope that he had been pleased with the operation of his medicine in behalf of Sir Hugh Robsart, added his desire to accompany him to court. This was indeed what Tressilian himself had several times thought of; for the shrewdness, alertness of understanding, and variety of resource, which this fellow had exhibited during the time they had travelled together, had made him sensible that his assistance might be of importance. But then Wayland was in danger from the grasp of the law; and of this Tressilian reminded him, mentioning something, at the same time, of the pincers of Pinniewinks, and the warrant of Master Justice Blindas. Wayland Smith laughed both to scorn.

"See you, sir!" said he, "I have changed my garb from that of a farrier to a serving-man; but were it still as it was, look at my moustaches—they now hang down—I will but turn them up and dye them with a tincture that I know of, and the devil would scarce know me again."

He accompanied these words with the appropriate action; and in less than a minute, by setting up his moustaches and his hair, he seemed a different person from him that had but now entered the room. Still, however, Tressilian hesitated to accept his services, and the artist became proportionably urgent.

"I owe you life and limb," he said, "and I would fain pay a part of the debt, especially as I know from Will Badger on what dangerous service your worship is bound. I do not indeed pretend to be what is called a man of mettle, one of those ruffling tear-cats, who maintain their master's quarrel with sword and buckler. Nay, I am even one of those who hold the end of a feast better than the beginning of a fray. But I know that I can serve your worship better in such quest as yours, than any of these sword-and-dagger-men, and that my head will be worth an hundred of their hands."

Tressilian still hesitated. He knew not much of this strange fellow, and was doubtful how far he could repose in him the confidence necessary to render him an useful attendant upon the present emergency. Ere he had come to a determination, the trampling of a horse was heard in the court-yard, and Master Mumblazen and Will Badger both entered hastily into Tressilian's chamber, speaking almost at the same moment.

"Here is a serving-man on the bonniest grey tit I ever see'd in my life," said Will Badger, who got the start;—"having on his arm a silver cognizance, being a fire-drake holding in his mouth a brick-bat, under a coronet of an earl's degree," said Master Mumblazen, "and bearing a letter sealed of the same."

Tressilian took the letter, which was addressed "To the worshipful Master Edmund Tressilian our loving kinsman—These—Ride, ride, ride,—for thy life, for thy life, for thy life." He then opened it and found the following contents:—

"MASTER TRESSILIAN, OUR GOOD FRIEND AND
COUSIN,

"We are at present so ill at ease, and otherwise so unhappily circumstanced, that we are desirous to have around us those of our friends, on whose loving kindness we can most especially repose confidence; amongst whom we hold our good Master Tressilian one of the foremost and nearest, both in good will and good ability. We therefore pray you, with your most convenient speed, to repair to our poor lodging, at Say's Court, near Deptford, where we will treat farther with you of matters which we deem it not fit to commit unto writing. And so we bid you heartily farewell, being your loving kinsman to command,

"RATCLIFFE, EARL OF SUSSEX."

"Send up the messenger instantly, Will Badger," said Tressilian; and as the man entered the room, he exclaimed, "Aha, Stevens, is it you? how does my good lord?"

"Ill, Master Tressilian," was the messenger's reply, "and having therefore the more need of good friends around him."

"But what is my lord's malady?" said Tressilian, anxiously, "I heard nothing of his being ill?"

"I know not, sir," replied the man, "he is very ill at ease. The leeches are at a stand, and many of his household suspect foul practice; witchcraft, or worse."

"What are the symptoms?" said Wayland Smith, stepping forward hastily.

"Anan?" said the messenger, not comprehending his meaning.

"What does he ail?" said Wayland; "where lies his disease?"

The man looked at Tressilian, as if to know whether he should answer these inquiries from a stranger, and receiving a sign in the affirmative, replied.

Stevens then hastily enumerated gradual loss of strength, nocturnal perspiration, loss of appetite, faintness, &c.

"Joined," said Wayland, "to a gnawing pain in the stomach, and a low fever."

"Even so," said the messenger, somewhat surprised.

"I know how the disease is caused," said the artist, "and I know the cause. Your master has eaten of the manna of Saint Nicholas. I know the cure too—my master shall not say I studied in his laboratory for nothing."

"How mean you?" said Tressilian, frowning; "we speak of one of the first nobles of England. Bethink you, this is no subject for buffoonery."

"God forbid!" said Wayland Smith. "I say that I know his disease, and can cure him. Remember what I did for Sir Hugh Robsart."

"We will set forth instantly," said Tressilian. "God calls us."

Accordingly, hastily mentioning this new motive for his instant departure, though without mentioning either the suspicions of Stevens, or the assurances of Wayland Smith, he took the kindest leave of Sir Hugh and the family at Lidcote Hall, who accompanied him with prayers and blessings, and, attended by Wayland and the Earl of Sussex's domestic, travelled with the utmost speed towards London.

CHAPTER XIII.

— Ay, I know you have arsenick,
Vitriol, sal-tartre, argaile, alkaly,
Cinoper: I know all. This fellow, captain,
Will come in time to be a great distiller,
And give a say (I will not say directly,
But very near) at the philosopher's stone.

BEN JONSON'S *Alchemist*.

TRESSILIAN and his attendants pressed their route with all dispatch. He had asked the smith, indeed, when their departure was resolved on, whether he would not rather chuse to avoid Berkshire, in which he had played a part so conspicuous. But Wayland returned a confident answer. He had employed the short interval they passed at Lidcote Hall in transforming himself in a wonderful manner. His wild and overgrown thicket of beard was now restrained to two small moustaches on the upper lip, turned up in a military fashion. A tailor from the village

of Lidcote (well paid) had exerted his skill, under his customer's directions, so as completely to alter Wayland's outward man, and take off from his appearance almost twenty years of age. Formerly besmeared with soot and charcoal—overgrown with hair, and bent double with the nature of his labour—disfigured too by his odd and fantastic dress, he seemed a man of fifty years old. But now, in a handsome suit of Tressilian's livery, with a sword by his side, and a buckler on his shoulder, he looked like a gay ruffling serving-man, whose age might be betwixt thirty and thirty-five, the very prime of human life. His loutish savage-looking demeanour seemed equally changed into a forward, sharp, and impudent alertness of look and action.

When challenged by Tressilian, who desired to know the cause of a metamorphosis so singular and so absolute, Wayland only answered by singing a stave from a comedy, which was then new, and was supposed, among the more favourable judges, to augur some genius on the part of the author. We are happy to preserve the couplet, which ran exactly thus,—

Ban, ban, ca Caliban—
Get a new master—Be a new man.

Although Tressilian did not recollect the verses, yet they reminded him that Wayland had once been a stage-player, a circumstance which, of itself, accounted indifferently well for the readiness with which he could assume so total a change of personal appearance. The artist himself was so confident of his disguise being completely changed, or of his having completely changed his disguise, which may be the more correct mode of speaking, that he regretted they were not to pass near his old place of retreat.

"I could venture," he said, "in my present dress, and with your worship's backing, to face Master Justice Blindas, even on a day of Quarter Sessions; and I would like to know what is become of Hobgoblin, who is like to play the devil in the world, if he can once slip the string, and leave his grannie and his Dominie.—Ay, and the scathed vault!" he said, "I would willingly have seen what havoc the explosion of so much gunpowder has made among Doctor Demetrius Doboobie's retorts and vials. I warrant me, my fame haunts the Vale of Whitehorse long after my body is rotten; and that many a lout ties up horse, lays down his silver groat, and pipes, like a sailor whistling in a calm, for Wayland Smith to come and shoe his tit for him. But the horse will catch the founders ere I answer the call."

In this particular, indeed, Wayland proved a true prophet; and so easily do fables rise, that an obscure tradition of his extraordinary practice in farriery prevails in the Vale of Whitehorse even unto this day; * and neither the tradition of Alfred's victory, nor of the celebrated Pusey Horn, are better preserved in Berkshire than the wild legend of Wayland Smith.

The haste of the travellers admitted their making

* See Camden's "*Britannia*:"—*Gough's Edition*, vol. i, page 221.

no stay upon their journey, save what the refreshment of the horses required; and as many of the places through which they passed were under the influence of the Earl of Leicester, or persons immediately dependent on him, they thought it prudent to disguise their names, and the purpose of their journey. On such occasions the agency of Wayland Smith (by which name we will continue to distinguish the artist, though his real name was Lancelot Wayland) was extremely serviceable. He seemed, indeed, to have a pleasure in displaying the alertness with which he could baffle investigation, and amuse himself by putting the curiosity of tapsters and innkeepers on a false scent. During the course of their brief journey, three different and inconsistent reports were circulated by him on their account; namely, first, that Tressilian was the Lord Deputy of Ireland, come over in disguise to take the queen's pleasure concerning the great rebel Rory Oge Mac-Carthy Mac-Mahon; secondly, that the said Tressilian was an agent of Monsieur, coming to urge his suit to the hand of Elizabeth; thirdly, that he was the Duke of Medina, come over, incognito, to adjust the quarrel betwixt Philip and that princess.

Tressilian was angry, and expostulated with the artist on the various inconveniences, and, in particular, the unnecessary degree of attention to which they were subjected, by the figments he thus circulated; but he was pacified (for who could be proof against such an argument?) by Wayland's assuring him that a general importance was attached to his own (Tressilian's) striking presence, which rendered it necessary to give an extraordinary reason for the rapidity and secrecy of his journey.

At length they approached the metropolis, where, owing to the more general recourse of strangers, their appearance excited neither observation nor inquiry; and finally they entered London itself.

It was Tressilian's purpose to go down directly to Deptford, where Lord Sussex resided, in order to be near the court, then held at Greenwich, the favourite residence of Elizabeth, and honoured as her birth-place. Still a brief halt in London was necessary; and it was somewhat prolonged by the earnest entreaties of Wayland Smith, who desired permission to take a walk through the city.

"Take thy sword and buckler, and follow me, then," said Tressilian; "I am about to walk myself, and we will go in company."

This he said, because he was not altogether so secure of the fidelity of his new retainer, as to leave sight of him, at this interesting moment, when rival factions at the court of Elizabeth were running so high. Wayland Smith willingly acquiesced in the precaution, of which he probably conjectured the motive, but only stipulated, that his master should enter the shops of such chemists or apothecaries as he should point out, in walking through Fleet-street, and permit him to make some necessary purchases. Tressilian agreed, and obeying the signal of his attendant, walked successively into more than four or five shops, where he observed that Wayland purchased in each only one single drug, in various quantities. The medicines which he first asked for, were readily furnished, each in succession, but those

which he afterwards required were less easily supplied—and Tressilian observed, that Wayland more than once, to the surprise of the shop keeper, returned the gum or herb that was offered to him, and compelled him to exchange it for the right sort, or else went on to seek it elsewhere. But one ingredient, in particular, seemed almost impossible to be found. Some chemists plainly admitted they had never seen it,—others denied that such a drug existed, excepting in the imagination of crazy alchemists,—and most of them attempted to satisfy their customer, by producing some substitute, which, when rejected by Wayland, as not being what he had asked for, they maintained possessed, in a superior degree, the self-same qualities. In general, they all displayed some curiosity concerning the purpose for which he wanted it. One old meagre chemist, to whom the artist put the usual question, in terms which Tressilian neither understood nor could recollect, answered frankly, there was none of that drug in London, unless Yoglan the Jew chanced to have some of it upon hand.

"I thought as much," said Wayland. And as soon as they left the shop, he said to Tressilian, "I crave your pardon, sir, but no artist can work without his tools. I must needs go to this Yoglan's; and I promise you, that if this detains you longer than your leisure seems to permit, you shall, nevertheless, be well repaid, by the use I will make of this rare drug. Permit me," he added, "to walk before you, for we are now to quit the broad street, and we will make double speed if I lead the way."

Tressilian acquiesced, and following the smith down a lane which turned to the left hand towards the river, he found that his guide walked on with great speed, and apparently perfect knowledge of the town, through a labyrinth of by-streets, courts, and blind alleys, until at length Wayland paused in the midst of a very narrow lane, the termination of which showed a peep of the Thames, looking misty and muddy, which back-ground was crossed by the masts of two lighters that lay waiting for the tide. The shop under which he halted had not, as in modern days, a glazed window—but a paltry canvas screen surrounded such a stall as a cobbler now occupies, having the front open, much in the manner of a fishmonger's booth of the present day. A little old smock-faced man, the very reverse of a Jew in complexion, for he was very soft-haired as well as beardless, appeared, and with many courtesies, asked Wayland what he pleased to want. He had no sooner named the drug, than the Jew started and looked surprised. "And vat might your vorship want vith that drug which is not named, mein God, in forty years I have been chemist here?"

"These questions it is no part of my commission to answer," said Wayland; "I only wish to know if you have what I want, and having it, are willing to sell it?"

"Ay, mein God, for having it that I have, and for selling it I am a chemist, and sell every drug." So saying, he exhibited a powder, and then continued, "But it will cost much monies—Vat I ave cost its weight in gold—ay, gold well-refined—I vill say six times—It comes from Mount Sinai, where we had our blessed law given forth, and the plant blossoms but once in one hundred year."

"I do not know how often it is gathered on Mount Sinai," said Wayland, after looking at the drug offered him with great disdain, "but I will wager my sword and buckler against your gaberdine, that this trash you offer me instead of what I asked for, may be had for gathering on the castle-ditch at Aleppo."

"You are a rude man," said the Jew; "and, besides, I have no better than that—or if I have, I will not sell it without order of a physician—or without you tell me what you make of it."

The artist made brief answer in a language of which Tressilian could not understand a word, and which seemed to strike the Jew with the utmost astonishment. He stared upon Wayland like one who has suddenly recognized some mighty hero or dreaded potentate, in the person of an unknown and unmarked stranger. "Holy Elias!" he exclaimed, when he had recovered the first stunning effects of his surprise; and then passing from his former suspicious and surly manner to the very extremity of obsequiousness, he cringed low to the artist, and besought him to enter his poor house, to bless his miserable threshold by crossing it.

"Vill you not taste a cup with the poor Jew, Zacharias Yoglan?—Vill you Tokay ave?—vill you Lachrymæ taste?—vill you?"

"You offend in your proffers," said Wayland; "minister to me in what I require of you, and forbear further discourse."

The rebuked Israelite took his bunch of keys, and opening with circumspection a cabinet which seemed more strongly secured than the other cases of drugs and medicines amongst which it stood, he drew out a little secret drawer, having a glass lid, and containing a small portion of a black powder. This he offered to Wayland, his manner conveying the deepest devotion towards him, though an avaricious and jealous expression, which seemed to grudge every grain of what his customer was about to possess himself, disputed ground in his countenance with the obsequious deference which he desired it should exhibit.

"Have you scales?" said Wayland.

The Jew pointed to those which lay ready for common use in the shop, but he did so with a puzzled expression of doubt and fear, which did not escape the artist.

"They must be other than these," said Wayland, sternly; "know you not that holy things lose their virtue if weighed in an unjust balance?"

The Jew hung his head, took from a steel-plated casket a pair of scales beautifully mounted, and said, as he adjusted them for the artist's use,—
"With these I do mine own experiment—one hair of the high-priest's beard would turn them."

"It suffices," said the artist; and weighed out two drachms for himself of the black powder, which he very carefully folded up, and put into his pouch with the other drugs. He then demanded the price of the Jew, who answered, shaking his head and bowing,—

"No price—no, nothing at all from such as you.—But you will see the poor Jew again? you will look into his laboratory, where, God help him, he hath dried himself to the substance of the withered

gourd of Jonah the holy prophet—You will have pity on him, and show him one little step on the great road?"

"Hush!" said Wayland, laying his finger mysteriously on his mouth, "it may be we shall meet again—thou hast already the *Scah-majm*, as thine own rabbis call it—the general creation; watch therefore, and pray, for thou must attain the knowledge of Alchahest Elixir, Samech, ere I may commune further with thee." Then returning with a slight nod the reverential congees of the Jew, he walked gravely up the lane, followed by his master, whose first observation on the scene he had just witnessed, was, that Wayland ought to have paid the man for his drug, whatever it was.

"I pay him?" said the artist; "May the foul fiend pay me if I do!—Had it not been that I thought it might displease your worship, I would have had an ounce or two of gold out of him, in exchange of the same just weight of brick-dust."

"I advise you to practise no such knavery while waiting upon me," said Tressilian.

"Did I not say," answered the artist, "that for that reason alone, I forbore him for the present.—Knavery, call you it?—why, yonder wretched skeleton hath wealth sufficient to pave the whole lane he lives in with dollars, yet scarce miss them out of his own iron chest; yet he goes mad after the philosopher's stone—and besides, he would have cheated a poor serving-man, as he thought me at first, with trash that was not worth a penny—Match for match, quoth the devil to the collier; if his false medicine was worth my good crowns, my true brick-dust is as well worth his good gold."

"It may be so for aught I know," said Tressilian, "in dealing amongst Jews and apothecaries; but understand, that to have such tricks of legerdemain practised by one attending on me, diminishes my honour, and that I will not permit them. I trust thou hast made up thy purchases?"

"I have, sir," replied Wayland; "and with these drugs will I, this very day, compound the true orvietan, that noble medicine which is so seldom found genuine and effective within these realms of Europe, for want of that most rare and precious drug which I got but now from Yoglan."

"But why not have made all your purchases at one shop?" said his master; "we have lost nearly an hour in running from one pounder of simples to another."

"Content you, sir," said Wayland. "No man shall learn my secret; and it would not be mine long, were I to buy all my materials from one chemist."

They now returned to their inn (the famous Bell-Savage); and while the Lord Sussex's servant prepared the horses for their journey, Wayland, obtaining from the cook the service of a mortar, shut himself up in a private chamber, where he mixed, pounded, and amalgamated the drugs which he had bought, each in its due proportion, with a readiness and address that plainly showed him well practised in all the manual operations of pharmacy.

By the time Wayland's electuary was prepared the horses were ready, and a short hour's riding brought them to the present habitation of Lord Sus-

sex, an ancient house, called Say's Court, near Deptford, which had long pertained to a family of that name, but had, for upwards of a century, been possessed by the ancient and honourable family of Evelyn. The present representative of that ancient house took a deep interest in the Earl of Sussex, and had willingly accommodated both him and his numerous retinue in his hospitable mansion. Say's Court was afterwards the residence of the celebrated Mr Evelyn, whose "Silva" is still the manual of British planters; and whose life, manners, and principles, as illustrated in his memoirs, ought equally to be the manual of English gentlemen.

CHAPTER XIV.

This is rare news thou tell'st me, my good fellow;
There are two bulls fierce battling on the green
For one fair heifer—if the one goes down,
The dale will be more peaceful, and the herd,
Which have small interest in their brulziement,
May pasture there in peace.

Old Play.

SAY'S COURT was watched like a beleaguered fort; and so high rose the suspicions of the time, that Tressilian and his attendants were stopped and questioned repeatedly by sentinels, both on foot and horseback, as they approached the abode of the sick earl. In truth, the high rank which Sussex held in Queen Elizabeth's favour, and his known and avowed rivalry of the Earl of Leicester, caused the utmost importance to be attached to his welfare; for, at that period we treat of, all men doubted whether he or the Earl of Leicester might ultimately have the higher rank in her regard.

Elizabeth, like many of her sex, was fond of governing by factions, so as to balance two opposing interests, and reserve in her own hand the power of making either predominate, as the interest of the state, or perhaps as her own female caprice (for to that foible even she was not superior) might finally determine. To finesse—to hold the cards—to oppose one interest to another—to bridle him who thought himself highest in her esteem, by the fears he must entertain of another equally trusted, if not equally beloved, were arts which she used through her reign, and which enabled her, though frequently giving way to the weakness of favouritism, to prevent most of its evil effects on her kingdom and government.

The two nobles, who at present stood as rivals in her favour, possessed very different pretensions to share it; yet it might be in general said, that the Earl of Sussex had been most serviceable to the queen, while Leicester was most dear to the woman. Sussex was, according to the phrase of the times, a martialist; had done good service in Ireland, and in Scotland, and especially in the great northern rebellion, in 1569, which was quelled, in a great measure, by his military talents. He was, therefore, naturally surrounded and looked up to by those who wished to make arms their road to distinction. The Earl of Sussex, moreover, was of more ancient and honourable descent than his rival, uniting in his person the representation of the Fitz-Walters, as

VOL. III.

well as of the Ratcliffes; while the scutcheon of Leicester was stained by the degradation of his grandfather, the oppressive minister of Henry VII., and scarce improved by that of his father, the unhappy Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, executed on Tower-Hill, August 22, 1553. But in person, features, and address, weapons so formidable in the court of a female sovereign, Leicester had advantage more than sufficient to counterbalance the military services, high blood, and frank bearing of the Earl of Sussex; and he bore, in the eye of the court and kingdom, the higher share in Elizabeth's favour, though (for such was her uniform policy) by no means so decidedly expressed as to warrant him against the final preponderance of his rival's pretensions. The illness of Sussex, therefore, happened so opportunely for Leicester, as to give rise to strange surmises among the public; while the followers of the one earl were filled with the deepest apprehensions, and those of the other with the highest hopes of its probable issue. Meanwhile,—for in that old time men never forgot the probability that the matter might be determined by length of sword,—the retainers of each noble flocked around their patron, appeared well armed in the vicinity of the court itself, and disturbed the ear of the sovereign by their frequent and alarming debates, held even within the precincts of her palace. This preliminary statement is necessary, to render what follows intelligible to the reader.

On Tressilian's arrival at Say's Court, he found the place filled with the retainers of the Earl of Sussex, and of the gentlemen who came to attend their patron in his illness. Arms were in every hand, and a deep gloom on every countenance, as if they had apprehended an immediate and violent assault from the opposite faction. In the hall, however, to which Tressilian was ushered by one of the earl's attendants, while another went to inform Sussex of his arrival, he found only two gentlemen in waiting. There was a remarkable contrast betwixt their dress, appearance, and manners. The attire of the elder gentleman, a person as it seemed of quality and in the prime of life, was very plain and soldier-like; his stature low, and his features of that kind which express sound common sense, without a grain of vivacity or imagination. The younger, who seemed about twenty, or upwards, was clad in the gayest habit used by persons of quality at the period, wearing a crimson velvet cloak richly ornamented with lace and embroidery, with a bonnet of the same, encircled with a gold chain turned three times round it, and secured by a medal. His hair was adjusted very nearly like that of some fine gentlemen of our own time; that is, it was combed upwards, and made to stand as it were on end; and in his ears he wore a pair of silver ear-rings, having each a pearl of considerable size. The countenance of this youth, besides being regularly handsome and accompanied by a fine person, was animated and striking in a degree that seemed to speak at once the firmness of a decided and the fire of an enterprising character—the power of reflection, and the promptitude of determination.

Both these gentlemen reclined nearly in the same posture on benches near each other; but each, seem-

ing engaged in his own meditations, looked straight upon the wall which was opposite to them, without speaking to his companion. The looks of the elder were of that sort, which convinced the beholder, that, in looking on the wall, he saw no more than the side of an old hall hung around with cloaks, antlers, bucklers, old pieces of armour, partisans, and the similar articles which were usually the furniture of such a place. The look of the younger gallant had in it something imaginative; he was sunk in reverie, and it seemed as if the empty space of air betwixt him and the wall, were the stage of a theatre on which his fancy was mustering his own *dramatis personæ*, and treating him with sights far different from those which his awakened and earthly vision could have offered.

At the entrance of Tressilian both started from their musing, and bade him welcome; the younger, in particular, with great appearance of animation and cordiality.

"Thou art welcome, Tressilian," said the youth; "thy philosophy stole thee from us when this household had objects of ambition to offer—it is an honest philosophy, since it returns thee to us, when there are only dangers to be shared."

"Is my lord, then, so dangerously indisposed?" said Tressilian.

"We fear the very worst," answered the elder gentleman, "and by the worst practice."

"Fye!" replied Tressilian; "my Lord of Leicester is honourable."

"What doth he with such attendants, then, as he hath about him?" said the younger gallant. "The man who raises the devil may be honest, but he is answerable for the mischief which the fiend does, for all that."

"And is this all that are of you, my mates," said Tressilian, "that are about my lord in his utmost straits?"

"No, no," replied the elder gentleman, "there are Tracy, Markham, and several more; but we keep watch here by two at once, and some are weary and are sleeping in the gallery above."

"And some," said the young man, "are gone down to the dock yonder at Deptford, to look out such a hulk as they may purchase by clubbing their broken fortunes; and so soon as all is over, we will lay our noble lord in a noble green grave, have a blow at those who have hurried him thither, if opportunity suits, and then sail for the Indies with hearts as light as our purses."

"It may be," said Tressilian, "an' I will embrace the same purpose, so soon as I have settled some business at court."

"Thou business at court!" they both exclaimed at once; "and thou make the Indian voyage!"

"Why, Tressilian," said the younger man, "art thou not wedded, and beyond these flaws of fortune, that drive folks out to sea when their bark bears fairest for the haven?—What has become of the lovely Indamira that was to match my Amoret for truth and beauty?"

"Speak not of her!" said Tressilian, averting his face.

"Ay, stands it so with you?" said the youth, taking his hand very affectionately; "then, fear not I

will again touch the green wound—But it is strange as well as sad news. Are none of our fair and merry fellowship to escape shipwreck of fortune and happiness in this sudden tempest? I had hoped thou wert in harbour, at least, my dear Edmund—But truly says another dear friend of thy name,

What man that sees the ever whirling wheel
Of Chance, the which all mortal things doth sway,
But that thereby doth find and plainly feel,
How Mutability in them doth play
Her cruel sports to many men's decay."

The elder gentleman had risen from his bench, and was pacing the hall with some impatience, while the youth, with much earnestness and feeling, recited these lines. When he had done, the other wrapped himself in his cloak, and again stretched himself down, saying, "I marvel, Tressilian, you will feed the lad in this silly humour. If there were aught to draw a judgment upon a virtuous and honourable household like my lord's, renounce me if I think not it were this piping, whining, childish trick of poetry that came among us with Master Walter Wittypate here and his comrades, twisting into all manner of uncouth and incomprehensible forms of speech the honest, plain English phrase which God gave us to express our meaning withal."

"Blount believes," said his comrade, laughing, "the devil woo'd Eve in rhyme, and that the mystic meaning of the Tree of Knowledge refers solely to the art of clashing rhymes and meting out hexameters."

At this moment the earl's chamberlain entered, and informed Tressilian that his lord required to speak with him.

He found Lord Sussex dressed, but unbraced and lying on his couch, and was shocked at the alteration disease had made in his person. The earl received him with the most friendly cordiality, and inquired into the state of his courtship. Tressilian evaded his inquiries for a moment, and turning his discourse on the earl's own health, he discovered, to his surprise, that the symptoms of his disorder corresponded minutely with those which Wayland had predicated concerning it. He hesitated not, therefore, to communicate to Sussex the whole history of his attendant, and the pretensions he set up to cure the disorder under which he laboured. The earl listened with incredulous attention until the name of Demetrius was mentioned, and then suddenly called to his secretary to bring him a certain casket which contained papers of importance. "Take out from thence," he said, "the declaration of the rascal cook whom we had under examination, and look heedfully if the name of Demetrius be not there mentioned."

The secretary turned to the passage at once, and read, "And said declarant, being examined, saith, That he remembers having made the sauce to the said sturgeon-fish, after eating of which, the said noble lord was taken ill; and he put the usual ingredients and condiments therein, namely"—

"Pass over his trash," said the earl, "and see whether he had not been supplied with his materials by a herbalist called Demetrius."

"It is even so," answered the secretary. "And he adds, he has not since seen the said Demetrius."

"This accords with thy fellow's story, Tressilian," said the earl; "call him hither."

On being summoned to the earl's presence, Wayland Smith told his former tale with firmness and consistency.

"It may be," said the earl, "thou art sent by those who have begun this work, to end it for them; but bethink, if I miscarry under thy medicine, it may go hard with thee."

"That were severe measure," said Wayland, "since the issue of medicine, and the end of life, are in God's disposal. But I will stand the risk. I have not lived so long under ground, to be afraid of a grave."

"Nay, if thou be'st so confident," said the Earl of Sussex, "I will take the risk too, for the learned can do nothing for me. Tell me how this medicine is to be taken."

"That will I do presently," said Wayland; "but allow me to condition that, since I incur all the risk of this treatment, no other physician shall be permitted to interfere with it."

"That is but fair," replied the earl; "and now prepare your drug."

While Wayland obeyed the earl's commands, his servants, by the artist's direction, undressed their master, and placed him in bed.

"I warn you," he said, "that the first operation of this medicine will be to produce a heavy sleep, during which time the chamber must be kept undisturbed; as the consequences may otherwise be fatal. I myself will watch by the earl, with any of the gentlemen of his chamber."

"Let all leave the room, save Stanley and this good fellow," said the earl.

"And saving me also," said Tressilian. "I too am deeply interested in the effects of this potion."

"Be it so, good friend," said the earl; "and now for our experiment; but first call my secretary and chamberlain."

"Bear witness," he continued, when these officers arrived, "bear witness for me, gentlemen, that our honourable friend Tressilian is in no way responsible for the effects which this medicine may produce upon me, the taking it being my own free action and choice, in regard I believe it to be a remedy which God has furnished me, by unexpected means, to recover me of my present malady. Commend me to my noble and princely mistress; and say that I live and die her true servant, and wish to all about her throne the same singleness of heart and will to serve her, with more ability to do so than hath been assigned to poor Thomas Ratcliffe."

He then folded his hands, and seemed for a second or two absorbed in mental devotion, then took the potion in his hand, and, pausing, regarded Wayland with a look that seemed designed to penetrate his very soul, but which caused no anxiety or hesitation in the countenance or manner of the artist.

"Here is nothing to be feared," said Sussex to Tressilian; and swallowed the medicine without farther hesitation.

"I am now to pray your lordship," said Wayland, "to dispose yourself to rest as commodiously as you can; and of you, gentlemen, to remain as still and mute as if you waited at your mother's death-bed."

The chamberlain and secretary then withdrew, giving orders that all doors be bolted, and all noise in the house strictly prohibited. Several gentlemen were voluntary watchers in the hall, but none remained in the chamber of the sick earl, save his groom of the chamber Stanley, the artist, and Tressilian.—Wayland Smith's predictions were speedily accomplished, and a sleep fell upon the earl, so deep and sound, that they who watched his bedside began to fear, that, in his weakened state, he might pass away without awakening from his lethargy. Wayland Smith himself appeared anxious, and felt the temples of the earl slightly, from time to time; attending particularly to the state of respiration, which was full and deep, but at the same time easy and uninterrupted.

CHAPTER XV.

You logger-headed and unpolish'd grooms,
What, no attendance, no regard, no duty?
Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

Taming of the Shrew.

THERE is no period at which men look worse in the eyes of each other, or feel more uncomfortable, than when the first dawn of day-light finds them watchers. Even a beauty of the first order, after the vigils of a ball are interrupted by the dawn, would do wisely to withdraw herself from the gaze of her fondest and most partial admirers. Such was the pale, inauspicious, and ungrateful light, which began to beam upon those who kept watch all night, in the hall at Say's Court, and which mingled its cold pale blue diffusion with the red, yellow, and smoky beams of expiring lamps and torches. The young gallant, whom we noticed in our last chapter, had left the room for a few minutes, to learn the cause of a knocking at the outward gate, and on his return was so struck with the forlorn and ghastly aspects of his companions of the watch, that he exclaimed, "Pity of my heart, my masters, how like owls you look! Methinks, when the sun rises, I shall see you flutter off with your eyes dazzled, to stick yourselves into the next ivy-tod or ruined steeple."

"Hold thy peace, thou gibing fool," said Blount, "hold thy peace. Is this a time for jeering, when the manhood of England is perchance dying within a wall's breadth of thee?"

"There thou liest," replied the gallant.

"How, lie!" exclaimed Blount, starting up, "lie, and to me?"

"Why, so thou didst, thou peevish fool," answered the youth; "thou didst lie on that bench even now, didst thou not? But art thou not a hasty coxcomb, to pick up a wry word so wrathfully? Nevertheless, loving and honouring my lord as truly as thou, or any one, I do say, that should Heaven take him from us, all England's manhood dies not with him."

"Ay," replied Blount, "a good portion will survive with thee, doubtless."

"And a good portion with thyself, Blount, and with stout Markham here, and Tracy, and all of us. But I am he will best employ the talent Heaven has given to us all."

"As how, I prithee?" said Blount; "tell us your mystery of multiplying."

"Why, sirs," answered the youth, "ye are like goodly land, which bears no crop because it is not quickened by manure; but I have that rising spirit in me, which will make my poor faculties labour to keep pace with it. My ambition will keep my brain at work, I warrant thee."

"I pray to God it does not drive thee mad," said Blount; "for my part, if we lose our noble lord, I bid adieu to the court and to the camp both. I have five hundred fowl acres in Norfolk, and thither will I, and change the court pantoufle for the country hob-nail."

"O base transmutation!" exclaimed his antagonist; "thou hast already got the true rustic slouch—thy shoulders stoop, as if thine hands were at the stilt of the plough, and thou hast a kind of earthy smell about thee, instead of being perfumed with essence, as a gallant and courtier should. On my soul, thou hast stolen out to roll thyself on a hay mow. Thy only excuse will be to swear by thy hilts, that a farmer had a fair daughter."

"I pray thee, Walter," said another of the company, "cease thy raillery, which suits neither time nor place, and tell us who was at the gate just now."

"Doctor Masters, physician to her grace in ordinary, sent by her especial orders to inquire after the earl's health," answered Walter.

"Ha! what!" exclaimed Tracy; "that was no slight mark of favour; if the earl can but come through, he will match with Leicester yet. Is Masters with my lord at present?"

"Nay," replied Walter, "he is half way back to Greenwich by this time, and in high dudgeon."

"Thou didst not refuse him admittance?" exclaimed Tracy.

"Thou wert not surely so mad?" ejaculated Blount.

"I refused him admittance as flatly, Blount, as you would refuse a penny to a blind beggar; as obstinately, Tracy, as thou didst ever deny access to a dun."

"Why, in the fiend's name, didst thou trust him to go to the gate?" said Blount to Tracy.

"It suited his years better than mine," answered Tracy; "but he has undone us all now thoroughly. My lord may live or die, he will never have a look of favour from her majesty again."

"Nor the means of making fortunes for his followers," said the young gallant, smiling contemptuously;—"there lies the sore point that will brook no handling. My good sirs, I sounded my lamentations over my lord somewhat less loudly than some of you; but when the point comes of doing him service, I will yield to none of you. Had this learned leech entered, think'st thou not there had been such a coil betwixt him and Tressilian's mediciner, that not the sleeper only, but the very dead might have awakened? I know what larum belongs to the discord of doctors."

"And who is to take the blame of opposing the queen's orders?" said Tracy; "for, undeniably, Doctor Masters came with her grace's positive commands to cure the earl."

"I, who have done the wrong, will bear the blame," said Walter.

"Thus, then, off fly the dreams of court favour thou hast nourished," said Blount; "and despite all thy boasted art and ambition, Devonshire will see thee shine a true younger brother, fit to sit low at the board, carve turn-about with the chaplain, look that the hounds be fed, and see the squire's girths drawn when he goes a hunting."

"Not so," said the young man, colouring, "not while Ireland and the Netherlands have wars, and not while the sea hath pathless waves. The rich west hath lands undreamed of, and Britain contains bold hearts to venture on the quest of them.—Adieu for a space, my masters. I go to walk in the court and look to the sentinels."

"The lad hath quicksilver in his veins, that is certain," said Blount, looking at Markham.

"He hath that both in brain and blood," said Markham, "which may either make or mar him. But, in closing the door against Masters, he hath done a daring and loving piece of service; for Tressilian's fellow hath ever averred, that to wake the earl were death, and Masters would wake the Seven Sleepers themselves, if he thought they slept not by the regular ordinance of medicine."

Morning was well advanced when Tressilian, fatigued and over-watched, came down to the hall with the joyful intelligence, that the earl had awakened of himself, that he found his internal complaints much mitigated, and spoke with a cheerfulness, and looked round with a vivacity, which of themselves showed a material and favourable change had taken place. Tressilian at the same time commanded the attendance of one or two of his followers, to report what had passed during the night, and to relieve the watchers in the earl's chamber.

When the message of the queen was communicated to the Earl of Sussex, he at first smiled at the repulse which the physician had received from his zealous young follower, but instantly recollecting himself, he commanded Blount, his master of the horse, instantly to take boat and go down the river to the Palace of Greenwich, taking young Walter and Tracy with him, and make a suitable compliment, expressing his grateful thanks to his sovereign, and mentioning the cause why he had not been enabled to profit by the assistance of the wise and learned Doctor Masters.

"A plague on it," said Blount, as he descended the stairs, "had he sent me with a cartel to Leicester, I think I should have done his errand indifferently well. But to go to our gracious sovereign, before whom all words must be lackered over either with gilding or with sugar, is such a confectionary matter as clean baffles my poor old English brain.—Come with me, Tracy, and come you too, Master Walter Wittypate, that art the cause of our having all this ado. Let us see if thy neat brain, that frames so many flashy fireworks, can help out a plain fellow at need with some of thy shrewd devices."

"Never fear, never fear!" exclaimed the youth, "it is I will help you through—let me but fetch my cloak."

"Why, thou hast it on thy shoulders," said Blount—"the lad is mazed."

"No, this is Tracy's old mantle," answered Walter; "I go not with thee to court unless as a gentleman should."

"Why," said Blount, "thy braveries are like to dazzle the eyes of none but some poor groom or porter."

"I know that," said the youth; "but I am resolved I will have my own cloak, ay, and brush my doublet to boot, ere I stir forth with you."

"Well, well," said Blount, "here is a coil about a doublet and a cloak!—get thyself ready, a God's name."

They were soon launched on the princely bosom of the broad Thames, upon which the sun now shone forth in all its splendour.

"There are two things scarce matched in the universe," said Walter to Blount,—“the sun in heaven and the Thames on the earth.”

"The one will light us to Greenwich well enough," said Blount, "and the other would take us there a little faster if it were ebb tide."

"And this is all thou think'st—all thou carest—all thou deem'st the use of the King of Elements, and the King of Rivers, to guide three such poor caitiffs, as thyself, and me, and Tracy, upon an idle journey of courtly ceremony!"

"It is no errand of my seeking, faith!" replied Blount, "and I could excuse both the sun and the Thames the trouble of carrying me where I have no great mind to go; and where I expect but dog's wages for my trouble—And by my honour," he added, looking out from the head of the boat, "it seems to me as if our message were a sort of labour in vain; for see, the queen's barge lies at the stairs, as if her majesty were about to take water."

It was even so. The royal barge, manned with the queen's watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did indeed lie at the great stairs which ascended from the river, and along with it two or three other boats for transporting such part of her retinue as were not in immediate attendance on the royal person. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberds the passage from the palace-gate to the river side, and all seemed in readiness for the queen's coming forth, although the day was yet so early.

"By my faith, this bodes us no good!" said Blount; "it must be some perilous cause puts her grace in motion thus untimely. By my counsel, we were best put back again, and tell the earl what we have seen."

"Tell the earl what we have seen!" said Walter, "why, what have we seen but a boat, and men with scarlet jerkins, and halberds in their hands? Let us do his errand, and tell him what the queen says in reply."

So saying, he caused the boat to pull towards a landing-place at some distance from the principal one, which it would not, at that moment, have been thought respectful to approach, and jumped on shore, followed, though with reluctance, by his cautious and timid companion, Blount. As they approached the gate of the palace, one of the sergeant porters told them they could not at present enter, as her majesty

was in the act of coming forth. The gentlemen used the name of the Earl of Sussex; but it proved no charm to subdue the officer, who alleged, in reply, that it was as much as his post was worth, to disobey in the least tittle the commands which he had received.

"Nay, I told you as much before," said Blount; "do, I pray you, my dear Walter, let us take boat and return."

"Not till I see the queen come forth," returned the youth, composedly.

"Thou art mad, stark mad, by the mass!" answered Blount.

"And thou," said Walter, "art turned coward of the sudden. I have seen thee face half a score of shag-headed Irish kernes to thy own share of them, and now thou wouldst blink and go back to shun the frown of a fair lady!"

At this moment the gates opened, and ushers began to issue forth in array, preceded and flanked by the band of gentlemen pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, yet so disposed around her, that she could see and be seen on all sides, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a sovereign was called beauty, and who would in the lowest rank of life have been truly judged a noble figure, joined to a striking and commanding physiognomy. She leant on the arm of Lord Hunsdon, whose relation to her by her mother's side often procured him such distinguished marks of Elizabeth's intimacy.

The young cavalier we have so often mentioned had probably never yet approached so near the person of his sovereign, and he pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted, in order to avail himself of the present opportunity. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept drawing him backwards, till Walter shook him off impatiently, and letting his rich cloak drop carelessly from one shoulder; a natural action, which served, however, to display to the best advantage his well-proportioned person; unbonneting at the same time, he fixed his eager gaze on the queen's approach, with a mixture of respectful curiosity, and modest yet ardent admiration, which suited so well with his fine features, that the warders, struck with his rich attire and noble countenance, suffered him to approach the ground over which the queen was to pass, somewhat closer than was permitted to ordinary spectators. Thus the adventurous youth stood full in Elizabeth's eye,—an eye never indifferent to the admiration which she deservedly excited among her subjects, or to the fair proportions of external form which chanced to distinguish any of her courtiers. Accordingly, she fixed her keen glance on the youth, as she approached the place where he stood, with a look in which surprise at his boldness seemed to be unmingled with resentment, while a trifling accident happened which attracted her attention towards him yet more strongly. The night had been rainy, and just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot, so as to ensure her stepping over it dry shod. Elizabeth

looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound reverence, and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The queen was confused, and blushed in her turn, nodded her head, hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge without saying a word.

"Come along, sir coxcomb," said Blount; "your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot. Nay, if you had meant to make a foot-cloth of your mantle, better have kept Tracy's old drab-de-buree, which despises all colours."

"This cloak," said the youth, taking it up and folding it, "shall never be brushed while in my possession."

"And that will not be long, if you learn not a little more economy—we shall have you in *cuerpo* soon, as the Spaniard says."

Their discourse was here interrupted by one of the Band of Pensioners.

"I was sent," said he, after looking at them attentively, "to a gentleman who hath no cloak, or a muddy one.—You sir, I think," addressing the younger cavalier, "are the man; you will please to follow me."

"He is in attendance on me," said Blount; "on me the noble Earl of Sussex's master of horse."

"I have nothing to say to that," answered the messenger; "my orders are directly from her majesty, and concern this gentleman only."

So saying, he walked away, followed by Walter, leaving Blount behind, with his eyes almost starting from his head with the excess of his astonishment. At length he gave vent to it in an exclamation.—"Who the good jere would have thought this!" And shaking his head with a mysterious air, he walked to his own boat, embarked, and returned to Deptford.

The young cavalier was, in the meanwhile, guided to the water-side by the pensioner, who showed him considerable respect; a circumstance which, to persons in his situation, may be considered as an augury of no small consequence. He ushered him into one of the wherries which lay ready to attend the queen's barge, which was already proceeding up the river, with the advantage of that flood-tide, of which, in the course of their descent, Blount had complained to his associates.

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition at the signal of the gentleman pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the queen's boat, where she sate beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies, and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the queen's order apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come alongside, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the queen's barge, which he performed with graceful agility at the fore part of the boat, and was brought aft to the queen's presence, the wherry at the same time dropping into the rear. The youth underwent the gaze of majesty, not the less gracefully that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The muddled

cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the queen introduced the conversation.

"You have this day spoiled a gay mantle in our service, young man. We thank you for your service, though the manner of offering it was unusual, and something bold."

"In a sovereign's need," answered the youth, "it is each liege-man's duty to be bold."

"God's pity! that was well said, my lord," said the queen, turning to a grave person who sate by her, and answered with a grave inclination of the head, and something of a mumbled assent. "Well, young man, your gallantry shall not go unrewarded. Go to the wardrobe keeper, and he shall have orders to supply the suit which you have cast away in our service. Thou shalt have a suit, and that of the newest cut, I promise thee, on the word of a princess."

"May it please your grace," said Walter, hesitating, "it is not for so humble a servant of your majesty to measure out your bounties; but if it became me to chuse"—

"Thou wouldst have gold, I warrant me," said the queen, interrupting him; "fie, young man! I take shame to say, that in our capital, such and so various are the means of thriftless folly, that to give gold to youth is giving fuel to fire, and furnishing them with the means of self-destruction. If I live and reign, these means of unchristian excess shall be abridged. Yet thou mayst be poor," she added, "or thy parents may be—It shall be gold if thou wilt, but thou shalt answer to me for the use on't."

Walter waited patiently until the queen had done, and then modestly assured her, that gold was still less in his wish than the raiment her majesty had before offered.

"How, boy!" said the queen, "neither gold nor garment? What is it thou wouldst have of me, then?"

"Only permission, madam—if it is not asking too high an honour—permission to wear the cloak which did you this trifling service."

"Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy!" said the queen.

"It is no longer mine," said Walter; "when your majesty's foot touched it, it became a fit mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner."

The queen again blushed; and endeavoured to cover, by laughing, a slight degree of not unpleasant surprise and confusion.

"Heard you ever the like, my lords? The youth's head is turned with reading romances—I must know something of him, that I may send him safe to his friends.—What art thou?"

"A gentleman of the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your grace, sent hither with his master of horse, upon a message to your majesty."

In a moment the gracious expression which Elizabeth's face had hitherto maintained, gave way to an expression of haughtiness and severity.

"My Lord of Sussex," she said, "has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon ours. We sent but this morning the physician in ordinary of our chamber, and that at no usual

time, understanding his lordship's illness to be more dangerous than we had before apprehended. There is at no court in Europe a man more skilled in his holy and most useful science than Doctor Masters, and he came from us to our subject. Nevertheless, he found the gate of Say's Court defended by men with culverins, as if it had been on the Borders of Scotland, not in the vicinity of our court; and when he demanded admittance in our name, it was stubbornly refused. For this slight of a kindness, which had but too much of condescension in it, we will receive, at present at least, no excuse; and some such we suppose to have been the purport of my Lord of Sussex's message.

This was uttered in a tone, and with a gesture, which made Lord Sussex's friends who were within hearing tremble. He to whom the speech was addressed, however, trembled not; but with great deference and humility, as soon as the queen's passion gave him an opportunity, he replied:—"So please your most gracious majesty, I was charged with no apology from the Earl of Sussex."

"With what were you then charged, sir?" said the queen, with the impetuosity, which, amid nobler qualities, strongly marked her character; "was it with a justification?—or, God's death, with a defiance?"

"Madam," said the young man, "my Lord of Sussex knew the offence approached towards treason, and could think of nothing save of securing the offender, and placing him in your majesty's hands, and at your mercy. The noble earl was fast asleep when your most gracious message reached him, a potion having been administered to that purpose by his physician; and his lordship knew not of the ungracious repulse your majesty's royal and most comfortable message had received, until after he awoke this morning."

"And which of his domestics then, in the name of Heaven, presumed to reject my message, without even admitting my own physician to the presence of him whom I sent him to attend?" said the queen, much surprised.

"The offender, madam, is before you," replied Walter, bowing very low; "the full and sole blame is mine; and my lord has most justly sent me to abye the consequences of a fault, of which he is as innocent as a sleeping man's dreams can be of a waking man's actions."

"What! was it thou?—thou thyself, that repelled my messenger and my physician from Say's Court?" said the queen. "What could occasion such boldness in one who seems devoted—that is, whose exterior bearing shows devotion—to his sovereign?"

"Madam," said the youth,—who, notwithstanding an assumed appearance of severity, thought that he saw something in the queen's face that resembled not implacability,—“we say in our country, that the physician is for the time the liege sovereign of his patient. Now, my noble master was then under dominion of a leech, by whose advice he hath greatly profited, who had issued his commands that his patient should not that night be disturbed, on the very peril of his life.”

"Thy master hath trusted some false varlet of an empiric!" said the queen.

"I know not, madam, but by the fact, that he is now—this very morning—awakened much refreshed and strengthened, from the only sleep he hath had for many hours."

The nobles looked at each other, but more with the purpose to see what each thought of this news, than to exchange any remarks on what had happened. The queen answered hastily, and without affecting to disguise her satisfaction, "By my word, I am glad he is better. But thou wert over bold to deny the access of my Doctor Masters. Know'st thou not the Holy Writ saith, 'in the multitude of counsel there is safety?'"

"Ay, madam," said Walter, "but I have heard learned men say, that the safety spoken of is for the physicians, not for the patient."

"By my faith, child, thou hast pushed me home," said the queen, laughing; "for my Hebrew learning does not come quite at a call.—How say you, my Lord of Lincoln? Hath the lad given a just interpretation of the text?"

"The word *safety*, most gracious madam," said the Bishop of Lincoln, "for so hath been translated, it may be somewhat hastily, the Hebrew word, being"—

"My lord," said the queen, interrupting him, "we said we had forgotten our Hebrew. But for thee, young man, what is thy name and birth?"

"Raleigh is my name, most gracious queen, the youngest son of a large but honourable family of Devonshire."

"Raleigh?" said Elizabeth, after a moment's recollection, "have we not heard of your service in Ireland?"

"I have been so fortunate as to do some service there, madam," replied Raleigh, "scarce, however, of consequence sufficient to reach your grace's ears."

"They hear farther than you think of," said the queen, graciously, "and have heard of a youth who defended a ford in Shannon against a whole band of wild Irish rebels, until the stream ran purple with their blood and his own."

"Some blood I may have lost," said the youth, looking down, "but it was where my best is due; and that is in your majesty's service."

The queen paused, and then said hastily, "You are very young to have fought so well, and to speak so well. But you must not escape your penance for turning back Masters—the poor man hath caught cold on the river; for our order reached him when he was just returned from certain visits in London, and he held it matter of loyalty and conscience instantly to set forth again. So hark ye, Master Raleigh, see thou fail not to wear thy muddy cloak, in token of penitence, till our pleasure be farther known. And here," she added, giving him a jewel of gold, in the form of a chess-man, "I give thee this to wear at the collar."

Raleigh, to whom nature had taught intuitively, as it were, those courtly arts which many scarce acquire from long experience, knelt, and, as he took from her hand the jewel, kissed the fingers which gave it. He knew, perhaps, better than almost any of the courtiers who surrounded her, how to mingle the devotion claimed by the queen with

the gallantry due to her personal beauty—and in this, his first attempt to unite them, he succeeded so well, as at once to gratify Elizabeth's personal vanity, and her love of power.

His master, the Earl of Sussex, had the full advantage of the satisfaction which Raleigh had afforded Elizabeth, on their first interview.

"My lords and ladies," said the queen, looking around to the retinue by whom she was attended, "methinks, since we are upon the river, it were well to renounce our present purpose of going to the city, and surprise this poor Earl of Sussex with a visit. He is ill, and suffering doubtless under the fear of our displeasure, from which he hath been honestly cleared by the frank avowal of this malapert boy. What think ye? were it not an act of charity to give him such consolation as the thanks of a queen, much bound to him for his loyal service, may perchance best minister?"

It may be readily supposed, that none to whom this speech was addressed, ventured to oppose its purport.

"Your grace," said the Bishop of Lincoln, "is the breath of our nostrils." The men of war averred, that the face of the sovereign was a whetstone to the soldier's sword; while the men of state were not less of opinion, that the light of the queen's countenance was a lamp to the paths of her councillors; and the ladies agreed, with one voice, that no noble in England so well deserved the regard of England's royal mistress as the Earl of Sussex—the Earl of Leicester's right being reserved entire; so some of the more politic worded their assent—an exception to which Elizabeth paid no apparent attention. The barge had, therefore, orders to deposit its royal freight at Deptford, at the nearest and most convenient point of communication with Say's Court, in order that the queen might satisfy her royal and maternal solicitude, by making personal inquiries after the health of the Earl of Sussex.

Raleigh, whose acute spirit foresaw and anticipated important consequences from the most trifling events, hastened to ask the queen's permission to go in the skiff, and announce the royal visit to his master; ingeniously suggesting, that the joyful surprise might prove prejudicial to his health, since the richest and most generous cordials may sometimes be fatal to those who have been long in a languishing state.

But whether the queen deemed it too presumptuous in so young a courtier to interpose his opinion unasked, or whether she was moved by a recurrence of the feeling of jealousy which had been instilled into her, by reports that the earl kept armed men about his person, she desired Raleigh, sharply, to reserve his counsel till it was required of him, and repeated her former orders, to be landed at Deptford, adding, "We will ourselves see what sort of household my Lord of Sussex keeps about him."

"Now the lord have pity on us!" said the young courtier to himself. "Good hearts, the earl hath many a one round him; but good heads are scarce with us—and he himself is too ill to give direction. And Blount will be at his morning meal of Yarmouth herrings and ale; and Tracy will have his beastly black puddings and Rhenish; those

thorough-paced Welchmen, Thomas ap Rice and Evan Evans, will be at work on their leek porridge and toasted cheese—and she detests, they say, all coarse meats, evil smells, and strong wines. Could they but think of burning some rosemary in the great hall! but *vogue la galère*, all must now be trusted to chance. Luck hath done indifferent well for me this morning, for I trust I have spoiled a cloak, and made a court fortune—May she do as much for my gallant patron!"

The royal barge soon stopped at Deptford; and, amid the loud shouts of the populace, which her presence never failed to excite, the queen, with a canopy borne over her head, walked, accompanied by her retinue, towards Say's Court, where the distant acclamations of the people gave the first notice of her arrival. Sussex, who was in the act of advising with Tressilian how he should make up the supposed breach in the queen's favour, was infinitely surprised at learning her immediate approach—not that the queen's custom of visiting her more distinguished nobility, whether in health or sickness, could be unknown to him; but the suddenness of the communication left no time for those preparations with which he well knew Elizabeth loved to be greeted, and the rudeness and confusion of his military household, much increased by his late illness, rendered him altogether unprepared for her reception.

Cursing internally the chance which thus brought her gracious visitation on him unaware, he hastened down with Tressilian, to whose eventful and interesting story he had just given an attentive ear.

"My worthy friend," he said, "such support as I can give your accusation of Varney, you have a right to expect, alike from justice and gratitude. Chance will presently show whether I can do aught with our sovereign, or whether, in very deed, my meddling in your affair, may not rather prejudice than serve you."

Thus spoke Sussex, while hastily casting around him a loose robe of sables, and adjusting his person in the best manner he could to meet the eye of his sovereign. But no hurried attention bestowed on his apparel could remove the ghastly effects of long illness on a countenance which nature had marked with features rather strong than pleasing. Besides, he was low of stature; and though broad-shouldered, athletic, and fit for martial achievements, his presence in a peaceful hall was not such as ladies love to look upon; a personal disadvantage, which was supposed to give Sussex, though esteemed and honoured by his sovereign, considerable disadvantage when compared with Leicester, who was alike remarkable for elegance of manners and for beauty of person.

The earl's utmost dispatch only enabled him to meet the queen as she entered the great hall, and he at once perceived there was a cloud on her brow. Her jealous eye had noticed the martial array of armed gentlemen and retainers with which the mansion-house was filled, and her first words expressed her disapprobation—"Is this a royal garrison, my Lord of Sussex? or have we by accident overshot Say's Court, and landed at our Tower of London?"

Lord Sussex hastened to offer some apology.

"It needs not," she said. "My lord, we intend speedily to take up a certain quarrel between your lordship and another great lord of our household, and at the same time to reprehend this uncivilized and dangerous practice of surrounding yourselves with armed, and even with ruffianly followers, as if in the neighbourhood of our capital, nay, in the very verge of our royal residence, you were preparing to wage civil war with each other. We are glad to see you so well recovered, my lord, though without the assistance of the learned physician whom we sent to you—Urge no excuse—we know how that matter fell out, and we have corrected for it the wild slip, young Raleigh.—By the way, my lord, we will speedily relieve your household of him, and take him into our own. Something there is about him which merits to be better nurtured than he is like to be amongst your very military followers."

To this proposal, Sussex, though scarce understanding how the queen came to make it, could only bow and express his obedience. He then entreated her to remain till refreshment could be offered, but in this he could not prevail. And, after a few compliments of a much colder and more common-place character than might have been expected from a step so decidedly favourable as a personal visit, the queen took her leave of Say's Court, having brought confusion thither along with her, and leaving doubt and apprehension behind.

CHAPTER XVI.

Then call them to our presence. Face to face,
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
The accuser and accused freely speak ;—
High-stomach'd are they both and full of ire,
In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

Richard II.

"I AM ordered to attend court to-morrow," said Leicester, speaking to Varney, "to meet, as they surmise, my Lord of Sussex. The queen intends to take up matters betwixt us. This comes of her visit to Say's Court, of which you must needs speak so lightly."

"I maintain it was nothing," said Varney; "nay, I know from a sure intelligencer, who was within ear-shot of much that was said, that Sussex has lost rather than gained by that visit. The queen said, when she stepped into the boat, that Say's Court looked like a guard-house, and smelt like an hospital. 'Like a cook's shop in Ram's Alley rather,' said the Countess of Rutland, who is ever your lordship's good friend. And then my Lord of Lincoln must needs put in his holy oar, and say, that my Lord of Sussex must be excused for his rude and old-world housekeeping, since he had as yet no wife."

"And what said the queen?" said Leicester, hastily.

"She took him up roundly," said Varney, "and asked what my Lord Sussex had to do with a wife, or my Lord Bishop to speak on such a subject. If marriage is permitted, she said, I no where read that it is enjoined."

VOL. III.

"She likes not marriages, or speech of marriage, among churchmen," said Leicester.

"Nor among courtiers neither," said Varney; but, observing that Leicester changed countenance, he instantly added, that all the ladies who were present had joined in ridiculing Lord Sussex's housekeeping, and in contrasting it with the reception her grace would have assuredly received at my Lord of Leicester's.

"You have gathered much tidings," said Leicester, "but you have forgotten or omitted the most important of all. She hath added another to those dangling satellites, whom it is her pleasure to keep revolving around her."

"Your lordship meaneth that Raleigh, the Devonshire youth," said Varney, "the knight of the cloak, as they call him at the court?"

"He may be Knight of the Garter one day, for aught I know," said Leicester, "for he advances rapidly—She hath cap'd verses with him, and such fooleries. I would gladly abandon, of my own free will, the part I have in her fickle favour, but I will not be elbowed out of it by the clown Sussex, or this new upstart. I hear Tressilian is with Sussex also, and high in his favour—I would spare him for considerations, but he will thrust himself on his fate—Sussex, too, is almost as well as ever in his health."

"My lord," replied Varney, "there will be rubs in the smoothest road, specially when it leads up hill. Sussex's illness was to us a god-send, from which I hoped much. He has recovered indeed, but he is not now more formidable than ere he fell ill, when he received more than one foil in wrestling with your lordship. Let not your heart fail you, my lord, and all shall be well."

"My heart never failed me, sir," replied Leicester.

"No, my lord," said Varney; "but it has betrayed you right often. He that would climb a tree, my lord, must grasp by the branches, not by the blossom."

"Well, well, well!" said Leicester, impatiently; "I understand thy meaning—My heart shall neither fail me nor seduce me. Have my retinue in order—see that their array be so splendid as to put down not only the rude companions of Ratcliffe, but the retainers of every other nobleman and courtier. Let them be well armed withal, but without any outward display of their weapons, wearing them as if more for fashion's sake than for use. Do thou thyself keep close to me, I may have business for you"—

The preparations of Sussex and his party were not less anxious than those of Leicester.

"Thy supplication, impeaching Varney of seduction," said the earl to Tressilian, "is by this time in the queen's hand—I have sent it through a sure channel. Methinks your suit should succeed, being, as it is, founded in justice and honour, and Elizabeth being the very muster of both. But I wot not how—the gipsy (so Sussex was wont to call his rival on account of his dark complexion) hath much to say with her in these holiday times of peace—Were war at the gates, I should be one of her white boys; but soldiers, like their bucklers and Bilboa

blades, get out of fashion in peace time, and satin sleeves and walking-rapiers bear the bell. Well, we must be gay since such is the fashion.—Blount, hast thou seen our household put into their new braveries?—But thou know'st as little of these toys as I do—thou wouldst be ready enow at disposing a stand of pikes.”

“My good lord,” answered Blount, “Raleigh hath been here and taken that charge upon him—Your train will glitter like a May morning.—Marry, the cost is another question. One might keep an hospital of old soldiers at the charge of ten modern lacqueys.”

“We must not count cost to-day, Nicholas,” said the earl, in reply; “I am beholden to Raleigh for his care—I trust, though, he has remembered that I am an old soldier, and would have no more of these follies than needs must.”

“Nay, I understand nought about it; but here are your honourable lordship's brave kinsmen and friends coming in scores to wait upon you to court, where, methinks, we shall bear as brave a front as Leicester, let him ruffle it as he will.”

“Give them the strictest charges,” said Sussex, “that they suffer no provocation short of actual violence to provoke them into quarrel—they have hot bloods, and I would not give Leicester the advantage over me by any imprudence of theirs.”

The Earl of Sussex ran so hastily through these directions, that it was with difficulty Tressilian at length found opportunity to express his surprise that he should have proceeded so far in the affair of Sir Hugh Robsart as to lay his petition at once before the queen—“It was the opinion of the young lady's friends,” he said, “that Leicester's sense of justice should be first appealed to, as the offence had been committed by his officer, and so he had expressly told to Sussex.”

“This could have been done without applying to me,” said Sussex, somewhat haughtily. “I, at least, ought not to have been a counsellor when the object was a humiliating reference to Leicester; and I am surprised that you, Tressilian, a man of honour, and my friend, would assume such a mean course. If you said so, I certainly understood you not in a matter which sounded so unlike yourself.”

“My lord,” said Tressilian, “the course I would prefer, for my own sake, is that you have adopted; but the friends of this most unhappy lady”—

“O, the friends—the friends,” said Sussex, interrupting him; “they must let us manage this cause in the way which seems best. This is the time and the hour to accumulate every charge against Leicester and his household, and yours the queen will hold a heavy one. But at all events she hath the complaint before her.”

Tressilian could not help suspecting that, in his eagerness to strengthen himself against his rival, Sussex had purposely adopted the course most likely to throw odium on Leicester, without considering minutely whether it were the mode of proceeding most like to be attended with success. But the step was irrevocable, and Sussex escaped from farther discussing it by dismissing his company, with the command, “Let all be in order at eleven o'clock;

I must be at court and in the presence by high noon precisely.”

While the rival statesmen were thus anxiously preparing for their approaching meeting in the queen's presence, even Elizabeth herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from the collision of two such fiery spirits, each backed by a strong and numerous body of followers, and dividing betwixt them, either openly or in secret, the hopes and wishes of most of her court. The band of gentlemen pensioners were all under arms, and a reinforcement of the yeomen of the guard was brought down the Thames from London. A royal proclamation was sent forth, strictly prohibiting nobles, of whatsoever degree, to approach the palace with retainers or followers, armed with shot, or with long weapons; and it was even whispered, that the High Sheriff of Kent had secret instructions to have a part of the array of the county ready on the shortest notice.

The eventful hour, thus anxiously prepared for on all sides, at length approached, and, each followed by his long and glittering train of friends and followers, the rival earls entered the palace-yard of Greenwich at noon precisely.

As if by previous arrangement, or perhaps by intimation that such was the queen's pleasure, Sussex and his retinue came to the palace from Deptford by water, while Leicester arrived by land; and thus they entered the court-yard from opposite sides. This trifling circumstance gave Leicester a certain ascendancy in the opinion of the vulgar, the appearance of his cavalcade of mounted followers showing more numerous and more imposing than those of Sussex's party, who were necessarily upon foot. No show or sign of greeting passed between the earls, though each looked full at the other, both expecting perhaps an exchange of courtesies, which neither was willing to commence. Almost in the minute of their arrival the castle-bell tolled, the gates of the palace were opened, and the earls entered, each numerously attended by such gentlemen of their train whose rank gave them that privilege. The yeomen and inferior attendants remained in the court-yard, where the opposite parties eyed each other with looks of eager hatred and scorn, as if waiting with impatience for some cause of tumult, or some apology for mutual aggression. But they were restrained by the strict commands of their leaders, and overawed, perhaps, by the presence of an armed guard of unusual strength.

In the meanwhile, the more distinguished persons of each train followed their patrons into the lofty halls and ante-chambers of the royal palace, flowing on in the same current, like two streams which are compelled into the same channel, yet shun to mix their waters. The parties arranged themselves, as it were instinctively, on the different sides of the lofty apartments, and seemed eager to escape from the transient union which the narrowness of the crowded entrance had for an instant compelled them to submit to. The folding-doors at the upper end of the long gallery were immediately afterwards opened, and it was announced in a whisper that the queen was in her presence-chamber, to which these gave access. Both earls moved slow and stately towards the en-

trance; Sussex followed by Tressilian, Blount, and Raleigh; and Leicester by Varney. The pride of Leicester was obliged to give way to court forms, and with a grave and formal inclination of the head, he paused until his rival, a peer of older creation than his own, passed before him. Sussex returned the reverence with the same formal civility, and entered the presence-room. Tressilian and Blount offered to follow him, but were not permitted, the usher of the black rod alleging in excuse, that he had precise orders to look to all admissions that day. To Raleigh, who stood back on the repulse of his companions, he said, "You, sir, may enter," and he entered accordingly.

"Follow me close, Varney," said the Earl of Leicester, who had stood aloof for a moment to mark the reception of Sussex; and advancing to the entrance, he was about to pass on, when Varney, who was close behind him, dressed out in the utmost bravery of the day, was stopped by the usher, as Tressilian and Blount had been before him. "How is this, Master Bowyer?" said the Earl of Leicester; "know you who I am, and that this is my friend and follower?"

"Your lordship will pardon me," replied Bowyer, stoutly; "my orders are precise, and limit me to a strict discharge of my duty."

"Thou art a partial knave," said Leicester, the blood mounting to his face, "to do me this dishonour, when you but now admitted a follower of my Lord of Sussex."

"My lord," said Bowyer, "Master Raleigh is newly admitted a sworn seryant of her grace, and to him my orders did not apply."

"Thou art a knave—an ungrateful knave," said Leicester; "but he that hath done can undo—thou shalt not prank thee in thy authority long!"

His threat he uttered aloud, with less than his usual policy and discretion; and having done so, he entered the presence-chamber, and made his reverence to the queen, who, attired with even more than her usual splendour, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects. She graciously returned the obeisance of the favourite earl, and looked alternately at him and at Sussex, as if about to speak, when Bowyer, a man whose spirit could not brook the insult he had so openly received from Leicester, in the discharge of his office, advanced with his black rod in his hand, and knelt down before her.

"Why, how now, Bowyer," said Elizabeth, "thy courtesy seems strangely timed!"

"My liege sovereign," he said, while every courtier around trembled at his audacity, "I come but to ask, whether, in the discharge of mine office, I am to obey your highness's commands, or those of the Earl of Leicester, who has publicly menaced me with his displeasure, and treated me with disparaging terms, because I denied entry to one of his followers, in obedience to your grace's precise orders."

The spirit of Henry VIII. was instantly aroused in the bosom of his daughter, and she turned on Leicester with a severity which appalled him, as well as all his followers.

"God's death, my lord," such was her emphatic

phrase, "what means this? We have thought well of you, and brought you near to our person; but it was not that you might hide the sun from our other faithful subjects. Who gave you license to contradict our orders, or control our officers? I will have in this court, ay, and in this realm, but one mistress, and no master. Look to it that Master Bowyer sustains no harm for his duty to me faithfully discharged; for, as I am christian woman and crowned queen, I will hold you dearly answerable.—Go, Bowyer, you have done the part of an honest man and a true subject. We will brook no mayor of the palace here."

Bowyer kissed the hand which she extended towards him, and withdrew to his post, astonished at the success of his own audacity. A smile of triumph pervaded the faction of Sussex; that of Leicester seemed proportionally dismayed, and the favourite himself, assuming an aspect of the deepest humility, did not even attempt a word in his own exculpation.

He acted wisely; for it was the policy of Elizabeth to humble, not to disgrace him, and it was prudent to suffer her, without opposition or reply, to glory in the exertion of her authority. The dignity of the queen was gratified, and the woman began soon to feel for the mortification which she had imposed on her favourite. Her keen eye also observed the secret looks of congratulation exchanged amongst those who favoured Sussex, and it was no part of her policy to give either party a decisive triumph.

"What I say to my Lord of Leicester," she said, after a moment's pause, "I say also to you, my Lord of Sussex. You also must needs ruffle in the court of England, at the head of a faction of your own?"

"My followers, gracious princess," said Sussex, "have indeed ruffled in your cause, in Ireland, in Scotland, and against yonder rebellious earls in the north. I am ignorant that"—

"Do you bandy looks and words with me, my lord?" said the queen, interrupting him; "methinks you might learn of my Lord of Leicester the modesty to be silent, at least, under our censure. I say, my lord, that my grandfather and my father, in their wisdom, debarred the nobles of this civilized land from travelling with such disorderly retinues; and think you, that because I wear a coif, their sceptre has in my hand been changed into a distaff? I tell you, no king in Christendom will less brook his court to be cumbered, his people oppressed, and his kingdom's peace disturbed by the arrogance of overgrown power, than she who now speaks with you.—My Lord of Leicester, and you, my Lord of Sussex, I command you both to be friends with each other; or, by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you."

"Madam," said the Earl of Leicester, "you who are yourself the fountain of honour, know best what is due to mine. I place it at your disposal, and only say, that the terms on which I have stood with my Lord of Sussex have not been of my seeking; nor had he cause to think me his enemy, until he had done me gross wrong."

"For me, madam," said the Earl of Sussex, "I cannot appeal from your sovereign pleasure; but I were well content my Lord of Leicester should say

in what I have, as he terms it, wronged him, since my tongue never spoke the word that I would not willingly justify, either on foot or horseback."

"And for me," said Leicester, "always under my gracious sovereign's pleasure, my hand shall be as ready to make good my words, as that of any man who ever wrote himself Ratchliffe."

"My lords," said the queen, "these are no terms for this presence; and if you cannot keep your temper, we will find means to keep both that and you close enough. Let me see you join hands, my lords, and forget your idle animosities."

The two rivals looked at each other with reluctant eyes, each unwilling to make the first advance to execute the queen's will.

"Sussex," said Elizabeth, "I entreat—Leicester, I command you."

Yet, so were her words accented, that the entreaty sounded like command, and the command like entreaty. They remained still and stubborn, until she raised her voice to a height which argued at once impatience and absolute command.

"Sir Henry Lee," she said, to an officer in attendance, "have a guard in present readiness, and man a barge instantly.—My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, I bid you once more to join hands—and, God's death! he that refuses shall taste of our Tower fare ere he see our face again. I will lower your proud hearts ere we part, and that I promise, on the word of a queen."

"The prison," said Leicester, "might be borne, but to lose your grace's presence, were to lose light and life at once.—Here, Sussex, is my hand."

"And here," said Sussex, "is mine, in truth and honesty; but"—

"Nay, under favour, you shall add no more," said the queen. "Why, this is as it should be," she added, looking on them more favourably, "and when you, the shepherds of the people, unite to protect them, it shall be well with the flock we rule over. For, my lords, I tell you plainly, your follies and your brawls lead to strange disorders among your servants.—My Lord of Leicester, you have a gentleman in your household, called Varney?"

"Yes, gracious madam," replied Leicester, "I presented him to kiss your royal hand when you were last at Nonsuch."

"His outside was well enough," said the queen, "but scarce so fair, I should have thought, as to have caused a maiden of honourable birth and hopes to barter her fame for his good looks, and become his paramour. Yet so it is—this fellow of yours hath seduced the daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall, and she hath fled with him from her father's house like a castaway.—My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deadly pale?"

"No, gracious madam," said Leicester; and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

"You are surely ill, my lord?" said Elizabeth, going towards him with hasty speech and hurried step, which indicated the deepest concern. "Call Masters—call our surgeon in ordinary—Where be these loitering fools?—We lose the pride of our

court through their negligence.—Or is it possible, Leicester," she continued, looking on him with a very gentle aspect, "can fear of my displeasure have wrought so deeply on thee? Doubt not for a moment, noble Dudley, that we could blame *thee* for the folly of thy retainer—thee, whose thoughts we know to be far otherwise employed? He that would climb the eagle's nest, my lord, cares not who are catching linnets at the foot of the precipice."

"Mark you that?" said Sussex, aside to Raleigh. "The devil aids him surely! for all that would sink another ten fathom deep, seems but to make him float the more easily. Had a follower of mine acted thus"—

"Peace, my good lord," said Raleigh, "for God's sake, peace. Wait the change of the tide; it is even now on the turn."

The acute observation of Raleigh, perhaps, did not deceive him; for Leicester's confusion was so great, and, indeed, for the moment, so irresistibly overwhelming, that Elizabeth, after looking at him with a wondering eye, and receiving no intelligible answer to the unusual expressions of grace and affection which had escaped from her, shot her quick glance around the circle of courtiers, and reading, perhaps, in their faces, something that accorded with her own awakened suspicions, she said suddenly, "Or is there more in this than we see—or than you, my lord, wish that we should see? Where is this Varney? Who saw him?"

"An it please your grace," said Bowyer, "it is the same against whom I this instant closed the door of the presence-room."

"An it please me!" repeated Elizabeth, sharply, not at that moment in the humour of being pleased with any thing. "It does *not* please me that he should pass saucily into my presence, or that you should exclude from it one who came to justify himself from an accusation."

"May it please you," answered the perplexed usher, "if I knew, in such case, how to bear myself, I would take heed"—

"You should have reported the fellow's desire to us, Master Usher, and taken our directions. You think yourself a great man, because but now we chid a nobleman on your account—but, after all, we hold you but as the lead-weight that keeps the door fast. Call this Varney hither instantly—there is one Tressilian also mentioned in this petition—let them both come before us."

She was obeyed, and Tressilian and Varney appeared accordingly. Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the queen. In the looks of the latter, there appeared an approaching storm, and in the downcast countenance of his patron, he could read no directions in what way he was to trim his vessel for the encounter—he then saw Tressilian, and at once perceived the peril of the situation in which he was placed. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous,—a skilful pilot in extremity, and fully conscious of the advantages which he would obtain, could he extricate Leicester from his present peril, and of the ruin that yawned for himself, should he fail in doing so.

"Is it true, sirrah," said the queen, with one of those searching looks which few had the audacity to resist, "that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

Varney kneeled down, and replied, with a look of the most profound contrition, "There had been some love passages betwixt him and Mistress Amy Robsart."

Leicester's flesh quivered with indignation as he heard his dependent make this avowal, and for one moment he manned himself to step forward, and, bidding farewell to the court and the royal favour, confess the whole mystery of the secret marriage. But he looked at Sussex, and the idea of the triumphant smile which would clothe his cheek upon hearing the avowal, sealed his lips. "Not now, at least," he thought, "or in this presence, will I afford him so rich a triumph." And pressing his lips close together, he stood firm and collected, attentive to each word which Varney uttered, and determined to hide to the last the secret on which his court favour seemed to depend. Meanwhile, the queen proceeded in her examination of Varney.

"Love passages!" said she, echoing his last words; "what passages, thou knave? and why not ask the wench's hand from her father, if thou hadst any honesty in thy love for her?"

"An it please your grace," said Varney, still on his knees, "I dared not do so, for her father had promised her hand to a gentleman of birth and honour—I will do him justice, though I know he bears me ill will—one Master Edmund Tressilian, whom I now see in the presence."

"Soh!" replied the queen; "and what was your right to make the simple fool break her worthy father's contract, through your love *passages*, as your conceit and assurance terms them?"

"Madam," replied Varney, "it is in vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or that of love, to one who never yields to the passion"—He paused an instant, and then added, in a very low and timid tone, "which she inflicts upon all others."

Elizabeth tried to frown, but smiled in her own despite, as she answered, "Thou art a marvelously impudent knave—Art thou married to the girl?"

Leicester's feelings became so complicated and so painfully intense, that it seemed to him as if his life was to depend on the answer made by Varney, who, after a moment's real hesitation, answered, "Yes."

"Thou false villain!" said Leicester, bursting forth into rage, yet unable to add another word to the sentence, which he had begun with such emphatic passion.

"Nay, my lord," said the queen, "we will, by your leave, stand between this fellow and your anger. We have not yet done with him.—Knew your master, my Lord of Leicester, of this fair work of yours? Speak truth, I command thee, and I will be thy warrant from danger on every quarter."

"Gracious madam," said Varney, "to speak heaven's truth, my lord was the cause of the whole matter."

"Thou villain, wouldst thou betray me?" said Leicester.

"Speak on," said the queen, hastily, her cheek colouring, and her eyes sparkling, as she addressed Varney; "speak on—here no commands are heard but mine."

"They are omnipotent, gracious madam," replied Varney; "and to you there can be no secrets.—Yet I would not," he added, looking around him, "speak of my master's concerns to other ears."

"Fall back, my lords," said the queen to those who surrounded her, "and do you speak on.—What hath the earl to do with this guilty intrigue of thine?—See, fellow, that thou beliest him not."

"Far be it from me to traduce my noble patron," replied Varney; "yet I am compelled to own that some deep, overwhelming, yet secret feeling, hath of late dwelt in my lord's mind, hath abstracted him from the cares of the household, which he was wont to govern with such religious strictness, and hath left us opportunities to do follies, of which the shame, as in this case, partly falls upon our patron. Without this, I had not had means or leisure to commit the folly which has drawn on me his displeasure; the heaviest to endure by me, which I could by any means incur,—saving always the yet more dreaded resentment of your grace."

"And in this sense, and no other, hath he been accessory to thy fault?" said Elizabeth.

"Surely, madam, in no other," replied Varney; "but since somewhat hath chanced to him, he can scarce be called his own man. Look at him, madam, how pale and trembling he stands—how unlike his usual majesty of manner—yet what has he to fear from aught I can say to your highness? Ah! madam, since he received that fatal packet!"

"What packet, and from whence?" said the queen, eagerly.

"From whence, madam, I cannot guess; but I am so near to his person, that I know he has ever since worn, suspended around his neck, and next to his heart, that lock of hair which sustains a small golden jewel shaped like a heart—he speaks to it when alone—he parts not from it when he sleeps—no heathen ever worshipped an idol with such devotion."

"Thou art a prying knave to watch thy master so closely," said Elizabeth, blushing, but not with anger; "and a tattling knave to tell over again his fooleries.—What colour might the braid of hair be that thou pratest of?"

Varney replied, "A poet, madam, might call it a thread from the golden web wrought by Minerva; but, to my thinking, it was paler than even the purest gold—more like the last parting sunbeam of the softest day of spring."

"Why, you are a poet yourself, Master Varney," said the queen, smiling; "but I have not genius quick enough to follow your rare metaphors—Look round these ladies—is there—(she hesitated, and endeavoured to assume an air of great indifference)—Is there here, in this presence, any lady, the colour of whose hair reminds thee of that braid? Methinks, without prying into my Lord of Leicester's amorous secrets, I would fain know what kind of locks are like the thread of Minerva's web, or

the—what was it?—the last rays of the May-day sun.”

Varney looked round the presence-chamber, his eye travelling from one lady to another, until at length it rested upon the queen herself, but with an aspect of the deepest veneration. “I see no tresses,” he said, “in this presence worthy of such similies, unless where I dare not look on them.”

“How, Sir Knave,” said the queen, “dare you intimate?”—

“Nay, madam,” replied Varney, shading his eyes with his hand, “it was the beams of the May-day sun that dazzled my weak eyes.”

“Go to—go to,” said the queen; “thou art a foolish fellow”—and turning quickly from him, she walked up to Leicester.

Intense curiosity, mingled with all the various hopes, fears, and passions, which influence court faction, had occupied the presence-chamber during the queen’s conference with Varney, as if with the strength of an eastern talisman. Men suspended every, even the slightest external motion, and would have ceased to breathe, had nature permitted such an intermission of her functions. The atmosphere was contagious, and Leicester, who saw all around wishing or fearing his advancement or his fall, forgot all that love had previously dictated, and saw nothing for the instant but the favour or disgrace which depended on the nod of Elizabeth and the fidelity of Varney. He summoned himself hastily, and prepared to play his part in the scene which was like to ensue, when, as he judged from the glances which the queen threw towards him, Varney’s communications, be they what they might, were operating in his favour. Elizabeth did not long leave him in doubt; for the more than favour with which she accosted him decided his triumph in the eyes of his rival, and of the assembled court of England—“Thou hast a prating servant of this same Varney, my lord,” she said; “it is lucky you trust him with nothing that can hurt you in our opinion, for believe me, he would keep no counsel.”

“From your highness,” said Leicester, dropping gracefully on one knee, “it were treason he should. I would that my heart itself lay before you, barer than the tongue of any servant could strip it.”

“What, my lord,” said Elizabeth, looking kindly upon him, “is there no one little corner over which you would wish to spread a veil? Ah! I see you are confused at the question, and your queen knows she should not look too deeply into her servants’ motives for their faithful duty, lest she see what might, or at least ought to displease her.”

Relieved by these last words, Leicester broke out into a torrent of expressions of deep and passionate attachment, which perhaps, at that moment, were not altogether fictitious. The mingled emotions which had at first overcome him, had now given way to the energetic vigour with which he had determined to support his place in the queen’s favour; and never did he seem to Elizabeth more eloquent, more handsome, more interesting, than while, kneeling at her feet, he conjured her to strip him of all his power, but to leave him the name of her servant—“Take from the poor Dudley,” he exclaimed, “all that your bounty has made him; and bid him

be the poor gentleman he was when your grace first shone on him; leave him no more than his cloak and his sword, but let him still boast he has—what in word or deed he never forfeited—the regard of his adored queen and mistress!”

“No, Dudley!” said Elizabeth, raising him with one hand, while she extended the other that he might kiss it; “Elizabeth hath not forgotten that, whilst you were a poor gentleman, despoiled of your hereditary rank, she was as poor a princess, and that in her cause you then ventured all that oppression had left you—your life and honour.—Rise, my lord, and let my hand go!—Rise, and be what you have ever been, the grace of our court, and the support of our throne. Your mistress may be forced to chide your misdemeanours, but never without owning your merits.—And so help me God,” she added, turning to the audience, who, with various feelings, witnessed this interesting scene,—“So help me God, gentlemen, as I think never sovereign had a truer servant than I have in this noble earl.”

A murmur of assent rose from the Leicestrian faction, which the friends of Sussex dared not oppose. They remained with their eyes fixed on the ground, dismayed as well as mortified by the public and absolute triumph of their opponents. Leicester’s first use of the familiarity to which the queen had so publicly restored him, was to ask her commands concerning Varney’s offence. “Although,” he said, “the fellow deserves nothing from me but displeasure, yet, might I presume to intercede?”—

“In truth, we had forgotten his matter,” said the queen; “and it was ill done of us, who owe justice to our meanest, as well as to our highest subject. We are pleased, my lord, that you were the first to recal the matter to our memory.—Where is Tressilian, the accuser?—let him come before us.”

Tressilian appeared, and made a low and beseeching reverence. His person, as we have elsewhere observed, had an air of grace and even of nobleness, which did not escape Queen Elizabeth’s critical observation. She looked at him with attention as he stood before her unabashed, but with an air of the deepest dejection.

“I cannot but grieve for this gentleman,” she said to Leicester. “I have inquired concerning him, and his presence confirms what I heard, that he is a scholar and a soldier, well accomplished both in arts and arms. We women, my lord, are fanciful in our choice—I had said now, to judge by the eye, there was no comparison to be held betwixt your follower and this gentleman. But Varney is a well spoken fellow, and to speak truth, that goes far with us of the weaker sex.—Look you, Master Tressilian, a bolt lost is not a bow broken. Your true affection, as I will hold it to be, hath been, it seems, but ill requited; but you have scholarship, and you know there have been false Cressidas to be found, from the Trojan war downwards. Forget, good sir, this Lady Light a’ Love—teach your affection to see with a wiser eye. This we say to you, more from the writings of learned men than our own knowledge, being, as we are, far removed by station and will, from the enlargement of experience in such idle toys of humorous passion. For this dame’s father, we can make his grief the less,

by advancing his son-in-law to such station as may enable him to give an honourable support to his bride. Thou shalt not be forgotten thyself, Tressilian—follow our court, and thou shalt see that a true Troilus hath some claim on our grace. Think of what that arch knave Shakspeare says—a plague on him, his toys come into my head when I should think of other matter—Stay, how goes it?—

Cressid was yours, tied with the bonds of heaven;
These bonds of heaven are slipt, dissolved, and loosed,
And with another knot five fingers tied,
The fragments of her faith are bound to Diomed.

You smile, my Lord of Southampton—perchance I make your player's verse halt through my bad memory—but let it suffice—let there be no more of this mad matter."

And as Tressilian kept the posture of one who would willingly be heard, though, at the same time, expressive of the deepest reverence, the queen added with some impatience,—“What would the man have? The wench cannot wed both of you?—She has made her election—not a wise one perchance—but she is Varney's wedded wife."

“My suit should sleep there, most gracious sovereign,” said Tressilian, “and with my suit my revenge. But I hold this Varney's word no good warrant for the truth."

“Had that doubt been elsewhere urged,” answered Varney, “my sword”——

“*Thy sword!*” interrupted Tressilian, scornfully; “with her grace's leave, my sword shall show”——

“Peace, you knaves both!” said the queen; “know you where you are?—This comes of your feuds, my lords,” she added, looking towards Leicester and Sussex; “your followers catch your own humour, and must bandy and brawl in my court, and in my very presence, like so many Matamoros.—Look you, sirs, he that speaks of drawing swords in any other quarrel than mine or England's, by mine honour, I'll bracelet him with iron both on wrist and ancle!” She then paused a minute, and resumed in a milder tone, “I must do justice betwixt the bold and mutinous knaves notwithstanding.—My Lord of Leicester, will you warrant with your honour,—that is, to the best of your belief,—that your servant speaks truth in saying he hath married this Amy Robsart?”

This was a home-thrust, and had nearly staggered Leicester. But he had now gone too far to recede, and answered, after a moment's hesitation, “To the best of my belief—indeed on my certain knowledge—she is a wedded wife."

“Gracious madam,” said Tressilian, “may I yet request to know, when and under what circumstances this alleged marriage”——

“Out, sirrah,” answered the queen; “*alleged marriage!*—Have you not the word of this illustrious earl to warrant the truth of what his servant says? But thou art a loser—think'st thyself such at least—and thou shalt have indulgence—we will look into the matter ourself more at leisure.—My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing—we will pray you to bid our good and

valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us there."

“If the noble Earl of Sussex,” said Leicester, bowing to his rival with the easiest and with the most graceful courtesy, “will so far honour my poor house, I will hold it an additional proof of the amicable regard it is your grace's desire we should entertain towards each other."

Sussex was more embarrassed—“I should,” said he, “madam, be but a clog on your gayer hours since my late severe illness."

“And have you been indeed so very ill?” said Elizabeth, looking on him with more attention than before; “you are in faith strangely altered, and deeply am I grieved to see it. But be of good cheer—we will ourselves look after the health of so valued a servant, and to whom we owe so much. Masters shall order your diet; and that we ourselves may see that he is obeyed, you must attend us in this progress to Kenilworth."

This was said so peremptorily and at the same time with so much kindness, that Sussex, however unwilling to become the guest of his rival, had no resource but to bow low to the queen in obedience to her commands, and to express to Leicester, with blunt courtesy, though mingled with embarrassment, his acceptance of his invitation. As the earls exchanged compliments on the occasion, the queen said to her high treasurer, “Methinks, my lord, the countenances of these our two noble peers resemble that of the two famed classic streams, the one so dark and sad, the other so fair and noble—My old Master, Ascham, would have chid me for forgetting the author.—It is Cæsar, as I think.—See what majestic calmness sits on the brow of the noble Leicester, while Sussex seems to greet him as if he did our will indeed, but not willingly."

“The doubt of your majesty's favour,” answered the lord treasurer, “may perchance occasion the difference which does not—as what does—escape your grace's eye."

“Such doubt were injurious to us, my lord,” replied the queen. “We hold both to be near and dear to us, and will with impartiality employ both in honourable service for the weal of our kingdom. But we will break their farther conference at present.—My lords of Sussex and Leicester, we have a word more with you. Tressilian and Varney are near your persons—you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth—And as we will then have both Paris and Menelaus within our call, so we will have this same fair Helen also, whose fickleness has caused this broil.—Varney, thy wife must be at Kenilworth, and forthcoming at my order.—My Lord of Leicester, we expect you will look to this."

The earl and his follower bowed low, and raised their heads, without daring to look at the queen, or at each other; for both felt at the instant as if the nets and toils which their own falsehood had woven, were in the act of closing around them. The queen, however, observed not their confusion, but proceeded to say, “My lords of Sussex and Leicester, we require your presence at the privy council to be presently held, where matters of importance are to be debated. We will then take the water for our divertisement, and you, my lords, will attend us.—And

that reminds us of a circumstance—Do you, Sir Squire of the Soiled Cassock (distinguishing Raleigh by a smile), fail not to observe that you are to attend us on our progress. You shall be supplied with suitable means to reform your wardrobe.”

And so terminated this celebrated audience, in which, as throughout her life, Elizabeth united the occasional caprice of her sex, with that sense and sound policy, in which neither man nor woman ever excelled her.

CHAPTER XVII.

Well, then—our course is chosen—spread the sail—
Heave oft the lead, and mark the soundings well—
Look to the helm, good master—many a shoal
Marks this stern coast, and rocks, where sits the syren,
Who, like ambition, lures men to their ruin.

The Shipwreck.

DURING the brief interval that intervened betwixt the dismissal of the audience and the sitting of the privy council, Leicester had time to reflect that he had that morning sealed his own fate. “It was impossible for him now,” he thought, “after having, in the face of all that was honourable in England, pledged his truth (though in ambiguous phrase) for the statement of Varney, to contradict or disavow it, without exposing himself, not merely to the loss of court-favour, but to the highest displeasure of the queen, his deceived mistress, and to the scorn and contempt at once of his rival and of all his competitors.” This certainty rushed at once on his mind, together with all the difficulties which he would necessarily be exposed to in preserving a secret, which seemed now equally essential to his safety, to his power, and to his honour. He was situated like one who walks upon ice, ready to give way around him, and whose only safety consists in moving onwards, by firm and unvacillating steps. The queen’s favour, to preserve which he had made such sacrifices, must now be secured by all means and at all hazards—it was the only plank which he could cling to in the tempest. He must settle himself, therefore, to the task of not only preserving, but augmenting the queen’s partiality—He must be the favourite of Elizabeth, or a man utterly shipwrecked in fortune and in honour. All other considerations must be laid aside for the moment, and he repelled the intrusive thoughts which forced on his mind the image of Amy, by saying to himself, there would be time to think hereafter how he was to escape from the labyrinth ultimately, since the pilot, who sees a Scylla under his bows, must not for the time think of the more distant dangers of Charybdis.

In this mood, the Earl of Leicester that day assumed his chair at the council table of Elizabeth; and when the hours of business were over, in this same mood did he occupy an honoured place near to her, during her pleasure excursion on the Thames. And never did he display to more advantage his powers as a politician of the first rank, or his parts as an accomplished courtier.

It chanced that in that day’s council matters were agitated touching the affairs of the unfortunate Mary, the seventh year of whose captivity in England was

now in doleful currency. There had been opinions in favour of this unhappy princess laid before Elizabeth’s council, and supported with much strength of argument by Sussex and others, who dwelt more upon the law of nations and the breach of hospitality, than, however softened or qualified, was agreeable to the queen’s ear. Leicester adopted the contrary opinion with great animation and eloquence, and described the necessity of continuing the severe restraint of the Queen of Scots, as a measure essential to the safety of the kingdom, and particularly of Elizabeth’s sacred person, the lightest hair of whose head, he maintained, ought, in their lordships’ estimation, to be matter of more deep and anxious concern, than the life and fortunes of a rival, who, after setting up a vain and unjust pretence to the throne of England, was now, even while in the bosom of her country, the constant hope and theme of all enemies to Elizabeth, whether at home or abroad. He ended by craving pardon of their lordships, if in the zeal of speech he had given any offence; but the queen’s safety was a theme which hurried him beyond his usual moderation of debate.

Elizabeth chid him, but not severely, for the weight which he attached unduly to her personal interests; yet she owned, that since it had been the pleasure of heaven to combine those interests with the weal of her subjects, she did only her duty when she adopted such measures of self-preservation as circumstances forced upon her; and if the council in their wisdom should be of opinion, that it was needful to continue some restraint on the person of her unhappy sister of Scotland, she trusted they would not blame her if she requested of the Countess of Shrewsbury to use her with as much kindness as might be consistent with her safe keeping. And with this intimation of her pleasure, the council was dismissed.

Never was more anxious and ready way made for “my Lord of Leicester,” than as he passed through the crowded ante-rooms to go towards the river-side, in order to attend her majesty to her barge—Never was the voice of the ushers louder, to “make room—make room for the noble earl”—Never were these signals more promptly and reverentially obeyed—Never were more anxious eyes turned on him to obtain a glance of favour, or even of mere recognition, while the heart of many a humble follower throbbed betwixt desire to offer his congratulations, and fear of intruding himself on the notice of one so infinitely above him. The whole court considered the issue of this day’s audience, expected with so much doubt and anxiety, as a decisive triumph on the part of Leicester, and felt assured that the orb of his rival satellite, if not altogether obscured by his lustre, must revolve hereafter in a dimmer and more distant sphere. So thought the court and courtiers, from high to low; and they acted accordingly.

On the other hand, never did Leicester return the general greeting with such ready and condescending courtesy, or endeavour more successfully to gather (in the words of one, who at that moment stood at no great distance from him) “golden opinions from all sorts of men.”

For all the favourite earl had a bow, a smile at

least, and often a kind word. Most of these were addressed to courtiers, whose names have long gone down the tide of oblivion; but some, to such as sound strangely in our ears, when connected with the ordinary matters of human life, above which the gratitude of posterity has long elevated them. A few of Leicester's interlocutory sentences ran as follows:

"Poynings, good morrow, and how does your wife and fair daughter? Why come they not to court?—Adams, your suit is naught—the queen will grant no more monopolies—but I may serve you in another matter.—My good Alderman Aylford, the suit of the city, affecting Queenhithe, shall be forwarded as far as my poor interest can serve.—Master Edmund Spencer, touching your Irish petition, I would willingly aid you, from my love to the muses; but thou hast nettled the lord treasurer."

"My lord," said the poet, "were I permitted to explain"—

"Come to my lodging, Edmund," answered the earl—"not to-morrow, or next day, but soon.—Ha, Will Shakspeare—wild Will!—thou hast given my nephew, Philip Sidney, love-powder—he cannot sleep without thy Venus and Adonis under his pillow! We will have thee hanged for the veriest wizard in Europe. Hark thee, mad wag, I have not forgotten thy matter of the patent, and of the bears."

The *player* bowed, and the earl nodded and passed on—so that age would have told the tale—in ours, perhaps, we might say the immortal had done homage to the mortal. The next whom the favourite accosted, was one of his own zealous dependents.

"How now, Sir Francis Denning," he whispered, in answer to his exulting salutation, "that smile hath made thy face shorter by one-third than when I first saw it this morning.—What, Master Bowyer, stand you back, and think you I bear malice? You did but your duty this morning; and, if I remember aught of the passage betwixt us, it shall be in thy favour."

Then the earl was approached, with several fantastic congees, by a person quaintly dressed in a doublet of black velvet, curiously slashed and pinked with crimson satin. A long cock's feather in the velvet bonnet, which he held in his hand, and an enormous ruff, stiffened to the extremity of the absurd taste of the times, joined with a sharp, lively, conceited expression of countenance, seemed to body forth a vain, hair-brained coxcomb, and small wit; while the rod he held, and an assumption of formal authority, appeared to express some sense of official consequence, which qualified the natural pertness of his manner. A perpetual blush, which occupied rather the sharp nose than the thin cheek of this personage, seemed to speak more of "good life," as it was called, than of modesty; and the manner in which he approached to the earl, confirmed that suspicion.

"Good even to you, Master Robert Laneham," said Leicester, and seemed desirous to pass forward, without farther speech.

"I have a suit to your noble lordship," said the figure, boldly following him.

"And what is it, good master keeper of the council-chamber door?"

VOL. III.

"*Clerk* of the council-chamber door," said Master Robert Laneham, with emphasis, by way of reply, and of correction.

"Well, qualify thine office as thou wilt, man," replied the earl; "what wouldst thou have with me?"

"Simply," answered Laneham, "that your lordship would be, as heretofore, my good lord, and procure me license to attend the summer progress unto your lordship's most beautiful, and all-to-be-unmatched Castle of Kenilworth."

"To what purpose, good Master Laneham," replied the earl; "bethink you my guests must needs be many."

"Not so many," replied the petitioner, "but that your nobleness will willingly spare your old servitor his crib and his mess. Bethink you, my lord, how necessary is this rod of mine, to fright away all those listeners, who else would play at bo-peep with the honourable council, and be searching for key-holes and crannies in the door of the chamber, so as to render my staff as needful as a fly-flap in a butcher's shop."

"Methinks you have found out a fly-blown comparison for the honourable council, Master Laneham," said the earl; "but seek not about to justify it. Come to Kenilworth, if you list; there will be store of fools there beside, and so you will be fitted."

"Nay, an there be fools, my lord," replied Laneham, with much glee, "I warrant I will make sport among them; for no greyhound loves to cote a hare, as I to turn and course a fool. But I have another singular favour to beseech of your honour."

"Speak it, and let me go," said the earl; "I think the queen comes forth instantly."

"My lord, I would fain bring a bedfellow with me."

"How, you irreverent rascal!" said Leicester.

"Nay, my lord, my meaning is within the canons," answered his unblushing, or rather, his ever-blushing petitioner. "I have a wife as curious as her grandmother who ate the apple. Now, take her with me I may not, her highness's orders being so strict against the officers bringing with them their wives in a progress, and so lumbering the court with womankind. But what I would crave of your lordship, is, to find room for her in some mummery, or pretty pageant, in disguise, as it were; so that, not being known for my wife, there may be no offence."

"The foul fiend seize ye both!" said Leicester, stung into uncontrollable passion by the recollections which this speech excited—"Why stop you me with such follies?"

The terrified clerk of the chamber-door, astonished at the burst of resentment he had so unconsciously produced, dropped his staff of office from his hand, and gazed on the incensed earl with a foolish face of wonder and terror, which instantly recalled Leicester to himself.

"I meant but to try if thou hadst the audacity which befits thine office," said he hastily. "Come to Kenilworth, and bring the devil with thee, if thou wilt."

"My wife, sir, hath played the devil ere now, in a mystery, in Queen Mary's time—but we shall want a trifle for properties."

"Here is a crown for thee," said the earl,—
"make me rid of thee—the great bell rings."

Master Robert Laneham stared a moment at the agitation which he had excited, and then said to himself, as he stooped to pick up his staff of office, "The noble earl runs wild humours to-day; but they who give crowns, expect us witty fellows to wink at their unsettled starts; and, by my faith, if they paid not for mercy, we would finger them tightly."

Leicester moved hastily on, neglecting the courtesies he had hitherto dispersed so liberally, and hurrying through the courtly crowd, until he paused in a small withdrawing-room, into which he plunged to draw a moment's breath unobserved, and in seclusion.

"What am I now," he said to himself, "that am thus jaded by the words of a mean, weather-beaten, goose-brained gull!—Conscience, thou art a bloodhound, whose growl wakes as readily at the paltry stir of a rat or mouse, as at the step of a lion.—Can I not quit myself by one bold stroke of a state so irksome, so unhonoured? What if I kneel to Elizabeth, and, owning the whole, throw myself on her mercy?"—

As he pursued this train of thought, the door of the apartment opened, and Varney rushed in.

"Thank God, my lord, that I have found you," was his exclamation.

"Thank the devil, whose agent thou art," was the earl's reply.

"Thank whom you will, my lord," replied Varney; "but hasten to the water-side. The queen is on board, and asks for you."

"Go, say I am taken suddenly ill," replied Leicester; "for, by Heaven, my brain can sustain this no longer."

"I may well say so," said Varney, with bitterness of expression; "for your place, ay, and mine, who, as your master of the horse, was to have attended your lordship, is already filled up in the queen's barge. The new minion, Walter Raleigh, and our old acquaintance, Tressilian, were called for to fill our places just as I hastened away to seek you."

"Thou art a devil, Varney," said Leicester, hastily; "but thou hast the mastery for the present—I follow thee."

Varney replied not, but led the way out of the palace, and towards the river, while his master followed him, as if mechanically; until, looking back, he said, in a tone which savoured of familiarity at least, if not of authority, "How is this, my lord?—your cloak hangs on one side,—your hose are unbraced—permit me"—

"Thou art a fool, Varney, as well as a knave," said Leicester, shaking him off and rejecting his officious assistance; "we are best thus, sir—when we require you to order our person, it is well, but now we want you not."

So saying, the earl resumed at once his air of command, and with it his self-possession—shook his dress into yet wilder disorder—passed before Varney with the air of a superior and master, and in his turn led the way to the river-side.

The queen's barge was on the very point of putting off; the seat allotted to Leicester in the stern, and that to his master of the horse on the bow of the boat,

being already filled up. But on Leicester's approach, there was a pause, as if the bargemen anticipated some alteration in their company. The angry spot was, however, in the queen's cheek, as, in that cold tone with which superiors endeavour to veil their internal agitation, while speaking to those before whom it would be derogation to express it, she pronounced the chilling words—"We have waited, my Lord of Leicester."

"Madam, and most gracious princess," said Leicester, "you, who can pardon so many weaknesses which your own heart never knows, can best bestow your commiseration on the agitations of the bosom, which, for a moment, affect both head and limbs.—I came to your presence, a doubting and an accused subject; your goodness penetrated the clouds of defamation, and restored me to my own honour, and, what is yet dearer, to your favour—is it wonderful, though for me it is most unhappy, that my master of the horse should have found me in a state which scarce permitted me to make the exertion necessary to follow him to this place, when one glance of your highness, although, alas! an angry one, has had power to do that for me, in which Esculapius might have failed?"

"How is this?" said Elizabeth hastily, looking at Varney; "hath your lord been ill?"

"Something of a fainting fit," answered the ready-witted Varney, "as your grace may observe from his present condition. My lord's haste would not permit me leisure even to bring his dress into order."

"It matters not," said Elizabeth, as she gazed on the noble face and form of Leicester, to which even the strange mixture of passions by which he had been so lately agitated, gave additional interest, "make room for my noble lord—Your place, Master Varney, has been filled up; you must find a seat in another barge."

Varney bowed, and withdrew.

"And you too, our young squire of the cloak," added she, looking at Raleigh, "must, for the time, go to the barge of our ladies of honour. As for Tressilian, he hath already suffered too much by the caprice of women, that I should aggrieve him by my change of plan, so far as he is concerned."

Leicester seated himself in his place in the barge, and close to the sovereign; Raleigh rose to retire, and Tressilian would have been so ill-timed in his courtesy as to offer to relinquish his own place to his friend, had not the acute glance of Raleigh himself, who seemed now in his native element, made him sensible, that so ready a disclamation of the royal favour might be misinterpreted. He sate silent, therefore, whilst Raleigh, with a profound bow, and a look of the deepest humiliation, was about to quit his place.

A young courtier, the gallant Lord Willoughby, read, as he thought, something in the queen's face, which seemed to pity Raleigh's real or assumed semblance of mortification.

"It is not for us old courtiers," he said, "to hide the sunshine from the young ones. I will, with her majesty's leave, relinquish for an hour, that which her subjects hold dearest, the delight of her highness's presence, and mortify myself by walking in star-light, while I forsake for a brief season, the

glory of Diana's own beams. I will take place in the boat which the ladies occupy, and permit this young cavalier his hour of promised felicity."

The queen replied, with an expression betwixt mirth and earnest, "If you are so willing to leave us, my lord, we cannot help the mortification. But, under favour, we do not trust you—old and experienced as you may deem yourself—with the care of our young ladies of honour. Your venerable age, my lord," she continued, smiling, "may be better assorted with that of my lord treasurer, who follows in the third boat, and whose experience even my Lord Willoughby's may be improved by."

Lord Willoughby hid his disappointment under a smile—laughed, was confused, bowed, and left the queen's barge to go on board my Lord Burleigh's. Leicester, who endeavoured to divert his thoughts from all internal reflection, by fixing them on what was passing around, watched this circumstance among others. But when the boat put off from the shore—when the music sounded from a barge which accompanied them—when the shouts of the populace were heard from the shore, and all reminded him of the situation in which he was placed, he abstracted his thoughts and feelings, by a strong effort, from every thing but the necessity of maintaining himself in the favour of his patroness, and exerted his talents of pleasing captivation with such success, that the queen, alternately delighted with his conversation and alarmed for his health, at length imposed a temporary silence on him, with playful yet anxious care, lest his flow of spirits should exhaust him.

"My lords," she said, "having passed for a time our edict of silence upon our good Leicester, we will call you to council on a gamesome matter, more fitted to be now treated of, amidst mirth and music, than in the gravity of our ordinary deliberations.—Which of you, my lords," said she, smiling, "know aught of a petition from Orson Pinnit, the keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal bears? Who stands godfather to his request?"

"Marry, with your grace's good permission, that do I," said the Earl of Sussex.—"Orson Pinnit was a stout soldier before he was so mangled by the skenes of the Irish clan Mac-Donough, and I trust your grace will be, as you always have been, good mistress to your good and trusty servants."

"Surely," said the queen, "it is our purpose to be so, and in especial to our poor soldiers and sailors, who hazard their lives for little pay. We would give," she said, with her eyes sparkling, "yonder royal palace of ours to be an hospital for their use, rather than they should call their mistress ungrateful.—But this is not the question," she said, her tone, which had been awakened by her patriotic feelings, once more subsiding into the tone of gay and easy conversation; "for this Orson Pinnit's request goes something farther. He complains, that amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the play-houses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakspeare (whom, I think, my lords, we have all heard something of), the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into comparative neglect; since men will rather throng to see these roguish players kill each other in jest, than to see our royal dogs and bears

worry each other in bloody earnest—What say you to this, my Lord of Sussex?"

"Why, truly, gracious madam," said Sussex, "you must expect little from an old soldier like me in favour of battles in sport, when they are compared with battles in earnest; and yet, by my faith, I wish Will Shakspeare no harm. He is a stout man at quarter-staff, and single falchion, though, as I am told, a halting fellow; and he stood, they say, a tough fight with the rangers of old Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot, when he broke his deer-park and kissed his keeper's daughter."

"I cry you mercy, my Lord of Sussex," said Queen Elizabeth, interrupting him; "that matter was heard in council, and we will not have this fellow's offence exaggerated—there was no kissing in the matter, and the defendant hath put the denial on record.—But what say you to his present practice, my lord, on the stage? for there lies the point, and not in any ways touching his former errors, in breaking parks, or the other follies you speak of."

"Why truly, madam," replied Sussex, "as I said before, I wish the gamesome mad fellow no injury. Some of his whoreson poetry (I crave your grace's pardon for such a phrase) has rung in mine ears as if they sounded to boot and saddle.—But then it is all froth and folly—no substance or seriousness in it, as your grace has already well touched.—What are half a dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting, which hath been graced by your highness's countenance, and that of your royal predecessors, in this your princely kingdom, famous for matchless mastiffs, and bold bearwards, over all Christendom? Greatly is it to be doubted that the race of both will decay, if men should rather throng to hear the lungs of an idle player belch forth nonsensical bombast, instead of bestowing their pence in encouraging the bravest image of war that can be shown in peace, and that is the sports of the bear-garden. There you may see the bear lying at guard with his red pinky eyes, watching the onset of the mastiff, like a wily captain, who maintains his defence that an assailant may be tempted to venture within his danger. And then comes Sir Mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary—and then shall Sir Bruin teach him the reward for those who, in their over-courage, neglect the policies of war, and, catching him in his arms, strain him to his breast like a lusty wrestler, until rib after rib crack like the shot of a pistolet. And then another mastiff, as bold, but with better aim and sounder judgment, catches Sir Bruin by the nether lip, and hangs fast, while he tosses about his blood and slaver, and tries in vain to shake Sir Talbot from his hold. And then"—

"Nay, by my honour, my lord," said the queen, laughing, "you have described the whole so admirably, that, had we never seen a bear-baiting, as we have beheld many, and hope, with Heaven's allowance, to see many more, your words were sufficient to put the whole bear-garden before our eyes.—But come, who speaks next in this case?—My Lord of Leicester, what say you?"

"Am I then to consider myself as unmuzzled, please your grace?" replied Leicester.

"Surely, my lord—that is, if you feel hearty enough to take part in our game," answered Elizabeth; "and yet, when I think of your cognizance of the bear and ragged staff, methinks we had better hear some less partial orator."

"Nay, on my word, gracious princess," said the earl, "though my brother Ambrose of Warwick and I do carry the ancient cognizance your highness deigns to remember, I nevertheless desire nothing but fair play on all sides; or, as they say, 'fight dog, fight bear.' And in behalf of the players, I must needs say that they are witty knaves, whose rants and jests keep the minds of the commons from busying themselves with state affairs, and listening to traitorous speeches, idle rumours, and disloyal insinuations. When men are agape to see how Marlow, Shakspeare, and other play artificers, work out their fanciful plots as they call them, the mind of the spectators is withdrawn from the conduct of their rulers."

"We would not have the mind of our subjects withdrawn from the consideration of our own conduct, my lord," answered Elizabeth; "because the more closely it is examined, the true motives by which we are guided will appear the more manifest."

"I have heard, however, madam," said the Dean of St Asaph's, an eminent puritan, "that these players are wont, in their plays, not only to introduce profane and lewd expressions, tending to foster sin and harlotry, but even to bellow out such reflections on government, its origin and its object, as tend to render the subject discontented, and shake the solid foundations of civil society. And it seems to be, under your grace's favour, far less than safe to permit these naughty foul-mouthed knaves to ridicule the godly for their decent gravity, and, in blaspheming Heaven, and slandering its earthly rulers, to set at defiance the laws both of God and man."

"If we could think this were true, my lord," said Elizabeth, "we should give sharp correction for such offences. But it is ill arguing against the use of any thing from its abuse. And touching this Shakspeare, we think there is that in his plays that is worth twenty bear-gardens; and that this new undertaking of his Chronicles, as he calls them, may entertain, with honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us."

"Your majesty's reign will need no such feeble aid to make it remembered to the latest posterity," said Leicester. "And yet, in his way, Shakspeare hath so touched some incidents of your majesty's happy government, as may countervail what has been spoken by his reverence the Dean of St Asaph's. There are some lines, for example—I would my nephew, Philip Sidney, were here, they are scarce ever out of his mouth—they are spoken in a mad tale of fairies, love-charms, and I wot not what besides; but beautiful they are, however short they may and must fall of the subject to which they bear a bold relation—and Philip murmurs them, I think, even in his dreams."

"You tantalize us, my lord," said the queen—"Master Philip Sidney is, we know, a minion of the

muses, and we are pleased it should be so. Valour never shines to more advantage than when united with the true taste and love of letters. But surely there are some others among our young courtiers who can recollect what your lordship has forgotten amid weightier affairs.—Master Tressilian, you are described to me as a worshipper of Minerva—remember you aught of these lines?"

Tressilian's heart was too heavy, his prospects in life too fatally blighted, to profit by the opportunity which the queen thus offered to him of attracting her attention, but he determined to transfer the advantage to his more ambitious young friend; and excusing himself on the score of want of recollection, he added, that he believed the beautiful verses, of which my Lord of Leicester had spoken, were in the remembrance of Master Walter Raleigh.

At the command of the queen, that cavalier repeated, with accent and manner which even added to their exquisite delicacy of tact and beauty of description, the celebrated vision of Oberon:

That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid, all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west;
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon;
And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free.

The voice of Raleigh, as he repeated the last lines, became a little tremulous, as if diffident how the sovereign to whom the homage was addressed, might receive it, exquisite as it was. If this diffidence was affected, it was good policy; but if real, there was little occasion for it. The verses were not probably new to the queen, for when was ever such elegant flattery long in reaching the royal ear to which it was addressed? But it was not the less welcome when repeated by such a speaker as Raleigh. Alike delighted with the matter, the manner, and the graceful form and animated countenance of the gallant young reciter, Elizabeth kept time to every cadence, with look and with finger. When the speaker had ceased, she murmured over the last lines as if scarce conscious that she was overheard; and as she uttered the words,

In maiden meditation, fancy free,

she dropt into the Thames the supplication of Orson Pinnit, keeper of the royal bears, to find more favourable acceptance at Sheerness, or wherever the tide might waft it.

Leicester was spurred to emulation by the success of the young courtier's exhibition, as the veteran racer is roused when a high-mettled colt passes him on the way. He turned the discourse on shows, banquets, pageants, and on the character of those by whom these gay scenes were then frequented. He mixed acute observation with light satire, in that just proportion which was free alike from malignant slander and insipid praise. He mimicked with ready accent the manners of the affected or the clownish, and made his own graceful tone and manner seem doubly such when he resumed it.

Foreign countries—their customs—their manners—the rules of their courts—the fashions, and even the dress of their ladies, were equally his theme; and seldom did he conclude without conveying some compliment, always couched in delicacy, and expressed with propriety, to the virgin queen, her court, and her government. Thus passed the conversation during this pleasure voyage, seconded by the rest of the attendants upon the royal person, in gay discourse, varied by remarks upon ancient classics and modern authors, and enriched by maxims of deep policy and sound morality, by the statesmen and sages who sate around, and mixed wisdom with the lighter talk of a female court.

When they returned to the palace, Elizabeth accepted, or rather selected, the arm of Leicester to support her, from the stairs where they landed, to the great gate. It even seemed to him (though that might arise from the flattery of his own imagination), that during this short passage, she leaned on him somewhat more than the slippiness of the way necessarily demanded. Certainly her actions and words combined to express a degree of favour, which, even in his proudest days, he had not till then attained. His rival, indeed, was repeatedly graced by the queen's notice; but it was in a manner that seemed to flow less from spontaneous inclination, than as extorted by a sense of his merit. And, in the opinion of many experienced courtiers, all the favour she showed him was overbalanced, by her whispering in the ear of the Lady Derby, that "now she saw sickness was a better alchemist than she before wotted of, seeing it had changed my Lord of Sussex's copper nose into a golden one."

The jest transpired, and the Earl of Leicester enjoyed his triumph, as one to whom court favour had been both the primary and the ultimate motive of life, while he forgot, in the intoxication of the moment, the perplexities and dangers of his own situation. Indeed, strange as it may appear, he thought less at that moment of the perils arising from his secret union, than of the marks of grace which Elizabeth from time to time showed to young Raleigh. They were indeed transient, but they were conferred on one accomplished in mind and body, with grace, gallantry, literature, and valour. An accident occurred in the course of the evening which riveted Leicester's attention to this object.

The nobles and courtiers who had attended the queen on her pleasure expedition, were invited, with royal hospitality, to a splendid banquet in the hall of the palace. The table was not, indeed, graced by the presence of the sovereign; for, agreeable to her idea of what was at once modest and dignified, the maiden queen, on such occasions, was wont to take in private, or with one or two favourite ladies, her light and temperate meal. After a moderate interval, the court again met in the splendid gardens of the palace; and it was while thus engaged, that the queen suddenly asked a lady, who was near to her both in place and favour, what had become of the young Squire Lack-Cloak.

The Lady Paget answered, "she had seen Master Raleigh but two or three minutes since, standing at the window of a small pavilion or pleasure house,

which looked out on the Thames, and writing on the glass with a diamond ring."

"That ring," said the queen, "was a small token I gave him, to make amends for his spoiled mantle. Come, Paget, let us see what use he has made of it, for I can see through him already. He is a marvelously sharp-witted spirit."

They went to the spot, within sight of which, but at some distance, the young cavalier still lingered, as the fowler watches the net which he has set. The queen approached the window, on which Raleigh had used her gift, to inscribe the following line:

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.

The queen smiled, read it twice over, once with deliberation to Lady Paget, and once again to herself. "It is a pretty beginning," she said, after the consideration of a moment or two; "but methinks the muse hath deserted the young wit at the very outset of his task. It were good-natured—were it not, Lady Paget,—to complete it for him? Try your rhyming faculties."

Lady Paget, prosaic from her cradle upwards, as ever any lady of the bed-chamber before or after her, disclaimed all possibility of assisting the young poet.

"Nay, then, we must sacrifice to the muses ourselves," said Elizabeth.

"The incense of no one can be more acceptable," said Lady Paget; "and your highness will impose such obligation on the ladies of Parnassus"—

"Hush, Paget," said the queen, "you speak sacrilege against the immortal Nine—yet, virgins themselves, they should be exorable to a virgin queen—and, therefore—let me see how runs his verse—

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.

Might not the answer (for fault of a better) run thus:

If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all."

The dame of honour uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise at so happy a termination; and certainly a worse has been applauded, even when coming from a less distinguished author.

The queen, thus encouraged, took off a diamond ring, and saying, "We will give this gallant some cause of marvel, when he finds his couplet perfected without his own interference," she wrote her own line beneath that of Raleigh.

The queen left the pavilion—but retiring slowly, and often looking back, she could see the young cavalier steal, with the flight of a lapwing, towards the place where he had seen her make a pause;—"She staid but to observe," as she said, "that her train had taken;" and then, laughing at the circumstance with the Lady Paget, she took the way slowly towards the palace. Elizabeth, as they returned, cautioned her companion not to mention to any one the aid which she had given to the young poet—and Lady Paget promised scrupulous secrecy. It is to be supposed, that she made a mental reservation in favour of Leicester, to whom her ladyship transmitted without delay an anecdote, so little calculated to give him pleasure.

Raleigh, in the meanwhile, stole back to the window, and read, with a feeling of intoxication, the encouragement thus given him by the queen in person to follow out his ambitious career, and returned to Sussex and his retinue, then on the point of embarking to go up the river, his heart beating high with gratified pride, and with hope of future distinction.

The reverence due to the person of the earl prevented any notice being taken of the reception he had met with at court, until they had landed, and the household were assembled in the great hall at Say's Court; while that lord, exhausted by his late illness and the fatigues of the day, had retired to his chamber, demanding the attendance of Wayland, his successful physician. Wayland, however, was no where to be found; and, while some of the party were, with military impatience, seeking him, and cursing his absence, the rest flocked around Raleigh, to congratulate him on his prospects of court favour.

He had the good taste and judgment to conceal the decisive circumstance of the couplet, to which Elizabeth had deigned to find a rhyme; but other circumstances had transpired, which plainly intimated that he had made some progress in the queen's favour. All hastened to wish him joy on the mended appearance of his fortune: some from real regard; some, perhaps, from hopes that his preferment might hasten their own; and most from a mixture of these motives, and a sense that the countenance shown to any one of Sussex's household was, in fact, a triumph to the whole. Raleigh returned the kindest thanks to them all, disowning, with becoming modesty, that one day's fair reception made a favourite, any more than one swallow a summer. But he observed that Blount did not join in the general congratulation, and, somewhat hurt at his apparent unkindness, he plainly asked him the reason.

Blount replied with equal sincerity—"Good Walter, I wish thee as well as do any of those chattering gulls, who are whistling and whooping gratulations in thine ear, because it seems fair weather with thee. But I fear for thee, Walter (and he wiped his honest eye), I fear for thee with all my heart. These court-tricks, and gambols, and flashes of fine women's favour, are the tricks and trinkets that bring fair fortunes to farthings, and fine faces and witty coxcombs to the acquaintance of dull blocks and sharp axes."

So saying, Blount arose and left the hall, while Raleigh looked after him with an expression that blanked for a moment his bold and animated countenance.

Stanley just then entered the hall, and said to Tressilian, "My lord is calling for your fellow Wayland, and your fellow Wayland is just come hither in a sculler, and is calling for you, nor will he go to my lord till he sees you. The fellow looks as he were mazed, methinks—I would you would see him immediately."

Tressilian instantly left the hall, and causing Wayland Smith to be shown into a withdrawing apartment, and lights placed, he conducted the artist thither, and was surprised when he observed the emotion of his countenance.

"What is the matter with you, Smith?" said Tressilian; "have you seen the devil?"

"Worse, sir, worse," replied Wayland, "I have seen a basilisk.—Thank God, I saw him first, for being so seen, and seeing not me, he will do the less harm."

"In God's name, speak sense," said Tressilian, "and say what you mean."

"I have seen my old master," said the artist—"Last night, a friend, whom I had acquired, took me to see the palace clock, judging me to be curious in such works of art. At the window of a turret next to the clock-house I saw my old master."

"Thou must have needs been mistaken," said Tressilian.

"I was not mistaken," said Wayland—"He that once hath his features by heart would know him amongst a million. He was anticly habited; but he cannot disguise himself from me, God be praised, as I can from him. I will not, however, tempt Providence by remaining within his ken. Tarleton the player himself could not so disguise himself, but that, sooner or later, Doboobie would find him out. I must away to-morrow; for, as we stand together, it were death to me to remain within reach of him."

"But the Earl of Sussex?" said Tressilian.

"He is in little danger from what he has hitherto taken, providing he swallow the matter of a bean's size of the orvietan, every morning fasting—but let him beware of a relapse."

"And how is that to be guarded against?" said Tressilian.

"Only by such caution as you would use against the devil," answered Wayland. "Let my lord's clerk of the kitchen kill his lord's meat himself, and dress it himself, using no spice but what he procures from the surest hands—Let the sewer serve it up himself, and let the master of my lord's household see that both clerk and sewer taste the dishes which the one dresses and the other serves. Let my lord use no perfumes which come not from well accredited persons; no unguents—no pomades. Let him, on no account, drink with strangers, or eat fruit with them, either in the way of nooning or otherwise. Especially, let him observe such caution if he goes to Kenilworth—the excuse of his illness, and his being under diet, will, and must, cover the strangeness of such practice."

"And thou," said Tressilian, "what doest thou think to make of thyself?"

"France, Spain, either India, East or West, shall be my refuge," said Wayland, "ere I venture my life by residing within ken of Doboobie, Demetrius, or whatever else he calls himself for the time."

"Well," said Tressilian, "this happens not inopportunely—I had business for you in Berkshire, but in the opposite extremity to the place where thou art known; and ere thou hadst found out this new reason for living private, I had settled to send thee thither upon a secret embassy."

The artist expressed himself willing to receive his commands; and Tressilian, knowing he was well acquainted with the outline of his business at court, frankly explained to him the whole, mentioned the agreement which subsisted betwixt Giles

Gosling and him, and told what had that day been averred in the presence-chamber by Varney, and supported by Leicester.

"Thou seest," he added, "that, in the circumstances in which I am placed, it behoves me to keep a narrow watch on the motions of these unprincipled men, Varney and his complices, Foster and Lambourne, as well as on those of my Lord Leicester himself, who, I suspect, is partly a deceiver, and not altogether the deceived in that matter. Here is my ring, as a pledge to Giles Gosling—here is besides gold, which shall be trebled if thou serve me faithfully. Away down to Cumnor, and see what happens there."

"I go with double good will," said the artist, "first, because I serve your honour, who has been so kind to me; and then, that I may escape my old master, who, if not an absolute incarnation of the devil, has, at least, as much of the demon about him, in will, word, and action, as ever polluted humanity.—And yet let him take care of me. I fly him now, as heretofore; but if, like the Scotch wild cattle, I am vexed by frequent pursuit, I may turn on him in hate and desperation.—Will your honour command my nag to be saddled? I will but give the medicine to my lord, divided in its proper proportions, with a few instructions. His safety will then depend on the care of his friends and domestics—for the past he is guarded, but let him beware of the future."

Wayland Smith accordingly made his farewell visit to the Earl of Sussex, dictated instructions as to his regimen, and precautions concerning his diet, and left Say's Court without waiting for morning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

—The moment comes—

It is already come—when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, "Now 's the time."

SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*, by Coleridge.

WHEN Leicester returned to his lodging, after a day so important and so harassing, in which, after riding out more than one gale, and touching on more than one shoal, his bark had finally gained the harbour with banner displayed, he seemed to experience as much fatigue as a mariner after a perilous storm. He spoke not a word while his chamberlain exchanged his rich court-mantle for a furred night-robe, and when this officer signified that Master Varney desired to speak with his lordship, he replied only by a sullen nod. Varney, however, entered, accepting this signal as a permission, and the chamberlain withdrew.

The earl remained silent and almost motionless in his chair, his head reclined on his hand, and his elbow resting upon the table which stood beside him, without seeming to be conscious of the entrance or of the presence of his confidant. Varney waited for some minutes until he should speak, desirous to know what was the finally predominant mood of a mind, through which so many powerful emotions had that

day taken their course. But he waited in vain, for Leicester continued still silent, and the confidant saw himself under the necessity of being the first to speak. "May I congratulate your lordship," he said, "on the deserved superiority you have this day attained over your most formidable rival?"

Leicester raised his head, and answered sadly, but without anger, "Thou, Varney, whose ready invention has involved me in a web of most mean and perilous falsehood, knowest best what reason there is for gratulation on the subject."

"Do you blame me, my lord," said Varney, "for not betraying, on the first push, the secret on which your fortunes depended, and which you have so oft and so earnestly recommended to my safe keeping? Your lordship was present in person, and might have contradicted me, and ruined yourself by an avowal of the truth; but surely it was no part of a faithful servant to have done so without your commands."

"I cannot deny it, Varney," said the earl, rising and walking across the room; "my own ambition has been traitor to my love."

"Say rather, my lord, that your love has been traitor to your greatness, and barred you from such a prospect of honour and power as the world cannot offer to any other. To make my honourable lady a countess, you have missed the chance of being yourself"—

He paused, and seemed unwilling to complete the sentence.

"Of being myself *what*?" demanded Leicester; "speak out thy meaning, Varney!"

"Of being yourself a KING, my lord," replied Varney; "and King of England to boot!—It is no treason to our queen to say so.—It would have chanced her by her obtaining that which all true subjects wish—a lusty, noble, and gallant husband."

"Thou ravest, Varney," answered Leicester. "Besides, our times have seen enough to make men loathe the crown matrimonial which men take from their wives' lap. There was Darnley in Scotland."

"He!" said Varney; "a gull, a fool, a thrice sodden ass, who suffered himself to be fired off into the air like a rocket on a rejoicing day. Had Mary had the hap to have wedded the noble earl *once* destined to share her throne, she had experienced a husband of different mettle; and her husband had found in her a wife as complying and loving as the mate of the meanest squire, who follows the hounds a horseback, and holds her husband's bridle as he mounts."

"I might have been as thou say'st, Varney," said Leicester, a brief smile of self-satisfaction passing over his anxious countenance. "Henry Darnley knew little of women—with Mary, a man who knew her sex might have had some chance of holding his own. But not with Elizabeth, Varney—for I think God, when he gave her the heart of a woman, gave her the head of a man to control its follies.—No, I know her.—She will accept love-tokens, ay, and requite them with the like—put sugared sonnets in her bosom—ay, and answer them too—push gallantry to the very verge where it becomes exchange of affection—but she writes *nil ultra* to all which is to follow, and would not barter one iota of her own supreme power for all the alphabet of both Cupid and Hymen."

"The better for you, my lord," said Varney, "that is, in the case supposed, if such be her disposition; since you think you cannot aspire to become her husband. Her favourite you are, and may remain, if the lady at Cumnor Place remains in her present obscurity."

"Poor Amy!" said Leicester, with a deep sigh; "she desires so earnestly to be acknowledged in presence of God and man!"

"Ay, but, my lord," said Varney, "is her desire reasonable?—that is the question—Her religious scruples are solved—she is an honoured and beloved wife—enjoying the society of her husband at such times as his weightier duties permit him to afford her his company—What would she more? I am right sure that a lady so gentle and so loving would consent to live her life through in a certain obscurity—which is, after all, not dimmer than when she was at Lidcote Hall—rather than diminish the least jot of her lord's honours and greatness by a premature attempt to share them."

"There is something in what thou say'st," said Leicester; "and her appearance here were fatal—yet she must be seen at Kenilworth; Elizabeth will not forget that she has so appointed."

"Let me sleep on that hard point," said Varney; "I cannot else perfect the device I have on the stithy, which I trust will satisfy the queen and please my honoured lady, yet leave this fatal secret where it is now buried.—Has your lordship further commands for the night?"

"I would be alone," said Leicester. "Leave me, and place my steel casket on the table.—Be within summons."

Varney retired—and the earl, opening the window of his apartment, looked out long and anxiously upon the brilliant host of stars which glimmered in the brilliance of a summer firmament. The words burst from him as at unawares—"I had never more need that the heavenly bodies should befriend me, for my earthly path is darkened and confused."

It is well known that the age reposed a deep confidence in the vain predictions of judicial astrology, and Leicester, though exempt from the general control of superstition, was not in this respect superior to his time; but, on the contrary, was remarkable for the encouragement which he gave to the professors of this pretended science. Indeed, the wish to pry into futurity, so general among the human race of every description, is peculiarly to be found amongst those who trade in state mysteries, and the dangerous intrigues and cabals of courts. With heedful precaution to see that it had not been opened, or its locks tampered with, Leicester applied a key to the steel casket, and drew from it, first, a parcel of gold pieces, which he put into a silk purse; then a parchment inscribed with planetary signs, and the lines and calculations used in framing horoscopes, on which he gazed intently for a few moments; and, lastly, took forth a large key, which, lifting aside the tapestry, he applied to a little concealed door in the corner of the apartment, and, opening it, disclosed a stair constructed in the thickness of the wall.

"Alasco!" said the earl, with a voice raised, yet no higher raised than to be heard by the inhabitant

of the small turret to which the stair conducted—"Alasco, I say, descend!"

"I come, my lord," answered a voice from above. The foot of an aged man was heard, slowly descending the narrow stair, and Alasco entered the earl's apartment. The astrologer was a little man, and seemed much advanced in age, for his beard was long and white, and reached over his black doublet down to his silken girdle. His hair was of the same venerable hue. But his eye-brows were as dark as the keen and piercing black eyes which they shaded, and this peculiarity gave a wild and singular cast to the physiognomy of the old man. His cheek was still fresh and ruddy, and the eyes we have mentioned resembled those of a rat, in acuteness, and even fierceness of expression. His manner was not without a sort of dignity; and the interpreter of the stars, though respectful, seemed altogether at his ease, and even assumed a tone of instruction and command, in conversing with the prime favourite of Elizabeth.

"Your prognostications have failed, Alasco," said the earl, when they had exchanged salutations—"He is recovering."

"My son," replied the astrologer, "let me remind you, I warranted not his death—nor is there any prognostication that can be derived from the heavenly bodies, their aspects and their conjunctions, which is not liable to be controlled by the will of Heaven. *Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus.*"

"Of what avail then is your mystery?" replied the earl.

"Of much, my son," replied the old man; "since it can show the natural and probable course of events, although that course moves in subordination to a higher power. Thus, in reviewing the horoscope which your lordship subjected to my skill, you will observe that Saturn, being in the sixth house in opposition to Mars, retrograde in the House of Life, cannot but denote long and dangerous sickness, the issue whereof is in the will of Heaven, though death may probably be inferred—Yet if I knew the name of the party, I would erect another scheme."

"His name is a secret," said the earl; "yet, I must own, thy prognostication hath not been unfaithful. He has been sick, and dangerously so, not however to death. But hast thou again cast my horoscope as Varney directed thee, and art thou prepared to say what the stars tell of my present fortune?"

"My art stands at your command," said the old man; "and here, my son, is the map of thy fortunes, brilliant in aspect as ever beamed from those blessed sigus whereby our life is influenced, yet not unchequered with fears, difficulties, and dangers."

"My lot were more than mortal were it otherwise," said the earl; "proceed farther, and believe you speak with one ready to undergo his destiny in action and in passion, as may beseem a noble of England."

"Thy courage to do and to suffer, must be wound up yet a strain higher," said the old man. "The stars intimate yet a prouder title, yet a higher rank. It is for thee to guess their meaning, not for me to name it."

"Name it, I conjure you—name it, I command you!" said the earl, his eyes brightening as he spoke.

"I may not, and I will not," replied the old man. "The ire of princes is as the wrath of the lion. But mark, and judge for thyself. Here Venus, ascendant in the House of Life, and conjoined with Sol, showers down that flood of silver light, blent with gold, which promises power, wealth, dignity, all that the proud heart of man desires, and in such abundance, that never the future Augustus of that old and mighty Rome heard from his *haruspices* such a tale of glory, as from this rich text my lore might read to my favourite son."

"Thou doest but jest with me, father," said the earl, astonished at the strain of enthusiasm in which the astrologer delivered his prediction.

"Is it for him to jest who hath his eye on heaven, who hath his foot on the grave?" returned the old man, solemnly.

The earl made two or three strides through the apartment, with his hand outstretched, as one who follows the beckoning signal of some phantom, waving him on to deeds of high import. As he turned, however, he caught the eye of the astrologer fixed on him, while an observing glance of the most shrewd penetration shot from under the penthouse of his shaggy dark eye-brows. Leicester's haughty and suspicious soul at once caught fire; he darted towards the old man from the further end of the lofty apartment, only standing still when his extended hand was within a foot of the astrologer's body.

"Wretch!" he said, "if you dare to palter with me, I will have your skin stripped from your living flesh!—Confess thou hast been hired to deceive and to betray me—that thou art a cheat, and I thy silly prey and booty!"

The old man exhibited some symptoms of emotion, but not more than the furious deportment of his patron might have extorted from innocence itself.

"What means this violence, my lord?" he answered, "or in what can I have deserved it at your hand?"

"Give me proof," said the earl, vehemently, "that you have not tampered with mine enemies."

"My lord," replied the old man, with dignity, "you can have no better proof than that which you yourself elected. In that turret I have spent the last twenty-four hours, under the key which has been in your own custody. The hours of darkness I have spent in gazing on the heavenly bodies with these dim eyes, and during those of light I have toiled this aged brain to complete the calculation arising from their combinations. Earthly food I have not tasted—earthly voice I have not heard—You are yourself aware I had no means of doing so—and yet I tell you—I who have been thus shut up in solitude and study—that within these twenty-four hours your star has become predominant in the horizon, and either the bright book of heaven speaks false, or there must have been a proportionate revolution in your fortunes upon earth. If nothing has happened within that space to secure your power, or advance your favour, then am I indeed a cheat; and the divine art, which was first devised in the plains of Chaldæa, is a foul imposture."

VOL. III.

"It is true," said Leicester, after a moment's reflection, "thou wert closely immured—and it is also true that the change has taken place in my situation which thou sayest the horoscope indicates."

"Wherefore this distrust then, my son," said the astrologer, assuming a tone of admonition; "the celestial intelligences brook not diffidence, even in their favourites."

"Peace, father!" answered Leicester, "I erred. Not to mortal man, nor to celestial intelligence—under that which is supreme—will Dudley's lips say more in condescension or apology. Speak rather to the present purpose—Amid these bright promises thou hast said there was a threatening aspect—Can thy skill tell whence, or by whose means such danger seems to impend?"

"Thus far only," answered the astrologer, "does my art enable me to answer your query. The infortune is threatened by the malignant and adverse aspect, through means of a youth,—and, as I think, a rival; but whether in love or in prince's favour, I know not; nor can I give farther indication respecting him, save that he comes from the western quarter."

"The western—ha!" replied Leicester, "it is enough—the tempest does indeed brew in that quarter!—Cornwall and Devon—Raleigh and Tressilian—one of them is indicated—I must beware of both. Father, if I have done thy skill injustice, I will make thee a lordly recompense."

He took a purse of gold from the strong casket which stood before him—"Have thou double the recompense which Varney promised.—Be faithful—be secret—obey the directions thou shalt receive from my master of the horse, and grudge not a little seclusion or restraint in my cause—it shall be richly considered.—Here, Varney—conduct this venerable man to thine own lodging—tend him heedfully in all things, but see that he holds communication with no one."

Varney bowed, and the astrologer kissed the earl's hand in token of adieu, and followed the master of the horse to another apartment, in which were placed wine and refreshments for his use.

The astrologer sate down to his repast, while Varney shut two doors with great precaution, examined the tapestry, lest any listener lurked behind it; and then sitting down opposite to the sage, began to question him.

"Saw you my signal from the court beneath?"

"I did," said Alasco, for by such name he was at present called, "and shaped the horoscope accordingly."

"And it passed upon the patron without challenge?" continued Varney.

"Not without challenge," replied the old man; "but it did pass; and I added, as before agreed, danger from a discovered secret, and a western youth."

"My lord's fear will stand sponsor to the one, and his conscience to the other of these prognostications," replied Varney. "Sure never man chose to run such a race as his, yet continued to retain those silly scruples! I am fain to cheat him to his own profit. But touching your matters, sage interpreter of the stars, I can tell you more of your own

31

fortune than plan or figure can show. You must be gone from hence forthwith."

"I will not," said Alasco, peevishly. "I have been too much hurried up and down of late—immured for day and night in a desolate turret-chamber—I must enjoy my liberty, and pursue my studies, which are of more import than the fate of fifty statesmen and favourites, that rise and burst like bubbles in the atmosphere of a court."

"At your pleasure," said Varney, with a sneer that habit had rendered familiar to his features, and which forms the principal characteristic which painters have assigned to that of Satan—"At your pleasure," he said, "you may enjoy your liberty, and your studies, until the daggers of Sussex's followers are clashing within your doublet, and against your ribs." The old man turned pale, and Varney proceeded. "Wot you not he hath offered a reward for the arch-quack and poison-vender, Demetrius, who sold certain precious spices to his lordship's cook?—What! turn you pale, old friend? Does Hali already see an infortune in the House of Life?—Why, hark thee, we will have thee down to an old house of mine in the country, where thou shalt live with a hob-nailed slave, whom thy alchemy may convert into ducats, for to such conversion alone is thy art serviceable."

"It is false, thou foul-mouthed railer!" said Alasco, shaking with impotent anger; "it is well known that I have approached more nearly to projection than any hermetic artist who now lives. There are not six chemists in the world who possess so near an approximation to the grand arcana—"

"Come, come," said Varney, interrupting him, "what means this, in the name of Heaven? Do we not know one another? I believe thee to be so perfect,—so very perfect, in the mystery of cheating, that, having imposed upon all mankind, thou hast at length, in some measure, imposed upon thyself; and without ceasing to dupe others, hast become a species of dupe to thine own imagination. Blush not for it, man—thou art learned, and shalt have classical comfort:

Ne quisquam Ajacem possit superare nisi Ajax.

No one but thyself could have gulled thee—and thou hast gulled the whole brotherhood of the Rosy Cross beside—none so deep in the mystery as thou. But hark thee in thine ear;—had the seasoning which spiced Sussex's broth wrought more surely, I would have thought better of the chemical science thou dost boast so highly."

"Thou art an hardened villain, Varney," replied Alasco; "many will do those things, who dare not speak of them."

"And many speak of them, who dare not do them," answered Varney; "but be not wroth—I will not quarrel with thee—if I did, I were fain to live on eggs for a month, that I might feed without fear. Tell me at once, how came thine art to fail thee at this great emergency?"

"The Earl of Sussex's horoscope intimates," replied the astrologer, "that the sign of the ascendant being in combustion—"

"Away with your gibberish," replied Varney;

"think'st thou it is the patron thou speak'st with?"

"I crave your pardon," replied the old man, "and swear to you, I know but one medicine that could have saved the earl's life; and as no man living in England knows that antidote save myself,—moreover, as the ingredients, one of them in particular, are scarce possible to be come by, I must needs suppose his escape was owing to such a constitution of lungs and vital parts, as was never before bound up in a body of clay."

"There was some talk of a quack who waited on him," said Varney, after a moment's reflection. "Are you sure there is no one in England who has this secret of thine?"

"One man there was," said the doctor, "once my servant, who might have stolen this of me, with one or two other secrets of art. But content you, Master Varney, it is no part of my policy to suffer such interlopers to interfere in my trade. He pries into no mysteries more, I warrant you; for, as I well believe, he hath been wafted to heaven on the wing of a fiery dragon.—Peace be with him.—But in this retreat of mine, shall I have the use of mine laboratory?"

"Of a whole workshop, man," said Varney; "for a reverend father abbot, who was fain to give place to bluff King Hal and some of his courtiers, a score of years since, had a chemist's complete apparatus, which he was fain to leave behind him to his successors. Thou shalt there occupy, and melt, and puff, and blaze, and multiply, until the green dragon become a golden goose, or whatever the newer phrase of the brotherhood may testify."

"Thou art right, Master Varney," said the alchemist, setting his teeth close, and grinding them together—"thou art right even in thy very contempt of right and reason. For what thou sayest in mockery may in sober verity chance to happen ere we meet again. If the most venerable sages of ancient days have spoken the truth—if the most learned of our own have rightly received it, if I have been accepted wheresoever I travelled, in Germany, in Poland, in Italy, and in the farther Tartary, as one to whom nature has unveiled her darkest secrets—if I have acquired the most secret signs and passwords of the Jewish cabala, so that the greyest beard in the synagogue would brush the steps to make them clean for me—if all this is so, and if there remains but one step—one little step—betwixt my long, deep, and dark, and subterranean progress, and that blaze of light which shall show Nature watching her richest and most glorious productions in the very cradle—one step betwixt dependence and the power of sovereignty—one step betwixt poverty and such a sum of wealth as earth, without that noble secret, cannot minister from all her mines in the old or the new-found world—if this be all so, is it not reasonable that to this I dedicate my future life, secure, for a brief period of studious patience, to rise above the mean dependence upon favourites, and *their* favourites, by which I am now enthralled!"

"Now, bravo! bravo! my good father," said Varney, with the usual Sardonic expression of ridicule on his countenance: "yet all this approximation to the philosopher's stone wringeth not one single

crown out of my Lord Leicester's pouch, and far less out of Richard Varney's—*We* must have earthly and substantial services, man, and care not whom else thou canst delude with thy philosophical charlatanerie."

"My son Varney," said the alchemist, "the unbelief, gathered around thee like a frost-fog, hath dimmed thine acute perception to that which is a stumbling-block to the wise, and which yet, to him who seeketh knowledge with humility, extends a lesson so clear, that he who runs may read. Hath not art, think'st thou, the means of completing nature's imperfect concoctions in her attempts to form the precious metals, even as by art we can perfect those other operations, of incubation, distillation, fermentation, and similar processes of an ordinary description, by which we extract life itself out of a senseless egg, summon purity and vitality out of muddy dregs, or call into vivacity the inert substance of a sluggish liquid?"

"I have heard all this before," said Varney; "and my heart is proof against such cant ever since I sent twenty good gold pieces (marry, it was in the nonage of my wit), to advance the grand magisterium, which all, God help the while, vanished *in fumo*. Since that moment, when I paid for my freedom, I defy chemistry, astrology, palmistry, and every other occult art, were it as secret as hell itself, to unloose the stricture of my purse-strings. Marry, I neither defy the manna of Saint Nicholas, nor can I dispense with it. Thy first task must be to prepare some when thou get'st down to my little sequestered retreat yonder, and then make as much gold as thou wilt."

"I will make no more of that dose," said the alchemist, resolutely.

"Then," said the master of the horse, "thou shalt be hanged for what thou hast made already, and so were the great secret for ever lost to mankind.—Do not humanity this injustice, good father, but e'en bend to thy destiny, and make us an ounce or two of this same stuff, which cannot prejudice above one or two individuals, in order to gain life-time to discover the universal medicine, which shall clear away all mortal diseases at once. But cheer up, thou grave, learned, and most melancholy jackanape! Hast thou not told me, that a moderate portion of thy drug hath mild effects, no way dangerous to the human frame, but which produce depression of spirits, nausea, headache, an unwillingness to change of place—even such a state of temper as would keep a bird from flying out of a cage, were the door left open?"

"I have said so, and it is true," said the alchemist; "this effect will it produce, and the bird who partakes of it in such proportion, shall sit for a season drooping on her perch, without thinking either of the free blue sky, or of the fair green-wood, though the one be lighted by the rays of the rising sun, and the other ringing with the newly awakened song of all the feathered inhabitants of the forest."

"And this without danger to life?" said Varney, somewhat anxiously.

"Ay, so that proportion and measure be not exceeded; and so that one who knows the nature of the manna be ever near to watch the symptoms, and succour in case of need."

"Thou shalt regulate the whole," said Varney; "thy reward shall be princely, if thou keep'st time and touch, and exceedest not the due proportion to the prejudice of her health—otherwise thy punishment shall be as signal."

"The prejudice of *her* health!" repeated Alasco; "it is, then, a woman I am to use my skill upon?"

"No, thou fool!" replied Varney; "said I not it was a bird—a reclaimed linnet, whose pipe might sooth a hawk when in mid stoop?—I see thine eye sparkle, and I know thy beard is not altogether so white as art has made it—*that*, at least, thou hast been able to transmute to silver. But mark me, this is no mate for thee. This caged bird is dear to one who brooks no rivalry, and far less such rivalry as thine, and her health must over all things be cared for. But she is in the case of being commanded down to yonder Kenilworth revels; and it is most expedient—most needful—most necessary, that she fly not thither. Of these necessities and their causes, it is not needful that she should know aught, and it is to be thought that her own wish may lead her to combat all ordinary reasons which can be urged for her remaining a housekeeper."

"That is but natural," said the alchemist, with a strange smile, which yet bore a greater reference to the human character, than the uninterested and abstracted gaze which his physiognomy had hitherto expressed, where all seemed to refer to some world distant from that which was existing around him.

"It is so," answered Varney; "you understand women well, though it may have been long since you were conversant amongst them.—Well then, she is not to be contradicted—yet she is not to be humoured. Understand me—a slight illness, sufficient to take away the desire of removing from thence, and to make such of your wise fraternity as may be called in to aid, recommend a quiet residence at home, will, in one word, be esteemed good service, and remunerated as such."

"I am not to be asked to affect the House of Life?" said the chemist.

"On the contrary, we will have thee hanged if thou doest," replied Varney.

"And I must," added Alasco, "have opportunity to do my turn, and all facilities for concealment or escape, should there be detection?"

"All, all, and every thing, thou infidel in all but the impossibilities of alchemy—Why, man, for what dost thou take me?"

The old man rose, and taking a light, walked towards the end of the apartment, where was a door that led to the small sleeping-room, destined for his reception during that night.—At the door he turned round, and slowly repeated Varney's question ere he answered it. "For what do I take thee, Richard Varney?—Why, for a worse devil than I have been myself. But I am in your toils, and I must serve you till my term be out."

"Well, well," answered Varney, hastily, "be stirring with grey light. It may be we shall not need thy medicine—Do nought till I myself come down—Michael Lambourne shall guide you to the place of your destination."

When Varney heard the adept's door shut and

carefully bolted within, he stepped towards it, and with similar precaution carefully locked it on the outside, and took the key from the lock, muttering to himself, "Worse than *thee*, thou poisoning quack salver and witch-monger, who, if thou art not a bounden slave to the devil, it is only because he disdains such an apprentice! I am a mortal man, and seek by mortal means the gratification of my passions, and advancement of my prospects—Thou art a vassal of hell itself.—So, ho, Lambourne!" he called at another door, and Michael made his appearance, with a flushed cheek and an unsteady step.

"Thou art drunk, thou villain!" said Varney to him.

"Doubtless, noble sir," replied the unabashed Michael; "we have been drinking all even to the glories of the day, and to my noble Lord of Leicester, and his valiant master of the horse.—Drunk! odds blades and poniards, he that would refuse to swallow a dozen healths on such an evening, is a base *besognio*, and a puckfist, and shall swallow six inches of my dagger!"

"Hark ye, scoundrel," said Varney, "be sober on the instant—I command thee! I know thou canst throw off thy drunken folly, like a fool's coat, at pleasure; and if not, it were the worse for thee."

Lambourne drooped his head, left the apartment, and returned in two or three minutes with his face composed, his hair adjusted, his dress in order, and exhibiting as great a difference from his former self as if the whole man had been changed.

"Art thou sober now, and dost thou comprehend me?" said Varney, sternly.

Lambourne bowed in acquiescence.

"Thou must presently down to Cumnor Place with the reverend man of art, who sleeps yonder in the little vaulted chamber. Here is the key, that thou mayst call him by times. Take another trusty fellow with you. Use him well on the journey, but let him not escape you—pistol him if he attempt it, and I will be your warrant. I will give thee letters to Foster. The doctor is to occupy the lower apartments of the eastern quadrangle, with freedom to use the old elaboratory and its implements.—He is to have no access to the lady but such as I shall point out—only she may be amused to see his philosophical jugglery. Thou wilt await at Cumnor Place my farther orders; and, as thou livest, beware of the ale-bench and the aqua-vitæ flask. Each breath drawn in Cumnor Place must be kept severed from common air."

"Enough, my lord—I mean my worshipful master—soon, I trust to be my worshipful knightly master. You have given me my lesson and my license;—I will execute the one, and not abuse the other. I will be in the saddle by day-break."

"Do so, and deserve favour.—Stay—ere thou goest, fill me a cup of wine—not out of that flask, sirrah,"—as Lambourne was pouring out from that which Alasco had left half finished, "fetch me a fresh one."

Lambourne obeyed, and Varney, after rinsing his mouth with the liquor, drank a full cup, and said, as he took up a lamp to retreat to his sleeping apartment, "It is strange—I am as little the slave

of fancy as any one, yet I never speak for a few minutes with this fellow Alasco, but my mouth and lungs feel as if soiled with the fumes of calcined arsenic—pah!"

So saying, he left the apartment. Lambourne lingered to drink a cup of the freshly opened flask. "It is from Saint-John's-Berg," he said, as he paused on the draught to enjoy its flavour, "and has the true relish of the violet. But I must forbear it now, that I may one day drink it at my own pleasure." And he quaffed a goblet of water to quench the fumes of the Rhenish wine, retired slowly towards the door, made a pause, and then, finding the temptation irresistible, walked hastily back, and took another long pull at the wine flask, without the formality of a cup.

"Were it not for this accursed custom," he said, "I might climb as high as Varney himself. But who can climb, when the room turns round with him like a parish-top? I would the distance were greater, or the road rougher, betwixt my hand and mouth!—But I will drink nothing to-morrow, save water—nothing save fair water."

CHAPTER XIX.

Pistol. And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys
And happy news of price.

Falstaff. I prythee now deliver them like to men of this world.

Pistol. A foutra for the world, and worldlings base!
I speak of Africa, and golden joys.

Henry IV. Part II.

THE public room of the Black Bear at Cumnor, to which the scene of our story now returns, boasted, on the evening which we treat of, no ordinary assemblage of guests. There had been a fair in the neighbourhood, and the cutting mercer of Abingdon, with some of the other personages whom the reader has already been made acquainted with, as friends and customers of Giles Gosling, had already formed their wonted circle around the evening fire, and were talking over the news of the day.

A lively, bustling, arch fellow, whose pack and oaken ell-wand, studded duly with brass points, denoted him to be of Autolycus's profession, occupied a good deal of the attention, and furnished much of the amusement, of the evening. The pedlars of these days, it must be remembered, were men of far greater importance than the degenerate and degraded hawkers of our modern times. It was by means of these peripatetic venders that the country-trade, in the finer manufactures used in female dress particularly, was almost entirely carried on; and if a merchant of this description arrived at the dignity of travelling with a pack-horse, he was a person of no small consequence, and company for the most substantial yeoman or franklin whom he might meet in his wandering.

The pedlar of whom we speak bore, accordingly, an active and unrebuked share in the merriment to which the rafters of the bonny Black Bear of Cumnor resounded. He had his smile with pretty Mistress Cicely, his broad laugh with mine host, and his jest upon dashing Master Goldthred, who, though in-

deed without any such benevolent intention on his own part, was the general butt of the evening. The pedlar and he were closely engaged in a dispute upon the preference due to the Spanish nether stock over the black Gascoigne hose, and mine host had just winked to the guests around him, as who should say, "You will have mirth presently, my masters," when the trampling of horses was heard in the court-yard, and the hostler was loudly summoned, with a few of the newest oaths then in vogue to add force to the invocation. Out tumbled Will Hostler, John Tapster, and all the militia of the inn, who had slunk from their posts in order to collect some scattered crumbs of the mirth which was flying about among the customers. Out into the yard sallied my host himself, also, to do fitting salutation to his new guests; and presently returned, ushering into the apartment his own worthy nephew, Michael Lambourne, pretty tolerably drunk, and having under his escort the astrologer. Alasco, though still a little old man, had, by altering his gown to a riding-dress, trimming his beard and eyebrows, and so forth, struck at least a score of years from his apparent age, and might now seem an active man of sixty, or little upwards. He appeared at present exceedingly anxious, and had insisted much with Lambourne that they should not enter the inn, but go straight forward to the place of their destination. But Lambourne would not be controlled. "By Cancer and Capricorn," he vociferated, "and the whole heavenly host—besides all the stars I saw in the southern heavens, to which these northern blinkers are but farthing candles, I will be unkindly for no one's humour—I will stay and salute my worthy uncle here.—Chesu! that good blood should ever be forgotten betwixt friends!—A gallon of your best, uncle, and let it go round to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester!—What! Shall we not colloque together, and warm the cockles of our ancient kindness?—Shall we not colloque, I say?"

"With all my heart, kinsman," said mine host, who obviously wished to be rid of him; "but are you to stand shot to all this good liquor?"

This is a question has quelled many a jovial toper, but it moved not the purpose of Lambourne's soul. "Question my means, uncle?" he said, producing a handful of mixed gold and silver pieces; "question Mexico and Peru—question the queen's exchequer—God save her majesty!—She is my good lord's good mistress."

"Well, kinsman," said mine host, "it is my business to sell wine to those who can buy it—So, Jack Tapster, do me thine office.—But I would I knew how to come by money as lightly as thou doest, Mike."

"Why, uncle," said Lambourne, "I will tell thee a secret—Dost see this little old fellow here? as old and withered a chip as ever the devil put into his porridge—and yet, uncle, between you and me—he hath Potosi in that brain of his—'Sblood! he can coin ducats faster than I can vent oaths."

"I will have none of his coinage in my purse though, Michael," said mine host; "I know what belongs to falsifying the queen's coin."

"Thou art an ass, uncle, for as old as thou art—

Pull me not by the skirts, doctor, thou art an ass, thyself, to boot—so being both asses, I tell ye I spoke but metaphorically."

"Are you mad?" said the old man; "is the devil in you?—can you not let us begone without drawing all men's eyes on us?"

"Say'st thou?" said Lambourne; "Thou art deceived now—no man shall see you an I give the word.—By heavens, masters, an any one dare to look on this old gentleman, I will slash the eyes out of his head with my poniard.—So sit down, old friend, and be merry—these are mine ancient inmates, and will betray no man."

"Had you not better withdraw to a private apartment, nephew," said Giles Gosling; "you speak strange matter," he added, "and there be intelligencers everywhere."

"I care not for them," said the magnanimous Michael—"intelligencers, pshaw!—I serve the noble Earl of Leicester—Here comes the wine—Fill round, Master Skinker, a carouse to the health of the flower of England, the noble Earl of Leicester! I say, the noble Earl of Leicester! He that does me not reason is a swine of Sussex, and I'll make him kneel to the pledge, if I should cut his hams and smoke them for bacon."

None disputed a pledge given under such formidable penalties; and Michael Lambourne, whose drunken humour was not of course diminished by this new potation, went on in the same wild way, renewing his acquaintance with such of the guests as he had formerly known, and experiencing a reception in which there was now something of deference, mingled with a good deal of fear; for the least servitor of the favourite earl, especially such a man as Lambourne, was, for very sufficient reasons, an object both of the one and of the other.

In the meanwhile, the old man, seeing his guide in this uncontrollable humour, ceased to remonstrate with him, and sitting down in the most obscure corner of the room, called for a small measure of sack, over which he seemed, as it were, to slumber, withdrawing himself as much as possible from general observation, and doing nothing which could recal his existence to the recollection of his fellow-traveller, who by this time had got into close intimacy with his ancient comrade, Goldthred of Abingdon.

"Never believe me, bully Mike," said the mercer, "if I am not as glad to see thee as ever I was to see a customer's money!—Why, thou canst give a friend a sly place at a mask or a revel now, Mike; ay, or I warrant thee, thou canst say in my lord's ear, when my honourable lord is down in these parts, and wants a Spanish ruff or the like—thou canst say in his ear, There is mine old friend, young Lawrence Goldthred of Abingdon, has good wares, lawn, tiffany, cambric, and so forth,—ay, and is as pretty a piece of man's flesh too as is in Berkshire, and will ruffle it for your lordship with any man of his inches; and thou mayst say"—

"I can say a hundred damned lies besides, mercer," answered Lambourne; "what, one must not stand upon a good word for a friend!"

"Here is to thee, Mike, with all my heart," said the mercer; "and thou canst tell one the reality of

the new fashions too—Here was a rogue pedlar but now, was crying up the old-fashioned Spanish nether stock over the Gascoigne hose, although thou seest how well the French hose set off the leg and knee, being adorned with parti-coloured garters and garniture in conformity.”

“Excellent! excellent!” replied Lambourne; “why, thy limber bit of a thigh, thrust through that bunch of slashed buckram and tiffany, shows like a housewife’s distaff, when the flax is half spun off.”

“Said I not so?” said the mercer, whose shallow brain was now overflowed in his turn; “where then, where be this rascal pedlar?—there was a pedlar here but now, methinks—Mine host, where the foul fiend is this pedlar?”

“Where wise men should be, Master Goldthred,” replied Giles Gosling; “even shut up in his private chamber, telling over the sales of to-day, and preparing for the custom of to-morrow.”

“Hang him, a mechanical chuff,” said the mercer; “but for shame, it were a good deed to ease him of his wares,—a set of peddling knaves, who stroll through the land, and hurt the established trader. There are good fellows in Berkshire yet, mine host—your pedlar may be met withal on Maiden Castle.”

“Ay,” replied mine host, laughing, “and he who meets him may meet his match—the pedlar is a tall man.”

“Is he?” said Goldthred.

“Is he?” replied the host; “ay, by cock and pye is he!—The very pedlar he who raddled Robin Hood so tightly, as the song says,—

Now Robin Hood drew his sword so good,
The pedlar drew his brand,
And he hath raddled him, Robin Hood,
Till he neither could see nor stand.”

“Hang him, foul scroyle! let him pass,” said the mercer; “if he be such a one, there were small worship to be won upon him.—And now tell me, Mike—my honest Mike, how wears the Hollands you won of me?”

“Why, well, as you may see, Master Goldthred,” answered Mike; “I will bestow a pot on thee for the handsel.—Fill the flagon, Master Tapster.”

“Thou wilt win no more Hollands, I think, on such wager, friend Mike,” said the mercer; “for the sulky swain, Tony Foster, rails at thee all to nought, and swears you shall ne’er darken his doors again, for that your oaths are enough to blow the roof off a christian man’s dwelling.”

“Doth he say so, the mincing hypocritical miser?” vociferated Lambourne;—“Why then he shall come down and receive my commands here, this blessed night, under my uncle’s roof! And I will ring him such a black sanctus, that he shall think the devil hath him by the skirts for a month to come, for barely hearing me.”

“Nay, now the pottle-pot is uppermost, with a witness,” said the mercer. “Tony Foster obey thy whistle!—Alas! good Mike, go sleep—go sleep.”

“I tell thee what, thou thin-faced gull,” said Michael Lambourne, in high chafe, “I will wager thee

fifty angels against the first five shelves of thy shop, numbering upward from the false light, with all that is on them, that I make Tony Foster come down to this public house, before we have finished three rounds.”

“I will lay no bet to that amount,” said the mercer, something sobered by an offer which intimated rather too private a knowledge, on Lambourne’s part, of the secret recesses of his shop, “I will lay no such wager,” he said; “but I will stake five angels against thy five, if thou wilt, that Tony Foster will not leave his own roof, or come to ale-house after prayer time, for thee, or any man.”

“Content,” said Lambourne.—“Here, uncle, hold stakes, and let one of your young bleed-barrels there—one of your infant tapsters, trip presently up to the Place, and give this letter to Master Foster, and say that I, his ingle, Michael Lambourne, pray to speak with him at mine uncle’s castle here, upon business of grave import.—Away with thee, child, for it is now sun-down, and the wretch goeth to bed with the birds, to save mutton-suet—faugh!”

Shortly after this messenger was dispatched—an interval which was spent in drinking and buffoonery—he returned with the answer, that Master Foster was coming presently.

“Won, won!” said Lambourne, darting on the stake.

“Not till he comes, if you please,” said the mercer, interfering.

“Why, ’sblood! he is at the threshold,” replied Michael—“What said he, boy?”

“If it please your worship,” answered the messenger, “he looked out of window, with a musketoon in his hand; and when I delivered your errand, which I did with fear and trembling, he said, with a vinegar aspect, that your worship might be gone to the infernal regions.”

“Or to hell, I suppose,” said Lambourne—“it is there he disposes of all that are not of the congregation.”

“Even so,” said the boy; “I used the other phrase, as being the more poetical.”

“An ingenious youth,” said Michael; “shalt have a drop to whet thy poetical whistle—And what said Foster next?”

“He called me back,” answered the boy, “and bid me say, you might come to him, if you had aught to say to him.”

“And what next?” said Lambourne.

“He read the letter, and seemed in a fluster, and asked if your worship was in drink—and I said you were speaking a little Spanish, as one who had been in the Canaries.”

“Out, you diminutive pint-pot, whelped of an overgrown reckoning!” replied Lambourne—“Out!—But what said he then?”

“Why, he muttered, that if he came not, your worship would bolt out what were better kept in; and so he took his old fleet cap, and thread-bare blue cloak, and, as I said before, he will be here incontinent.”

“There is truth in what he said,” replied Lambourne, as if speaking to himself—“My brain has played me its old dog’s trick—but coraggio—let him approach!—I have not rolled about in the world, for

many a day, to fear Tony Foster, be I drunk or sober. Bring me a flagon of cold water to christen my sack withal."

While Lambourne, whom the approach of Foster seemed to have recalled to a sense of his own condition, was busied in preparing to receive him, Giles Gosling stole up to the apartment of the pedlar, whom he found traversing the room in much agitation.

"You withdrew yourself suddenly from the company," said the landlord to the guest.

"It was time when the devil became one among you," replied the pedlar.

"It is not courteous in you to term my nephew by such a name," said Gosling, "nor is it kindly in me to reply to it; and yet, in some sort, Mike may be considered as a limb of Satan."

"Pooh!—I talk not of the swaggering ruffian," replied the pedlar, "it is of the other, who, for aught I know—But when go they? or wherefore come they?"

"Marry, these are questions I cannot answer," replied the host. "But, look you, sir, you have brought me a token from worthy Master Tressilian—a pretty stone it is." He took out the ring, and looked at it, adding, as he put it into his purse again, that it was too rich a guerdon for any thing he could do for the worthy donor. He was, he said, in the public line, and it ill became him to be too inquisitive into other folks' concerns; he had already said, that he could hear nothing, but that the lady lived still at Cumnor Place, in the closest seclusion, and, to such as by chance had a view of her, seemed pensive and discontented with her solitude. "But here," he said, "if you are desirous to gratify your master, is the rarest chance that hath occurred for this many a day. Tony Foster is coming down hither, and it is but letting Mike Lambourne smell another wine-flask, and the queen's command would not move him from the ale-bench. So they are fast for an hour or so—Now, if you will don your pack, which will be your best excuse, you may, perchance, win the ear of the old servant, being assured of the master's absence, to let you try to get some custom of the lady, and then you may learn more of her condition than I or any other can tell you."

"True—very true," answered Wayland, for he it was; "an excellent device, but methinks something dangerous—for say Foster should return?"

"Very possible indeed," replied the host.

"Or say," continued Wayland, "the lady should render me cold thanks for my exertions?"

"As is not unlikely," replied Giles Gosling. "I marvel Master Tressilian will take such heed of her that cares not for him."

"In either case I were foully sped," said Wayland; "and therefore I do not, on the whole, much relish your device."

"Nay, but take me with you, good master serving-man," replied mine host; "this is your master's business, and not mine; you best know the risk to be encountered, or how far you are willing to brave it. But that which you will not yourself hazard, you cannot expect others to risk."

"Hold, hold," said Wayland; "tell me but one thing—Goes yonder old man up to Cumnor?"

"Surely, I think so," said the landlord; "their servant said he was to take their baggage thither, but the ale-tap has been as potent for him as the sack-spigot has been for Michael."

"It is enough," said Wayland, assuming an air of resolution—"I will thwart that old villain's projects—my affright at his baleful aspect begins to abate, and my hatred to arise. Help me on with my pack, good mine host—And look to thyself, old Albu-mazar—there is a malignant influence in thy horoscope, and it gleams from the constellation of Ursa Major."

So saying, he assumed his burthen, and, guided by the landlord through the postern-gate of the Black Bear, took the most private way from thence up to Cumnor Place.

CHAPTER XX.

Clown. You have of these pedlars, that have more in 'em than you 'd think, sister.

Winter's Tale, Act IV, Sc. III.

IN his anxiety to obey the earl's repeated charges of secrecy, as well as from his own unsocial and miserly habits, Anthony Foster was more desirous, by his mode of housekeeping, to escape observation, than to resist intrusive curiosity. Thus, instead of a numerous household, to secure his charge, and defend his house, he studied, as much as possible, to elude notice, by diminishing his attendants; so that, unless when there were attendants of the earl, or of Varney in the mansion, one old male domestic, and two old crones, who assisted in keeping the countess's apartments in order, were the only servants of the family. It was one of these old women who opened the door when Wayland knocked, and answered his petition, to be admitted to exhibit his wares to the ladies of the family, with a volley of vituperation, couched in what is there called the *jowring* dialect. The pedlar found the means of checking this vociferation, by slipping a silver groat into her hand, and intimating the present of some stuff for a coif, if the lady would buy of his wares.

"God ield thee, for mine is aw in littocks—Slocket with thy pack into gharn, mon—Her walks in gharn." Into the garden she ushered the pedlar accordingly, and pointing to an old ruinous garden-house, said, "Yonder be's her, mon,—yonder be's her—Zhe will buy changes an zhe loikes stuffs."

"She has left me to come off as I may," thought Wayland, as he heard the hag shut the garden-door behind him. "But they shall not beat me, and they dare not murder me, for so little trespass, and by this fair twilight. Hang it, I will on—a brave general never thought of his retreat till he was defeated. I see two females in the old garden-house yonder—but how to address them?—Stay—Will Shakspeare, be my friend in need. I will give them a taste of Autolycus." He then sung, with a good voice, and becoming audacity, the popular playhouse ditty,

"Lawn as white as driven snow
Cyprus black as e'er was crow,
Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
Masks for faces and for noses."

"What hath fortune sent us here for an unwonted sight, Janet?" said the lady.

"One of these merchants of vanity, called pedlars," answered Janet, demurely, "who utters his light wares in lighter measures—I marvel old Dorcas let him pass."

"It is a lucky chance, girl," said the countess; "we lead a heavy life here, and this may wile off a weary hour."

"Ay, my gracious lady," said Janet; "but my father?"

"He is not *my* father Janet, nor I hope my master," answered the lady—"I say, call the man hither—I want some things."

"Nay, replied Janet, "your ladyship has but to say so in the next packet, and if England can furnish them they will be sent.—There will come mischief on't—Pray, dearest lady, let me bid the man begone!"

"I will have thee bid him come hither," said the countess,—*"or stay, thou terrified fool; I will bid him myself, and spare thee a chiding."*

"Ah! well-a-day, dearest lady, if that were the worst," said Janet, sadly, while the lady called to the pedlar, "Good fellow, step forward—undo thy pack—if thou hast good wares, chance has sent thee hither for my convenience, and thy profit."

"What may your ladyship please to lack?" said Wayland, unstrapping his pack, and displaying its contents with as much dexterity as if he had been bred to the trade. Indeed, he had occasionally pursued it in the course of his roving life, and now commended his wares with all the volubility of a trader, and showed some skill in the main art of placing prices upon them.

"What do I please to lack?" said the lady; "why, considering I have not for six long months bought one yard of lawn or cambric, or one trinket, the most inconsiderable, for my own use, and at my own choice, the better question is, what hast thou got to sell? Lay aside for me that cambric partlet and pair of sleeves—and those roundells of gold fringe, drawn out with cyprus—and that short cloak of cherry-coloured fine cloth, garnished with gold buttons and loops—is it not of an absolute fancy, Janet?"

"Nay, my lady," replied Janet, "if you consult my poor judgment, it is, methinks, over gawdy for a graceful habit."

"Now, out upon thy judgment! if it be no brighter, wench," said the countess, "thou shalt wear it thyself for penance sake; and I promise, the gold buttons, being somewhat massive, will comfort thy father, and reconcile him to the cherry-coloured body. See that he snap them not away, Janet, and send them to bear company with the imprisoned angels which he keeps captive in his strong-box."

"May I pray your ladyship to spare my poor father!" said Janet.

"Nay, but why should any one spare him that is so sparing of his own nature?" replied the lady.—"Well, but to our gear—That head garniture for myself, and that silver bodkin, mounted with pearl;—and take off two gowns of that russet cloth for Dorcas and Alison, Janet, to keep the old wretches warm against winter comes—And stay, hast thou

no perfumes and sweet bags, or any handsome casting bottles of the newest mode?"

"Were I pedlar in earnest, I were a made merchant," thought Wayland, as he busied himself to answer the demands which she thronged one on another with the eagerness of a young lady who has been long secluded from such a pleasing occupation. "But how to bring her to a moment's serious reflection." Then as he exhibited his choicest collection of essences and perfumes, he at once arrested her attention by observing, that these articles had almost risen to double value, since the magnificent preparations made by the Earl of Leicester to entertain the queen and court at his princely Castle of Kenilworth.

"Ha!" said the countess, hastily; "that rumour then is true, Janet."

"Surely, madam," answered Wayland; "and I marvel it hath not reached your noble ladyship's ears. The Queen of England feasts with the noble earl for a week during the Summer's Progress; and there are many who will tell you England will have a king, and England's Elizabeth, God save her, a husband, ere the progress be over."

"They lie like villains!" said the countess, bursting forth impatiently.

"For God's sake, madam, consider," said Janet, trembling with apprehension; "who would cumber themselves about pedlar's tidings!"

"Yes, Janet!" exclaimed the countess; "right, thou hast corrected me justly. Such reports, blighting the reputation of England's brightest and noblest peer, can only find currency among the mean, the abject, and the infamous."

"May I perish, lady," said Wayland Smith, observing that her violence directed itself towards him, "if I have done any thing to merit this strange passion—I have said but what many men say."

By this time the countess had recovered her composure, and endeavoured, alarmed by the anxious hints of Janet, to suppress all appearance of displeasure. "I were loth," she said, "good fellow, that our queen should change the virgin style, so dear to us her people—think not of it." And then, as if desirous to change the subject, she added, "And what is this paste, so carefully put up in the silver box?" as she examined the contents of a casket in which drugs and perfumes were contained in separate drawers.

"It is a remedy, madam, for a disorder, of which I trust your ladyship will never have reason to complain. The amount of a small turkey-bean, swallowed daily for a week, fortifies the heart against those black vapours which arise from solitude, melancholy, unrequited affection, disappointed hope"—

"Are you a fool, friend?" said the countess, sharply; "or do you think, because I have good-naturedly purchased your trumpery goods at your roguish prices, that you may put any gullery you will on me?—who ever heard that affections of the heart were cured by medicines given to the body?"

"Under your honourable favour," said Wayland, "I am an honest man, and I have sold my goods at an honest price—As to this most precious medicine, when I told its qualities, I asked you not to purchase it, so why should I lie to you? I say not it will cure

a rooted affection of the mind, which only God and time can do; but I say, that this restorative relieves the black vapours which are engendered in the body of that melancholy which broodeth on the mind. I have relieved many with it, both in court and city, and of late one Master Edmund Tressilian, a worshipful gentleman in Cornwall, who, on some slight received, it was told me, where he had set his affections, was brought into that state of melancholy which made his friends alarmed for his life."

He paused, and the lady remained silent for some time, and then asked, with a voice which she strove in vain to render firm and indifferent in its tone, "Is the gentleman you have mentioned perfectly recovered?"

"Passably, madam," answered Wayland; "he hath at least no bodily complaint."

"I will take some of the medicine, Janet," said the countess. "I too have sometimes that dark melancholy which overclouds the brain."

"You shall not do so, madam," said Janet; "who shall answer that this fellow vends what is wholesome?"

"I will myself warrant my good faith," said Wayland; and, taking a part of the medicine, he swallowed it before them. The countess now bought what remained, a step to which Janet, by farther objections, only determined her the more obstinately. She even took the first dose upon the instant, and professed to feel her heart lightened and her spirits augmented,—a consequence which, in all probability, existed only in her own imagination. The lady then piled the purchases she had made together, flung her purse to Janet, and desired her to compute the amount and to pay the pedlar; while she herself, as if tired of the amusement she at first found in conversing with him, wished him good evening, and walked carelessly into the house; thus depriving Wayland of every opportunity to speak with her in private. He hastened, however, to attempt an explanation with Janet.

"Maiden," he said, "thou hast the face of one who should love her mistress. She hath much need of faithful service."

"And well deserves it at my hands," replied Janet; "but what of that?"

"Maiden, I am not altogether what I seem," said the pedlar, lowering his voice.

"The less like to be an honest man," said Janet.

"The more so," answered Wayland, "since I am no pedlar."

"Get thee gone then instantly, or I will call for assistance," said Janet; "my father must ere this be returned."

"Do not be so rash," said Wayland; "you will do what you may repent of. I am one of your mistress's friends; and she had need of more, not that thou shouldst ruin those she hath."

"How shall I know that?" said Janet.

"Look me in the face," said Wayland Smith, "and see if thou dost not read honesty in my looks."

And in truth, though by no means handsome, there was in his physiognomy the sharp, keen expression of inventive genius and prompt intellect, which, joined to quick and brilliant eyes, a well-formed mouth, and an intelligent smile, often gives

VOL. III.

grace and interest to features which are both homely and irregular. Janet looked at him with the sly simplicity of her sect, and replied, "Notwithstanding thy boasted honesty, friend, and although I am not accustomed to read and pass judgment on such volumes as thou hast submitted to my perusal, I think I see in thy countenance something of the pedlar—something of the picaroon."

"On a small scale, perhaps," said Wayland Smith, laughing. "But this evening, or to-morrow, will an old man come hither with thy father, who has the stealthy step of the cat, the shrewd and vindictive eye of the rat, the fawning wile of the spaniel, the determined grasp of the mastiff—of him beware, for your own sake and that of your mistress. See you, fair Janet, he brings the venom of the aspic under the assumed innocence of the dove. What precise mischief he meditates towards you I cannot guess, but death and disease have ever dogged his footsteps.—Say nought of this to thy mistress—my art suggests to me that in her state, the fear of evil may be as dangerous as its operation—But see that she take my specific, for—(he lowered his voice and spoke low but impressively in her ear)—it is an antidote against poison—Hark, they enter the garden!"

In effect, a sound of noisy mirth and loud talking approached the garden-door; alarmed by which, Wayland Smith sprung into the midst of a thicket of overgrown shrubs, while Janet withdrew to the garden-house that she might not incur observation, and that she might at the same time conceal, at least for the present, the purchases made from the supposed pedlar, which lay scattered on the floor of the summer-house.

Janet, however, had no occasion for anxiety. Her father, his old attendant, Lord Leicester's domestic, and the astrologer, entered the garden in tumult and in extreme perplexity, endeavouring to quiet Lambourne, whose brain had now become completely fired with liquor, and who was one of those unfortunate persons, who, being once stirred with the vinous stimulus, do not fall asleep like other drunkards, but remain long partially influenced by it, for many hours, until at length, by successive draughts, they are elevated into a state of uncontrollable frenzy. Like many men in this state also, Lambourne neither lost the power of motion, speech, or expression; but, on the contrary, spoke with unwonted emphasis and readiness, and told all that at another time he would have been most desirous to have kept secret.

"What!" ejaculated Michael, at the full extent of his voice, "am I to have no welcome—no carouse when I have brought fortune to your old ruinous dog-house in the shape of a devil's ally, that can change slate-shivers into Spanish dollars?—Here, you Tony Fire-the-fagot, papist, puritan, hypocrite, miser, profligate, devil, compounded of all men's sins, bow down and reverence him who has brought into thy house the very mammon thou worshippingest."

"For God's sake," said Foster, "speak low—come into the house—thou shalt have wine, or whatever thou wilt."

"No, old puckfist, I will have it here," thundered

the inebriated ruffian—"here *al fresco*, as the Italian hath it.—No, no, I will not drink with that poisoning devil within doors, to be choked with the fumes of arsenic and quicksilver; I learned from villain Varney to beware of that."

"Fetch him wine, in the name of all the fiends," said the alchemist.

"Aha! and thou wouldst spice it for me, old Truepenny, wouldst thou not? Ay, I should have copperas, and hellebore, and vitriol, and aquafortis, and twenty devilish materials, bubbling in my brain-pan like a charm to raise the devil in a witch's cauldron. Hand me the flask thyself, old Tony Fire-the-fagot—and let it be cool—I will have no wine mulled at the pile of the old burned bishops—Or stay, let Leicester be king if he will—good—and Varney, villain Varney, grand vizier—why, excellent,—and what shall I be then?—why, emperor—Emperor Lambourne.—I will see this choice piece of beauty that they have walled up here for their private pleasures—I will have her this very night to serve my wine-cup, and put on my nightcap. What should a fellow do with two wives, were he twenty times an earl?—answer me that, Tony boy, you old reprobate hypocritical dog, whom God struck out of the book of life, but tormented with the constant wish to be restored to it.—You old bishop-burning, blasphemous fanatic, answer me that."

"I will stick my knife to the haft in him," said Foster, in a low tone, which trembled with passion.

"For the love of heaven, no violence," said the astrologer. "It cannot but be looked closely into.—Here, honest Lambourne, wilt thou pledge me to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester and Master Richard Varney?"

"I will, mine old Albumazar—I will, my trusty vender of ratsbane—I would kiss thee, mine honest infractor of the Lex Julia (as they said at Leyden), didst thou not flavour so damnably of sulphur, and such fiendish apothecaries' stuff—Here goes it, up seyes—to Varney and Leicester!—two more noble mounting spirits—and more dark-seeking, deep-diving, high-flying, malicious, ambitious miscreants—well, I say no more, but I will whet my dagger on his heart-spone, that refuses to pledge me! And so, my masters"—

Thus speaking, Lambourne exhausted the cup which the astrologer had handed him, and which contained not wine, but distilled spirits. He swore half an oath, dropped the empty cup from his grasp, laid his hand on his sword without being able to draw it, reeled, and fell, without sense or motion, into the arms of the domestic, who dragged him off to his chamber and put him to bed.

In the general confusion, Janet regained her lady's chamber unobserved, trembling like an aspen leaf, but determined to keep secret from the countess the dreadful surmises which she could not help entertaining from the drunken ravings of Lambourne. Her fears, however, though they assumed no certain shape, kept pace with the advice of the pedlar; and she confirmed her mistress in her purpose of taking the medicine which he had recommended, from which it is probable she would otherwise have dissuaded her. Neither had these intimations escaped the ears

of Wayland, who knew much better how to interpret them. He felt much compassion at beholding so lovely a creature as the countess, and whom he had first seen in the bosom of domestic happiness, exposed to the machinations of such a gang of villains. His passions, too, had been highly excited, by hearing the voice of his old master, against whom he nourished, in equal degree, the passions of hatred and fear. He nourished also a pride in his own art and resources; and, dangerous as the task was, he that night formed a determination to attain the bottom of the mystery, and to aid the distressed lady, if it were yet possible. From some words which Lambourne had dropped amongst his ravings, Wayland now, for the first time, felt inclined to doubt that Varney had acted entirely on his own account, in wooing and winning the affections of this beautiful creature. Fame asserted of this zealous retainer, that he had accommodated his lord in former love intrigues; and it occurred to Wayland Smith, that Leicester himself might be the party chiefly interested. Her marriage with the earl he could not suspect; but even the discovery of such a passing intrigue with a lady of Mistress Amy Robsart's rank, was a secret of the deepest importance to the stability of the favourite's power over Elizabeth. "If Leicester would hesitate to stifle such a rumour by very strange means," said he to himself, "he has those about him who would do him that favour without waiting for his consent. If I would meddle in this business, it must be as my old master uses to compound his manna of Satan, with a close mask on my face. So I will quit Giles Gosling to-morrow, and change my course and place of residence as often as a hunted fox. I should like to see this little puritan, too, once more. She looks both pretty and intelligent, to have come of such a caitiff as Anthony Fire-the-fagot."

Giles Gosling received the adieus of Wayland rather joyfully than otherwise. The honest publican saw so much peril in crossing the course of the Earl of Leicester's favourite, that his virtue was scarce able to support him in the task, and he was well pleased when it was likely to be removed from his shoulders; still, however, professing his good will, and readiness, in case of need, to do Mr Tressilian or his emissary any service, in so far as consisted with his character of a publican.

CHAPTER XXI.

Vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on t'other side.

Macbeth.

THE splendour of the approaching revels at Kenilworth was now the conversation through all England; and every thing was collected at home, or from abroad, which could add to the gaiety or glory of the prepared reception of Elizabeth, at the house of her most distinguished favourite. Meantime, Leicester appeared daily to advance in the queen's favour. He was perpetually by her side in council, willingly listened to in the moments of courtly recreation—favoured with approaches even to familiar intimacy—looked up to by all who had aught to hope at

court—courted by foreign ministers with the most flattering testimonies of respect from their sovereigns—the *Alter Ego*, as it seemed, of the stately Elizabeth, who was now very generally supposed to be studying the time and opportunity for associating him, by marriage, into her sovereign power.

Amid such a tide of prosperity, this minion of fortune, and of the queen's favour, was probably the most unhappy man in the realm which seemed at his devotion. He had the Fairy King's superiority over his friends and dependents, and saw much which they could not. The character of his mistress was intimately known to him; it was his minute and studied acquaintance with her humours, as well as her noble qualities, which, joined to his powerful mental qualities, and his eminent external accomplishments, had raised him so high in her favour; and it was that very knowledge of her disposition which led him to apprehend at every turn some sudden and overwhelming disgrace. Leicester was like a pilot possessed of a chart, which points out to him all the peculiarities of his navigation, but which exhibits so many shoals, breakers, and reefs of rocks, that his anxious eye reaps little more from observing them, than to be convinced that his final escape can be little else than miraculous.

In fact, Queen Elizabeth had a character strangely compounded of the strongest masculine sense, with those foibles which are chiefly supposed proper to the female sex. Her subjects had the full benefit of her virtues, which far predominated over her weaknesses; but her courtiers, and those about her person, had often to sustain sudden and embarrassing turns of caprice, and the sallies of a temper which was both jealous and despotic. She was the nursing-mother of her people, but she was also the true daughter of Henry VIII.; and though early sufferings and an excellent education had repressed and modified, they had not altogether destroyed, the hereditary temper of that "hard-ruled king."—"Her mind," says her witty godson, Sir John Harrington, who had experienced both the smiles and the frowns which he describes, "was oft-time like the gentle air, that cometh from the western point in a summer's morn—'twas sweet and refreshing to all around her. Her speech did win all affections. And again, she could put forth such alterations, when obedience was lacking, as left no doubting *whose* daughter she was. When she smiled, it was a pure sunshine, that every one did chuse to bask in, if they could; but anon came a storm, from a sudden gathering of clouds, and the thunder fell, in a wondrous manner, on all alike."*

This variability of disposition, as Leicester well knew, was chiefly formidable to those who had a share in the queen's affections, and who depended rather on her personal regard, than on the indispensable services which they could render to her councils and her crown. The favour of Burleigh, or of Walsingham, of a description far less striking than that by which he was himself upheld, was founded, as Leicester well knew, on Elizabeth's solid judgment, not on her partiality; and was, therefore, free from all those principles of change and decay,

necessarily incident to that which chiefly arose from personal accomplishments and female predilection. These great and sage statesmen were judged of by the queen, only with reference to the measures they suggested, and the reasons by which they supported their opinions in council; whereas the success of Leicester's course depended on all those light and changeable gales of caprice and humour, which thwart or favour the progress of a lover in the favour of his mistress, and she, too, a mistress who was ever and anon becoming fearful lest she should forget the dignity, or compromise the authority of the queen, while she indulged the affections of the woman. Of the difficulties which surrounded his power, "too great to keep or to resign," Leicester was fully sensible; and, as he looked anxiously round for the means of maintaining himself in his precarious situation, and sometimes contemplated those of descending from it in safety, he saw but little hope of either. At such moments, his thoughts turned to dwell upon his secret marriage, and its consequences; and it was in bitterness against himself, if not against his unfortunate countess, that he ascribed to that hasty measure, adopted in the ardour of what he now called inconsiderate passion, at once the impossibility of placing his power on a solid basis, and the imminent prospect of its precipitate downfall.

"Men say," thus ran his thoughts, in these anxious and repentant moments, "that I might marry Elizabeth, and become king of England. All things suggest this. The match is carolled in ballads, while the rabble throw their caps up—It has been touched upon in the schools—whispered in the presence-chamber—recommended from the pulpit—prayed for in the calvinistic churches abroad—touched on by statists in the very council at home—These bold insinuations have been rebutted by no rebuke, no resentment, no chiding, scarce even by the usual female protestation that she would live and die a virgin princess.—Her words have been more courteous than ever, though she knows such rumours are abroad—her actions more gracious—her looks more kind—nought seems wanting to make me king of England, and place me beyond the storms of court favour, excepting the putting forth of mine own hand to take that crown imperial, which is the glory of the universe! And when I might stretch that hand out most boldly, it is fettered down by a secret and inextricable bond.—And here I have letters from Amy," he would say, catching them up with a movement of peevishness, "persecuting me to acknowledge her openly—to do justice to her and to myself—and I wot not what. Methinks I have done less than justice to myself already. And she speaks as if Elizabeth were to receive the knowledge of this matter, with the glee of a mother hearing of the happy marriage of a hopeful son!—She, the daughter of Henry, who spared neither man in his anger, nor woman in his desire,—she to find herself tricked, drawn on with toys of passion to the verge of acknowledging her love to a subject, and he a married man!—Elizabeth to learn that she had been dallied with in such fashion, as a gay courtier might trifle with a country wench—We should then learn *furens quid fœmina!*"

* *Nugæ Antiquæ*, vol. i, pp. 355, 356—362.

He would then pause, and call for Varney, whose advice was now more frequently resorted to than ever, because the earl remembered the remonstrances which he had made against his secret contract. And their consultation usually terminated in anxious deliberation, how, or in what manner, the countess was to be produced at Kenilworth. These communings had for some time ended always in a resolution to delay the progress from day to day. But at length a peremptory decision became necessary.

"Elizabeth will not be satisfied without her presence," said the earl; "whether any suspicion hath entered her mind, as my own apprehensions suggest, or whether the petition of Tressilian is kept in her memory by Sussex, or some other secret enemy, I know not; but amongst all the favourable expressions which she uses to me, she often recurs to the story of Amy Robsart. I think that Amy is the slave in the chariot, who is placed there by my evil fortune to dash and to confound my triumph, even when at the highest. Show me thy device, Varney, for solving the inextricable difficulty. I have thrown every such impediment in the way of these accursed revels as I could propound even with a shade of decency, but to-day's interview has put all to a hazard. She said to me kindly, but peremptorily, 'We will give you no farther time for preparations, my lord, lest you should altogether ruin yourself. On Saturday, the 9th of July, we will be with you at Kenilworth—We pray you to forget none of our appointed guests and suitors, and in especial this light-o'-love, Amy Robsart. We would wish to see the woman who could postpone yonder poetical gentleman, Master Tressilian, to your man, Richard Varney.'—Now, Varney, ply thine invention, whose forge hath availed us so often; for, sure as my name is Dudley, the danger menaced by my horoscope is now darkening around me."

"Can my lady be by no means persuaded to bear for a brief space the obscure character which circumstances impose on her?" said Varney, after some hesitation.

"How, sirrah! my countess term herself *thy* wife!—that may neither stand with my honour nor with hers."

"Alas! my lord," answered Varney, "and yet such is the quality in which Elizabeth now holds her; and to contradict this opinion is to discover all."

"Think of something else, Varney," said the earl, in great agitation; "this invention is naught—If I could give way to it, she would not; for I tell thee, Varney, if thou know'st it not, that not Elizabeth on the throne has more pride than the daughter of this obscure gentleman of Devon. She is flexible in many things, but where she holds her honour brought in question, she hath a spirit and temper as apprehensive as lightning, and as swift in execution."

"We have experienced that, my lord, else had we not been thus circumstanced," said Varney. "But what else to suggest I know not—Methinks she who gives rise to the danger should do somewhat towards parrying it."

"It is impossible," said the earl, waving his hand; "I know neither authority nor entreaties would make her endure thy name for an hour."

"It is somewhat hard though," said Varney, in a dry tone; and, without pausing on that topic, he added, "Suppose some one were found to represent her? Such feats have been performed in the courts of as sharp-eyed monarchs as Queen Elizabeth."

"Utter madness, Varney," answered the earl; "the counterfeit would be confronted with Tressilian, and discovery become inevitable."

"Tressilian might be removed from court," said the unhesitating Varney.

"And by what means?"

"There are many," said Varney, "by which a statesman in your situation, my lord, may remove from the scene one who pries into your affairs, and places himself in perilous opposition to you."

"Speak not to me of such policy, Varney," said the earl, hastily; "which, besides, would avail nothing in the present case. Many others may be at court, to whom Amy may be known; and besides, on the absence of Tressilian, her father, or some of her friends, would be instantly summoned hither. Urge thine invention once more."

"My lord, I know not what to say," answered Varney; "but were I myself in such perplexity, I would ride post down to Oumnor Place, and compel my wife to give her consent to such measures as her safety and mine required."

"Varney," said Leicester, "I cannot urge her to aught so repugnant to her noble nature, as a share in this stratagem—it would be a base requital to the love she bears me."

"Well, my lord," said Varney, "your lordship is a wise and an honourable man, and skilled in those high points of romantic scruple, which are current in Arcadia, perhaps, as your nephew, Philip Sidney, writes. I am your humble servitor—a man of this world, and only happy that my knowledge of it, and its ways, is such as your lordship has not scorned to avail yourself of. Now I would fain know, whether the obligation lies on my lady or on you, in this fortunate union; and which has most reason to show complaisance to the other, and to consider that other's wishes, conveniences, and safety?"

"I tell thee, Varney," said the earl, "that all it was in my power to bestow upon her, was not merely deserved, but a thousand times overpaid, by her own virtue and beauty; for never did greatness descend upon a creature so formed by nature to grace and adorn it."

"It is well, my lord, you are so satisfied," answered Varney, with his usual sardonic smile, which even respect to his patron could not at all times subdue—"you will have time enough to enjoy undisturbed the society of one so gracious and beautiful—that is, so soon as such confinement in the Tower be over, as may correspond to the crime of deceiving the affections of Elizabeth Tudor—A cheaper penalty, I presume, you do not expect."

"Malicious fiend!" answered Leicester, "do you mock me in my misfortune?—Manage it as thou wilt."

"If you are serious, my lord," said Varney, "you must set forth instantly, and post for Oumnor Place."

"Do thou go thyself, Varney; the devil has given thee that sort of eloquence, which is most powerful in the worst cause. I should stand self-convicted of villany, were I to urge such a deceit.—Begone, I tell thee—Must I entreat thee to mine own dishonour?"

"No, my lord," said Varney—"but if you are serious in entrusting me with the task of urging this most necessary measure, you must give me a letter to my lady, as my credentials, and trust to me for backing the advice it contains with all the force in my power. And such is my opinion of my lady's love for your lordship, and of her willingness to do that which is at once to contribute to your pleasure and your safety, that I am sure she will condescend to bear, for a few brief days, the name of so humble a man as myself, especially since it is not inferior in antiquity to that of her own paternal house."

Leicester seized on writing materials, and twice or thrice commenced a letter to the countess, which he afterwards tore into fragments. At length he finished a few distracted lines, in which he conjured her, for reasons nearly concerning his life and honour, to consent to bear the name of Varney for a few days, during the revels at Kenilworth. He added, that Varney would communicate all the reasons which rendered this deception indispensable; and having signed and sealed these credentials, he flung them over the table to Varney, with a motion that he should depart, which his adviser was not slow to comprehend and to obey.

Leicester remained like one stupified, till he heard the trampling of the horses, as Varney, who took no time even to change his dress, threw himself into the saddle, and, followed by a single servant, set off for Berkshire. At the sound, the earl started from his seat, and ran to the window, with the momentary purpose of recalling the unworthy commission with which he had entrusted one, of whom he used to say, he knew no virtuous property save affection to his patron. But Varney was already beyond call—and the bright starry firmament, which the age considered as the Book of Fate, lying spread before Leicester when he opened the case-ment, diverted him from his better and more manly purpose.

"There they roll, on their silent but potential course," said the earl, looking around him, "without a voice which speaks to our ear, but with influences which affect, at every change, the indwellers of this vile earthly planet. This, if astrologers fable not, is the very crisis of my fate! The hour approaches, of which I was taught to beware—the hour, too, which I was encouraged to hope for.—A king was the word—but how?—the crown matrimonial—all hopes of that are gone—let them go. The rich Netherlands have demanded me for their leader, and, would Elizabeth consent, would yield to me *their* crown.—And have I not such a claim, even in this kingdom? That of York, descending from George of Clarence to the House of Huntingdon, which, this lady failing, may have a fair chance—Huntingdon is of my house.—But I will plunge no deeper in these high mysteries. Let me hold my course in silence for a while, and in obscurity, like a subterranean river—the time shall

come that I will burst forth in my strength, and bear all opposition before me."

While Leicester was thus stupifying the remonstrances of his own conscience, by appealing to political necessity for his apology, or losing himself amidst the wild dreams of ambition, his agent left town and tower behind him, on his hasty journey to Berkshire. *He* also nourished high hope. He had brought Lord Leicester to the point which he had desired, of committing to him the most intimate recesses of his breast, and of using him as the channel of his most confidential intercourse with his lady. Henceforward it would, he foresaw, be difficult for his patron either to dispense with his services, or refuse his requests, however unreasonable. And if this disdainful dame, as he termed the countess, should comply with the request of her husband, Varney, her pretended husband, must needs become so situated with respect to her, that there was no knowing where his audacity might be bounded, perhaps not till circumstances enabled him to obtain a triumph, which he thought of with a mixture of fiendish feelings, in which revenge for her previous scorn was foremost and predominant. Again he contemplated the possibility of her being totally intractable, and refusing obstinately to play the part assigned to her in the drama at Kenilworth.

"Alas! must then do his part," he said—"Sickness must serve her majesty as an excuse for not receiving the homage of Mrs Varney—ay, and a sore and a wasting sickness it may prove, should Elizabeth continue to cast so favourable an eye on my Lord of Leicester. I will not forego the chance of being favourite of a monarch for want of determined measures, should these be necessary.—Forward, good horse, forward—ambition, and haughty hope of power, pleasure, and revenge, strike their stings as deep through my bosom as I plunge the rowels in thy flanks—On, good horse, on—the devil urges us both forward.

CHAPTER XXII.

Say that my beauty was but small,
Among court ladies all despised;
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where, scornful earl, 't was dearly prized?

No more thou comest with wonted speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see;
But be she alive or be she dead.
I fear, stern earl, 's the same to thee.

MICKLE'S *Cumnor-hall*.

THE ladies of fashion of the present, or of any other period, must have allowed, that the young and lovely Countess of Leicester had, besides her youth and beauty, two qualities which entitled her to a place amongst women of rank and distinction. She displayed, as we have seen in her interview with the pedlar, a liberal promptitude to make unnecessary purchases, solely for the pleasure of acquiring useless and showy trifles, which ceased to please as soon as they were possessed; and she was, besides, apt to spend a considerable space of time every day in adorning her person, although the varied splendour of her attire could only attract the half satirical

praise of the precise Janet, or an approving glance from the bright eyes which witnessed their own beams of triumph reflected from the mirror.

The Countess Amy had, indeed, to plead for indulgence in those frivolous tastes, that the education of the times had done little or nothing for a mind naturally gay and averse to study. If she had not loved to collect finery and to wear it, she might have woven tapestry or sewed embroidery, till her labours spread in gay profusion all over the walls and seats at Lidcote Hall; or she might have varied Minerva's labours with the task of preparing a mighty pudding against the time that Sir Hugh Robsart returned from the green-wood. But Amy had no natural genius either for the loom, the needle, or the receipt-book. Her mother had died in infancy; her father contradicted her in nothing; and Tressilian, the only one who approached her, that was able or desirous to attend to the cultivation of her mind, had much hurt his interest with her, by assuming too eagerly the task of a preceptor; so that he was regarded by the lively, indulged, and idle girl, with some fear and much respect; but with little or nothing of that softer emotion which it had been his hope and his ambition to inspire. And thus her heart lay readily open, and her fancy became easily captivated by the noble exterior and graceful deportment, and complacent flattery of Leicester, even before he was known to her as the dazzling minion of wealth and power.

The frequent visits of Leicester at Cumnor, during the earlier part of their union, had reconciled the countess to the solitude and privacy to which she was condemned; but when these visits became rarer and more rare, and when the void was filled up with letters of excuse, not always very warmly expressed, and generally extremely brief, discontent and suspicion began to haunt those splendid apartments which love had fitted up for beauty. Her answers to Leicester conveyed these feelings too bluntly, and pressed, more naturally than prudently, that she might be relieved from this obscure and secluded residence, by the earl's acknowledgment of their marriage; and in arranging her arguments with all the skill she was mistress of, she trusted chiefly to the warmth of the entreaties with which she urged them. Sometimes she even ventured to mingle reproaches, of which Leicester conceived he had good reason to complain.

"I have made her countess," he said to Varney; "surely she might wait till it consisted with my pleasure that she should put on a coronet."

The Countess Amy viewed the subject in directly an opposite light.

"What signifies," she said, "that I have rank and honour in reality, if I am to live an obscure prisoner, without either society or observance, and suffering in my character, as one of dubious or disgraced reputation? I care not for all those strings of pearl, which you fret me by warping into my tresses, Janet. I tell you, that at Lidcote Hall, if I put but a fresh rose-bud among my hair, my good father would call me to him, that he might see it more closely; and the kind old curate would smile, and Master Mumblazen would say something about roses gules; and now I sit here, decked out like

an image with gold and gems, and no one to see my finery but you, Janet. There was the poor Tressilian too—but it avails not speaking of him."

"It doth not, indeed, madam," said her prudent attendant; "and verily you make me sometimes wish you would not speak of him so often, or so rashly."

"It signifies nothing to warn me, Janet—I was born free, though I am now mewed up like some fine foreign slave, rather than the wife of an English noble. I bore it all with pleasure while I was sure he loved me; but now, my tongue and heart shall be free, let them fetter my limbs as they will—I tell thee, Janet, I love my husband—I will love him till my latest breath—I cannot cease to love him, even if I would, or if he—which, God knows, may chance—should cease to love me. But I will say, and loudly, I would have been happier than I now am, to have remained in Lidcote Hall; even although I must have married poor Tressilian, with his melancholy look, and his head full of learning, which I cared not for. He said if I would read his favourite volumes, there would come a time that I should be glad of it—I think it is come now."

"I bought you some books, madam," said Janet, "from a lame fellow who sold them in the market-place—and who stared something boldly at me, I promise you."

"Let me see them, Janet," said the countess; "but let them not be of your own precise cast.—How is this, most righteous damsel?—'A Pair of Snuffers for the Golden Candlestick'—'A Handful of Myrrh and Hyssop to put a Sick Soul to Purgation'—'A Draught of Water from the Valley of Baca'—'Foxes and Firebrands'—What gear call you this, maiden?"

"Nay, madam," said Janet, "it was but fitting and seemly to put grace in your ladyship's way; but an you will none of it, there are play-books, and poet-books, I trow."

The countess proceeded carelessly in her examination, turning over such rare volumes as would now make the fortune of twenty retail booksellers. Here was a "*Boke of Cookery, imprinted by Richard Lant,*" and "*Skelton's Books*"—"The Passtime of the People"—"The Castle of Knowledge," etc. But neither to this lore did the countess's heart incline, and joyfully did she start up from the listless task of turning over the leaves of the pamphlets, and hastily did she scatter them through the floor, when the hasty clatter of horses' feet, heard in the courtyard, called her to the window, exclaiming, "it is Leicester!—it is my noble earl!—it is my Dudley!—Every stroke of his horse's hoof sounds like a note of lordly music!"

There was a brief bustle in the mansion, and Foster, with his downward look and sullen manner, entered the apartment to say, "That Master Richard Varney was arrived from my lord having ridden all night, and craved to speak with her ladyship instantly."

"Varney?—and to speak with me?—pshaw!—But he comes with news from Leicester—so admit him instantly."

Varney entered her dressing apartment, where she sate arrayed in her native loveliness, adorned with all that Janet's art, and a rich and tasteful undress, could bestow. But the most beautiful part of her at-

fire was her beautiful and luxuriant light-brown locks, which floated in such rich abundance around a neck that resembled a swan's, and over a bosom heaving with anxious expectation, which communicated a hurried tinge of red to her whole countenance.

Varney entered the room in the dress in which he had waited on his master that morning to court, the splendour of which made a strange contrast with the disorder arising from hasty riding, during a dark night and foul ways. His brow bore an anxious and hurried expression, as one who has that to say of which he doubts the reception, and who hath yet posted on from the necessity of communicating his tidings. The countess's anxious eye at once caught the alarm, as she exclaimed, "You bring news from my lord, Master Varney—Gracious Heaven, is he ill?"

"No, madam, thank Heaven!" said Varney. "Compose yourself, and permit me to take breath ere I communicate my tidings."

"No breath, sir," replied the lady, impatiently; "I know your theatrical arts. Since your breath hath sufficed to bring you hither, it may suffice to tell your tale, at least briefly, and in the gross."

"Madam," answered Varney, "we are not alone, and my lord's message was for your ear only."

"Leave us, Janet, and Master Foster," said the lady; "but remain in the next apartment, and within call."

Foster and his daughter retired, agreeably to the Lady Leicester's commands, into the next apartment, which was the withdrawing-room. The door which led from the sleeping-chamber was then carefully shut and bolted, and the father and daughter remained both in a posture of anxious attention,—the first with a stern, suspicious, anxious cast of countenance, and Janet with folded hands, and looks which seemed divided betwixt her desire to know the fortunes of her mistress, and her prayers to Heaven for her safety. Anthony Foster seemed himself to have some idea of what was passing through his daughter's mind, for he crossed the apartment, and took her anxiously by the hand, saying, "That is right—pray, Janet, pray—we have all need of prayers, and some of us more than others. Pray, Janet—I would pray myself, but I must listen to what goes on within—evil has been brewing, love—evil has been brewing. God forgive our sins; but Varney's sudden and strange arrival bodes us no good."

Janet had never before heard her father excite or even permit her attention to any thing which passed in their mysterious family, and now that he did so, his voice sounded in her ear—she knew not why—like that of a screech-owl denouncing some deed of terror and of woe. She turned her eyes fearfully towards the door, almost as if she expected some sounds of horror to be heard, or some sight of fear to display itself.

All, however, was as still as death, and the voices of those who spoke in the inner chamber, were, if they spoke at all, carefully subdued to a tone which could not be heard in the next. At once, however, they were heard to speak fast, thick, and hastily; and presently after the voice of the countess was heard exclaiming, at the highest pitch to which indigna-

tion could raise it, "Undo the door, sir, I command you!—Undo the door!—I will have no other reply!" she continued, drowning, with her vehement accents, the low and muttered sounds which Varney was heard to utter betwixt whiles. "What, ho! without there!" she persisted, accompanying her words with shrieks, "Janet, alarm the house!—Foster, break open the door!—I am detained here by a traitor!—Use axe and lever, Master Foster—I will be your warrant!"

"It shall not need, madam," Varney was at length distinctly heard to say. "If you please to expose my lord's important concerns and your own to the general ear, I will not be your hindrance."

The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Janet and her father rushed in, anxious to learn the cause of these reiterated exclamations.

When they entered the apartment, Varney stood by the door grinding his teeth, with an expression in which rage, and shame, and fear, had each their share. The countess stood in the midst of her apartment, like a juvenile Pythoness, under the influence of the prophetic fury. The veins in her beautiful forehead started into swoln blue lines, through the hurried impulse of her articulation—her cheek and neck glowed like scarlet—her eyes were like those of an imprisoned eagle, flashing red lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its talons. Were it possible for one of the Graces to have been animated by a Fury, the countenance could not have united such beauty with so much hatred, scorn, defiance, and resentment. The gesture and attitude corresponded with the voice and looks, and altogether presented a spectacle which was at once beautiful and fearful; so much of the sublime had the energy of passion united with the Countess Amy's natural loveliness. Janet, as soon as the door was open, ran to her mistress; and more slowly, yet with more haste than he was wont, Anthony Foster went to Richard Varney.

"In the truth's name, what ails your ladyship?" said the former.

"What, in the name of Satan, have you done to her?" said Foster to his friend.

"Who, I?—nothing," answered Varney, but with sunken head and sullen voice; "nothing but communicated to her her lord's commands, which, if the lady list not to obey, she knows better how to answer it than I may pretend to do."

"Now, by Heaven, Janet!" said the countess, "the false traitor lies in his throat! He must needs lie, for he speaks to the dishonour of my noble lord—he must needs lie doubly, for he speaks to gain ends of his own, equally execrable and unattainable."

"You have misapprehended me, lady," said Varney, with a sulky species of submission and apology; "let this matter rest till your passion be abated, and I will explain all."

"Thou shalt never have an opportunity to do so," said the countess.—"Look at him, Janet. He is fairly dressed, hath the outside of a gentleman, and hither he came to persuade me it was my lord's pleasure—nay, more, my wedded lord's commands, that I should go with him to Kenilworth, and before the queen and nobles, and in presence of my own wedded

lord, that I should acknowledge him—*him* there—that very cloak-brushing, shoe-cleaning fellow—*him* there, my lord's lacquey, for my liege lord and husband; furnishing against myself, great God! whenever I was to claim my right and my rank, such weapons as would hew my just claim from the root, and destroy my character to be regarded as an honourable matron of the English nobility!"

"You hear her, Foster, and you, young maiden, hear this lady," answered Varney, taking advantage of the pause which the countess had made in her charge, more for lack of breath than for lack of matter—"You hear that her heat only objects to me the course which our good lord, for the purpose to keep certain matters secret, suggests in the very letter which she holds in her hands."

Foster here attempted to interfere with a face of authority, which he thought became the charge entrusted to him, "Nay, lady, I must needs say you are hasty in this—Such deceit is not utterly to be condemned when practised for a righteous end; and thus even the patriarch Abraham feigned Sarah to be his sister when they went down to Egypt."

"Ay, sir," answered the countess; "but God rebuked that deceit even in the father of his chosen people, by the mouth of the heathen Pharaoh. Out upon you, that will read Scripture only to copy those things, which are held out to us as warnings, not as examples!"

"But Sarah disputed not the will of her husband, an it be your pleasure," said Foster, in reply; "but did as Abraham commanded, calling herself his sister, that it might be well with her husband for her sake and that his soul might live because of her beauty."

"Now, so Heaven pardon me my useless anger," answered the countess, "thou art as daring a hypocrite as yonder fellow is an impudent deceiver. Never will I believe that the noble Dudley gave countenance to so dastardly, so dishonourable a plan. Thus I tread on his infamy, if his indeed it be, and thus destroy its remembrance for ever!"

So saying, she tore in pieces Leicester's letter, and stamped, in the extremity of impatience, as if she would have annihilated the minute fragments into which she had rent it.

"Bear witness," said Varney, collecting himself, "she has torn my lord's letter, in order to burthen me with the scheme of his devising; and although it promises nought but danger and trouble to me, she would lay it to my charge, as if I had any purpose of mine own in it."

"Thou liest, thou treacherous slave!" said Countess Amy, in spite of Janet's attempts to keep her silent, in the sad foresight that her vehemence might only furnish arms against herself. "Thou liest," she continued—"Let me go, Janet—Were it the last word I have to speak, he lies—he had his own foul ends to seek; and broader he would have displayed them, had my passion permitted me to preserve the silence which at first encouraged him to unfold his vile projects."

"Madam," said Varney, overwhelmed in spite of his effrontery, "I entreat you to believe yourself mistaken."

"As soon will I believe light darkness. Have I

drank of oblivion! Do I not remember former passages, which, known to Leicester, had given thee the preferment of a gallows, instead of the honour of his intimacy—I would I were a man but for five minutes! It were space enough to make a craven like thee confess his villany. But go—begone—Tell thy master, that when I take the foul course to which such scandalous deceits as thou hast recommended on his behalf must necessarily lead me, I will give him a rival something worthy of the name. He shall not be supplanted by an ignominious lacquey, whose best fortune is to catch his master's last suit of clothes ere it is threadbare, and who is only fit to seduce a suburb-wench by the bravery of new roses in his master's old pantouffles. Go, begone, sir—I scorn thee so much, that I am ashamed to have been angry with thee."

Varney left the room with a mute expression of rage, and was followed by Foster, whose apprehension, naturally slow, was overpowered by the eager and abundant discharge of indignation, which, for the first time, he had heard burst from the lips of a being, who had seemed till that moment too languid, and too gentle, to nurse an angry thought, or utter an intemperate expression. Foster, therefore, pursued Varney from place to place, persecuting him with interrogatories, to which the other replied not, until they were in the opposite side of the quadrangle, and in the old library; with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Here he turned round on his persevering follower, and thus addressed him, in a tone tolerably equal; that brief walk having been sufficient to give one so habituated to command his temper, time to rally and recover his presence of mind.

"Tony," he said, with his usual sneering laugh, "it avails not to deny it. The woman and the devil, who, as thine oracle Holdforth will confirm to thee, cheated man at the beginning, have this day proved more powerful than my discretion. Yon termagant looked so tempting, and had the art to preserve her countenance so naturally, while I communicated my lord's message, that, by my faith, I thought I might say some little thing for myself. She thinks she hath my head under her girdle now, but she is deceived.—Where is Doctor Alasco?"

"In his laboratory," answered Foster; "it is the hour he is not spoken withal—we must wait till noon is past, or spoil his important—What said I, important?—I would say interrupt his divine studies."

"Ay, he studies the devil's divinity," said Varney,—“but when I want him, one hour must suffice as well as another. Lead the way to his pandæmonium."

So spoke Varney, and with hasty and perturbed steps followed Foster, who conducted him through private passages, many of which were well nigh ruinous, to the opposite side of the quadrangle, where, in a subterranean apartment, now occupied by the chemist Alasco, one of the abbots of Abingdon, who had a turn for the occult sciences, had, much to the scandal of his convent, established a laboratory, in which, like other fools of the time, he spent much precious time, and money besides, in the pursuit of the grand arcanum.

Anthony Foster paused before the door, which was scrupulously secured within, and again showed a marked hesitation to disturb the sage in his operations. But Varney, less scrupulous, roused him, by knocking and voice, until at length, slowly and reluctantly, the inmate of the apartment undid the door. The chemist appeared, with his eyes bleared with the heat and vapours of the stove or alembic over which he brooded, and the interior of his cell displayed the confused assemblage of heterogeneous substances, and extraordinary implements, belonging to his profession. The old man was muttering, with spiteful impatience, "Am I for ever to be recalled to the affairs of earth from those of heaven?"

"To the affairs of hell," answered Varney, "for that is thy proper element.—Foster, we need thee at our conference."

Foster slowly entered the room. Varney, following, barred the door, and they betook themselves to secret council.

In the meanwhile, the countess traversed the apartment, with shame and anger contending on her lovely cheek.

"The villain," she said, "the cold-blooded calculating slave!—But I unmasked him, Janet—I made the snake uncoil all his folds before me, and crawl abroad in his naked deformity—I suspended my resentment, at the danger of suffocating under the effort, until he had let me see the very bottom of a heart more foul than hell's darkest corner.—And thou, Leicester, is it possible thou couldst bid me for a moment deny my wedded right in thee, or thyself yield it to another? But it is impossible—the villain has lied in all.—Janet, I will not remain here longer—I fear him—I fear thy father—I grieve to say it, Janet—but I fear thy father, and, worst of all, this odious Varney. I will escape from Cumnor."

"Alas! madam, whither would you fly, or by what means will you escape from these walls?"

"I know not, Janet," said the unfortunate young lady, looking upwards, and clasping her hands together, "I know not where I shall fly, or by what means; but I am certain the God I have served will not abandon me in this dreadful crisis, for I am in the hands of wicked men."

"Do not think so, dear lady," said Janet; "my father is stern and strict in his temper, and severely true to his trust—but yet"—

At this moment, Anthony Foster entered the apartment, bearing in his hand a glass cup, and a small flask. His manner was singular; for, while approaching the countess with the respect due to her rank, he had till this time suffered to become visible, or had been unable to suppress, the obdurate sulkiness of his natural disposition, which, as is usual with those of his unhappy temper, was chiefly exerted towards those over whom circumstances gave him control. But at present he showed nothing of that sullen consciousness of authority which he was wont to conceal under a clumsy affectation of civility and deference, as a ruffian hides his pistols and bludgeon under his ill-fashioned gaberdine. And yet it seemed as if his smile was more in fear than in courtesy, and as if, while he pressed the

countess to taste of the choice cordial, which should refresh her spirits after her late alarm, he was conscious of meditating some farther injury. His hand trembled also, his voice faltered, and his whole outward behaviour exhibited so much that was suspicious, that his daughter Janet, after she had stood looking at him in astonishment for some seconds, seemed at once to collect herself to execute some hardy resolution, raised her head, assumed an attitude and gait of determination and authority, and walking slowly betwixt her father and her mistress, took the salver from the hand of the former, and said in a low, but marked and decided tone, "Father, I will fill for my noble mistress, when such is her pleasure."

"Thou, my child?" said Foster, eagerly and apprehensively; "no, my child—it is not thou shalt render the lady this service."

"And why, I pray you," said Janet, "if it be fitting that the noble lady should partake of the cup at all?"

"Why—why," said the seneschal, hesitating, and then bursting into passion, as the readiest mode of supplying the lack of all other reason—"Why, because it is my pleasure, minion, that you should not—Get you gone to the evening lecture."

"Now, as I hope to hear lecture again," replied Janet, "I will not go thither this night, unless I am better assured of my mistress's safety. Give me that flask, father;"—and she took it from his reluctant hand, while he resigned it as if conscience-struck—"And now," she said, "father, that which shall benefit my mistress, cannot do *me* prejudice. Father, I drink to you."

Foster, without speaking a word, rushed on his daughter and wrested the flask from her hand; then, as if embarrassed by what he had done, and totally unable to resolve what he should do next, he stood with it in his hand, one foot advanced and the other drawn back, glaring on his daughter with a countenance, in which rage, fear, and convicted villany, formed a hideous combination.

"This is strange, my father," said Janet, keeping her eye fixed on his, in the manner in which those who have the charge of lunatics are said to overawe their unhappy patients; "will you neither let me serve my lady, nor drink to her myself?"

The courage of the countess sustained her through this dreadful scene, of which the import was not the less obvious that it was not even hinted at. She preserved even the rash carelessness of her temper, and though her cheek had grown pale at the first alarm, her eye was calm and almost scornful. "Will you taste this rare cordial, Master Foster? Perhaps you will not yourself refuse to pledge us, though you permit not Janet to do so.—Drink, sir, I pray you?"

"I will not," answered Foster.

"And for whom, then, is the precious beverage reserved, sir?" said the countess.

"For the devil, who brewed it," answered Foster; and, turning on his heel, he left the chamber.

Janet looked at her mistress with a countenance expressive in the highest degree of shame, dismay, and sorrow.

"Do not weep for me, Janet," said the countess, kindly.

"No, madam," replied her attendant, in a voice broken by sobs, "it is not for you I weep; it is for myself—it is for that unhappy man. Those who are dishonoured before man—those who are condemned by God, have cause to mourn—not those who are innocent!—Farewell, madam!" she said, hastily assuming the mantle in which she was wont to go abroad.

"Do you leave me, Janet?" said her mistress—"desert me in such an evil strait?"

"Desert you, madam!" exclaimed Janet; and, running back to her mistress, she imprinted a thousand kisses on her hand—"desert you!—may the hope of my trust desert me when I do so!—No, madam; well you said the God you serve will open you a path for deliverance. There is a way of escape; I have prayed night and day for light, that I might see how to act betwixt my duty to yonder unhappy man, and that which I owe to you. Sternly and fearfully that light has now dawned, and I must not shut the door which God opens.—Ask me no more. I will return in brief space."

So speaking, she wrapped herself in her mantle, and saying to the old woman whom she passed in the outer room, that she was going to evening prayer, she left the house.

Meanwhile her father had reached once more the laboratory, where he found the accomplices of his intended guilt.

"Has the sweet bird sipped?" said Varney, with half a smile; while the astrologer put the same question with his eyes, but spoke not a word.

"She has not, nor she shall not from my hands," replied Foster; "would you have me do murder in my daughter's presence?"

"Wert thou not told, thou sullen and yet faint-hearted slave," answered Varney, with bitterness, "that no *murder*, as thou call'st it, with that staring look and stammering tone, is designed in the matter? Wert thou not told, that a brief illness, such as woman puts on in very wantonness, that she may wear her night-gear at noon, and lie on a settle when she should mind her domestic business, is all here aimed at? Here is a learned man will swear it to thee by the key of the Castle of Wisdom."

"I swear it," said Alasco, "that the elixir thou hast there in the flask will not prejudice life! I swear it by that immortal and indestructible quintessence of gold, which pervades every substance in nature, though its secret existence can be traced by him only to whom Trismegistus renders the key of the cabala."

"An oath of force," said Varney. "Foster, thou wert worse than a pagan to disbelieve it. Believe me, moreover, who swear by nothing but my own word, that if you be not conformable, there is no hope, no, not a glimpse of hope, that this thy leasehold may be transmuted into a copyhold. Thus, Alasco will leave your pewter artillery untransmigrated, and I, honest Anthony, will still have thee for my tenant."

"I know not, gentlemen," said Foster, "where your designs tend to; but in one thing I am bound up,—that, fall back fall edge, I will have one in this place that may pray for me, and that one shall be my daughter. I have lived ill, and the world has

been too weighty with me; but she is as innocent as ever she was when on her mother's lap, and she, at least, shall have her portion in that happy city, whose walls are of pure gold, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones."

"Ay, Tony," said Varney, "that were a paradise to thy heart's content.—Debate the matter with him, Doctor Alasco; I will be with you anon."

So speaking, Varney arose, and, taking the flask from the table, he left the room.

"I tell thee, my son," said Alasco to Foster, as soon as Varney had left them, "that whatever this bold and profligate railer may say of the mighty science, in which, by heaven's blessing, I have advanced so far, that I would not call the wisest of living artists my better or my teacher—I say howsoever yonder reprobate may scoff at things too holy to be apprehended by men merely of carnal and evil thoughts, yet believe, that the city beheld by St John, in that bright vision of the christian Apocalypse, that new Jerusalem, of which all christian men hope to partake, sets forth typically the discovery of the GRAND SECRET, whereby the most precious and perfect of nature's works are elicited out of her basest and most crude productions; just as the light and gaudy butterfly, the most beautiful child of the summer's breeze, breaks forth from the dungeon of a sordid chrysalis."

"Master Holdforth said nought of this exposition," said Foster, doubtfully; "and moreover, Doctor Alasco, the holy writ says, that the gold and precious stones of the holy city are in no sort for those who work abomination, or who frame lies."

"Well, my son," said the doctor, "and what is your inference from thence?"

"That those," said Foster, "who distil poisons, and administer them in secrecy, can have no portion in those unspeakable riches."

"You are to distinguish, my son," replied the alchemist, "betwixt that which is necessarily evil in its progress and in its end also, and that which, being evil, is, nevertheless, capable of working forth good. If, by the death of one person, the happy period shall be brought nearer to us, in which all that is good shall be attained, by wishing its presence—all that is evil escaped, by desiring its absence—in which sickness, and pain, and sorrow, shall be the obedient servants of human wisdom, and made to fly at the slightest signal of a sage,—in which that which is now richest and rarest, shall be within the compass of every one who shall be obedient to the voice of wisdom,—when the art of healing shall be lost and absorbed in the one universal medicine,—when sages shall become monarchs of the earth and death itself retreat before their crown,—if this blessed consummation of all things can be hastened by the slight circumstance, that a frail earthly body, which must needs partake corruption, shall be consigned to the grave a short space earlier than in the course of nature, what is such a sacrifice to the advancement of the holy millenium?"

"Millenium is the reign of the saints," said Foster, somewhat doubtfully.

"Say it is the reign of the sages, my son," answered Alasco; "or rather, the reign of Wisdom itself."

"I touched on the question with Master Holdforth last exercising night," said Foster; "but he says your doctrine is heterodox, and a damnable and false exposition."

"He is in the bonds of ignorance, my son," answered Alasco, "and as yet burning bricks in Egypt; or, at best, wandering in the dry desert of Sinai. Thou didst ill to speak to such a man of such matters. I will, however, give thee proof, and that shortly, which I will defy that peevish divine to confute, though he should strive with me as the magicians strove with Moses before King Pharaoh. I will do projection in thy presence, my son—in thy very presence,—and thine eyes shall witness the truth."

"Stick to that, learned sage," said Varney, who at this moment entered the apartment; "if he refuse the testimony of thy tongue, yet how shall he deny that of his own eyes?"

"Varney!" said the adept—"Varney already returned! Hast thou"—he stopped short.

"Have I done mine errand, thou wouldst say," replied Varney—"I have!—And thou," he added, showing more symptoms of interest than he had hitherto exhibited, "art thou sure thou hast poured forth neither more nor less than the just measure?"

"Ay," replied the alchemist, "as sure as men can be in these nice proportions; for there is diversity of constitutions."

"Nay, then," said Varney, "I fear nothing. I know thou wilt not go a step further to the devil than thou art justly considered for. Thou wert paid to create illness, and would esteem it thriftless prodigality to do murder at the same price. Come, let us each to our chamber.—We shall see the event to-morrow."

"What didst thou do to make her swallow it?" said Foster, shuddering.

"Nothing," answered Varney, "but looked on her with that aspect which governs madmen, women, and children. They told me, in Saint Luke's Hospital, that I have the right look for overpowering a refractory patient. The keepers made me their compliments on't; so I know how to win my bread, when my court-favour fails me."

"And art thou not afraid," said Foster, "lest the dose be disproportioned?"

"If so," replied Varney, "she will but sleep the sounder, and the fear of that shall not break my rest. Good night, my masters."

Anthony Foster groaned heavily, and lifted up his hand and eyes. The alchemist intimated his purpose to continue some experiment of high import during the greater part of the night, and the others separated to their places of repose.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Now God be good to me in this wild pilgrimage!

All hope in human aid I cast behind me.

Oh, who would be a woman?—who that fool,

A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman?

She hath hard measure still where she hopes kindest,

And all her bounties only make ingrates.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER'S *Love's Pilgrimage*.

THE summer evening was closed, and Janet, just when her longer stay might have occasioned suspi-

cion and inquiry in that jealous household, returned to Cumnor Place, and hastened to the apartment in which she had left her lady. She found her with her head resting on her arms, and these crossed upon a table which stood before her. As Janet came in, she neither looked up nor stirred.

Her faithful attendant ran to her mistress with the speed of lightning, and rousing her at the same time with her hand, conjured the countess in the most earnest manner to look up, and say what thus affected her. The unhappy lady raised her head accordingly, and looking on her attendant with a ghastly eye, and cheek as pale as clay, "Janet," she said, "I have drank it."

"God be praised!" said Janet, hastily—"I mean God be praised that it is no worse—the potion will not harm you.—Rise! shake this lethargy from your limbs, and this despair from your mind."

"Janet," repeated the countess again, "disturb me not—leave me at peace—let life pass quietly—I am poisoned."

"You are not, my dearest lady," answered the maiden, eagerly—"What you have swallowed cannot injure you; and I hastened hither to tell you that the means of escape are open to you."

"Escape!" exclaimed the lady, as she raised herself hastily in her chair, while light returned to her eye and life to her cheek; "but ah! Janet, it comes too late!"

"Not so, dearest lady—Rise, take mine arm, walk through the apartment—Let not fancy do the work of poison!—So; feel you not now that you are possessed of the full use of your limbs?"

"The torpor seems to diminish," said the countess, as, supported by Janet, she walked to and fro in the apartment; "but is it then so, and have I not swallowed a deadly draught? Varney was here since thou wert gone, and commanded me, with eyes in which I read my fate, to swallow yon horrible drug. O, Janet! it must be fatal; never was harmless draught served by such a cup-bearer!"

"He did not deem it harmless, I fear," replied the maiden; "but God confounds the devices of the wicked. Believe me, as I swear by the dear Gospel in which we trust, your life is safe from his practice. Did you not debate with him?"

"The house was silent," answered the lady—"thou gone—no other but he in the chamber—and he capable of every crime. I did but stipulate he would remove his hateful presence, and I drank whatever he offered.—But you spoke of escape, Janet; can I be so happy?"

"Are you strong enough to bear the tidings, and make the effort?"

"Strong!" answered the countess—"Ask the hind, when the fangs of the deer-hound are stretched to gripe her, if she is strong enough to spring the chasm! I am equal to every effort that may relieve me from this place."

"Hear me, then," said Janet. "One, whom I deem an assured friend of yours, has shown himself to me in various disguises, and sought speech of me, which,—for my mind was not clear on the matter until this evening,—I have ever declined. He was the pedlar who brought you goods—the itinerant hawker who sold me books—whenever I stirred

abroad I was sure to see him. The event of this night determined me to speak with him. He waits even now at the postern-gate of the park with means for your flight.—But have you strength of body?—Have you courage of mind?—Can you undertake the enterprise?”

“She that flies from death,” said the lady, “finds strength of body—she that would escape from shame, lacks no strength of mind. The thoughts of leaving behind me the villain who menaces both my life and honour, would give me strength to rise from my death-bed.”

“In God’s name then, lady,” said Janet, “I must bid you adieu, and to God’s charge I must commit you.”

“Will you not fly with me then, Janet?” said the countess, anxiously—“Am I to lose thee? Is this thy faithful service?”

“Lady, I would fly with you as willingly as bird ever fled from cage, but my doing so would occasion instant discovery and pursuit. I must remain, and use means to disguise the truth for some time—May Heaven pardon the falsehood, because of the necessity!”

“And am I then to travel alone with this stranger?” said the lady—“Bethink thee, Janet, may not this prove some deeper and darker scheme to separate me perhaps from you, who are my only friend?”

“No, madam, do not suppose it,” answered Janet, readily; “the youth is an honest youth in his purpose to you; and a friend to Master Tressilian, under whose direction he is come hither.”

“If he be a friend of Tressilian,” said the countess, “I will commit myself to his charge, as to that of an angel sent from heaven; for than Tressilian never breathed mortal man more free of whatever was base, false, or selfish. He forgot himself whenever he could be of use to others—Alas! and how was he requited!”

With eager haste they collected the few necessities which it was thought proper the countess should take with her, and which Janet, with speed and dexterity, formed into a small bundle, not forgetting to add such ornaments of intrinsic value as came most readily in her way, and particularly a casket of jewels, which she wisely judged might prove of service in some future emergency. The Countess of Leicester next changed her dress for one which Janet usually wore upon any brief journey, for they judged it necessary to avoid every external distinction which might attract attention. Ere these preparations were fully made, the moon had arisen in the summer heaven, and all in the retired mansion had betaken themselves to rest, or at least to the silence and retirement of their chambers.

There was no difficulty anticipated in escaping, whether from the house or garden, providing only they could elude observation. Anthony Foster had accustomed himself to consider his daughter as a conscious sinner might regard a visible guardian angel, which, notwithstanding his guilt, continued to hover around him; and therefore his trust in her knew no bounds. Janet commanded her own motions during the day-time, and had a master-key which opened the postern-door of the park, so that

she could go to the village at pleasure, either upon the household affairs, which were entirely confided to her management, or to attend her devotions at the meeting-house of her sect. It is true, the daughter of Foster was thus liberally entrusted, under the solemn condition that she should not avail herself of these privileges to do any thing inconsistent with the safe-keeping of the countess; for so her residence at Cumnor Place had been termed, since she began of late to exhibit impatience of the restrictions to which she was subjected. Nor is there reason to suppose, that any thing short of the dreadful suspicions which the scene of that evening had excited, could have induced Janet to have violated her word, or deceived her father’s confidence. But from what she had witnessed, she now conceived herself not only justified, but imperatively called upon, to make her lady’s safety the principal object of her care, setting all other considerations aside.

The fugitive countess with her guide were traversing with hasty steps the broken and interrupted path, which had once been an avenue, now totally darkened by the boughs of spreading trees which met above their head, and now receiving a doubtful and deceiving light from the beams of the moon, which penetrated where the axe had made openings in the wood. Their path was repeatedly interrupted by felled trees, or the large boughs which had been left on the ground till time served to make them into fagots and billets. The inconvenience and difficulty attending these interruptions, the breathless haste of the first part of their route, the exhausting sensations of hope and fear, so much affected the countess’s strength, that Janet was forced to propose that they should pause for a few minutes to recover breath and spirits. Both therefore stood still beneath the shadow of a huge old gnarled oak-tree, and both naturally looked back to the mansion which they had left behind them, whose long dark front was seen in the gloomy distance, with its huge stacks of chimneys, turrets, and clock-house, rising above the line of the roof, and definedly visible against the pure azure blue of the summer sky. One light only twinkled from the extended and shadowy mass, and it was placed so low that it rather seemed to glimmer from the ground in front of the mansion, than from one of the windows. The countess’s terror was awakened.—“They follow us!” she said, pointing out to Janet the light which thus alarmed her.

Less agitated than her mistress, Janet perceived that the gleam was stationary, and informed the countess in a whisper, that the light proceeded from the solitary cell in which the alchemist pursued his occult experiments.—“He is of those,” she added, “who sit up and watch by night, that they may commit iniquity. Evil was the chance which sent hither a man, whose mixed speech of earthly wealth and unearthly or superhuman knowledge, has in it what does so especially captivate my poor father. Well spoke the good Master Holdforth—and, methought, not without meaning that those of our household should find therein a practical use. ‘There be those,’ he said, ‘and their number is legion, who will rather, like the wicked Ahab, listen to the dreams of the false prophet Zedechias, than to the words of him by whom the Lord has spoken.’ And he fur-

ther insisted—'Ah, my brethren, there be many Zedechiases among you—men that promise you the light of their carnal knowledge, so you will surrender to them that of your heavenly understanding. What are they better than the tyrant Naas, who demanded the right eye of those who were subjected to him?' And further he insisted"—

It is uncertain how long the fair puritan's memory might have supported her in the recapitulation of Master Holdforth's discourse; but the countess now interrupted her, and assured her she was so much recovered that she could now reach the postern without the necessity of a second delay.

They set out accordingly, and performed the second part of their journey with more deliberation, and of course more easily, than the first hasty commencement. This gave them leisure for reflection; and Janet now, for the first time, ventured to ask her lady, which way she proposed to direct her flight. Receiving no immediate answer,—for perhaps in the confusion of her mind, this very obvious subject of deliberation had not occurred to the countess,—Janet ventured to add, "Probably to your father's house, where you are sure of safety and protection?"

"No, Janet," said the lady, mournfully, "I left Lidcote Hall while my heart was light and my name was honourable, and I will not return thither till my lord's permission and public acknowledgment of our marriage restore me to my native home, with all the rank and honour which he has bestowed on me."

"And whither will you then, madam?" said Janet.

"To Kenilworth, girl," said the countess, boldly and freely. "I will see these revels—these princely revels—the preparation for which makes the land ring from side to side. Methinks, when the Queen of England feasts within my husband's halls, the Countess of Leicester should be no unbecoming guest."

"I pray God you may be a welcome one!" said Janet, hastily.

"You abuse my situation, Janet," said the countess, angrily, "and you forget your own."

"I do neither, dearest madam," said the sorrowful maiden; "but have you forgotten that the noble earl has given such strict charges to keep your marriage secret, that he may preserve his court-favour? and can you think that your sudden appearance at his castle, at such a juncture, and in such a presence, will be acceptable to him?"

"Thou thinkest I would disgrace him," said the countess;—"Nay, let go my arm: I can walk without aid, and work without counsel."

"Be not angry with me, lady," said Janet, meekly, "and let me still support you; the road is rough, and you are little accustomed to walk in darkness."

"If you deem me not so mean as may disgrace my husband," said the countess, in the same resentful tone, "you suppose my Lord of Leicester capable of abetting, perhaps of giving aim and authority, to the base proceedings of your father and Varney, whose errand I will do to the good earl."

"For God's sake, madam, spare my father in your

report," said Janet; "let my services, however poor, be some atonement for his errors."

"I were most unjust, dearest Janet, were it otherwise," said the countess, resuming at once the fondness and confidence of her manner towards her faithful attendant. "Yes, Janet, not a word of mine shall do your father prejudice. But thou seest, my love, I have no desire but to throw myself on my husband's protection. I have left the abode he assigned for me, because of the villany of the persons by whom I was surrounded—but I will disobey his commands in no other particular. I will appeal to him alone—I will be protected by him alone—To no other, than at his pleasure, have I or will I communicate the secret union which combines our hearts and our destinies. I will see him, and receive from his own lips the directions for my future conduct. Do not argue against my resolution, Janet; you will only confirm me in it—And to own the truth, I am resolved to know my fate at once, and from my husband's own mouth; and to seek him at Kenilworth is the surest way to attain my purpose."

While Janet hastily revolved in her mind the difficulties and uncertainties attendant on the unfortunate lady's situation, she was inclined to alter her first opinion, and to think, upon the whole, that since the countess had withdrawn herself from the retreat in which she had been placed by her husband, it was her first duty to repair to his presence, and possess him with the reasons of such conduct. She knew what importance the earl attached to the concealment of their marriage, and could not but own, that by taking any step to make it public without his permission, the countess would incur, in a high degree, the indignation of her husband. If she retired to her father's house without an explicit avowal of her rank, her situation was likely greatly to prejudice her character, and if she made such an avowal, it might occasion an irreconcilable breach with her husband. At Kenilworth, again, she might plead her cause with her husband himself, whom Janet, though distrusting him more than the countess did, believed incapable of being accessory to the base and desperate means which his dependents, from whose power the lady was now escaping, might resort to, in order to stifle her complaints of the treatment she had received at their hands. But at the worst, and were the earl himself to deny her justice and protection, still at Kenilworth, if she chose to make her wrongs public, the countess might have Tressilian for her advocate, and the queen for her judge; for so much Janet had learned in her short conference with Wayland. She was, therefore, on the whole, reconciled to her lady's proposal of going towards Kenilworth, and so expressed herself; recommending, however, to the countess, the utmost caution in making her arrival known to her husband.

"Hast thou thyself been cautious, Janet?" said the countess; "this guide, in whom I must put my confidence, hast thou not entrusted to him the secret of my condition?"

"From me he has learned nothing," said Janet, "nor do I believe that he knows more than what the public in general believe of your situation."

"And what is that?" said the lady.

"That you left your father's house—but I shall offend you again if I go on," said Janet, interrupting herself.

"Nay, go on," said the countess; "I must learn to endure the evil report which my folly has brought upon me. They think, I suppose, that I have left my father's house to follow lawless pleasure—It is an error which will soon be removed,—indeed it shall, for I will live with spotless fame, or I shall cease to live.—I am accounted, then, the paramour of my Leicester?"

"Most men say of Varney," said Janet; "yet some call him only the convenient cloak of his master's pleasures; for reports of the profuse expense in garnishing yonder apartments have secretly gone abroad, and such doings far surpass the means of Varney. But this latter opinion is little prevalent; for men dare hardly even hint suspicion when so high a name is concerned, lest the Star-chamber should punish them for scandal of the nobility."

"They do well to speak low," said the countess, "who would mention the illustrious Dudley as the accomplice of such a wretch as Varney.—We have reached the postern—Ah! Janet, I must bid thee farewell!—Weep not, my good girl," said she, endeavouring to cover her own reluctance to part with her faithful attendant under an attempt at playfulness, "and against we meet again, reform me, Janet, that precise ruff of thine for an open rabatine of lace and cut work, that will let men see thou hast a fair neck; and that kirtle of Philippine chency, with that bugle lace which befits only a chamber-maid, into three-piled velvet and cloth of gold—thou wilt find plenty of stuffs in my chamber, and I freely bestow them on you. Thou must be brave, Janet; for though thou art now but the attendant of a distressed and errant lady, who is both nameless and fameless, yet, when we meet again, thou must be dressed as becomes the gentlewoman nearest in love and in service to the first countess in England."

"Now, may God grant it, dear lady!—not that I may go with gayer apparel, but that we may both wear our kirtles over lighter hearts."

By this time the lock of the postern-door had, after some hard wrenching, yielded to the master-key; and the countess, not without internal shuddering, saw herself beyond the walls which her husband's strict commands had assigned to her as the boundary of her walks. Waiting with much anxiety for their appearance, Wayland Smith stood at some distance, shrouding himself behind a hedge which bordered the high-road.

"Is all safe?" said Janet to him anxiously, as he approached them with caution.

"All," he replied; "but I have been unable to procure a horse for the lady. Giles Gosling, the cowardly hilding, refused me one on any terms; lest, forsooth, he should suffer—but no matter. She must ride on my palfrey, and I must walk by her side until I come by another horse. There will be no pursuit, if you, pretty Mistress Janet, forget not thy lesson."

"No more than the wise widow of Tekoa forgot the words which Joab put into her mouth," answered Janet. "To-morrow, I say that my lady is unable to rise."

"Ay, and that she hath aching and heaviness of the head—a throbbing at the heart, and lists not to be disturbed.—Fear not, they will take the hint, and trouble thee with few questions—they understand the disease."

"But," said the lady, "my absence must be soon discovered, and they will murder her in revenge.—I will rather return than expose her to such danger."

"Be at ease on my account, madam," said Janet; "I would you were as sure of receiving the favour you desire from those to whom you must make appeal, as I am that my father, however angry, will suffer no harm to befall me."

The countess was now placed by Wayland upon his horse, around the saddle of which he had placed his cloak, so folded as to make her a commodious seat.

"Adieu, and may the blessing of God wend with you!" said Janet, again kissing her mistress's hand, who returned her benediction with a mute caress. They then tore themselves asunder, and Janet, addressing Wayland, exclaimed, "May Heaven deal with you at your need, as you are true or false to this most injured and most helpless lady!"

"Amen! pretty Janet," replied Wayland;—"and believe me, I will so acquit myself of my trust, as may tempt even your pretty eyes, saintlike as they are, to look less scornfully on me when we next meet."

The latter part of this adieu was whispered into Janet's ear; and, although she made no reply to it directly, yet her manner, influenced no doubt by her desire to leave every motive in force which could operate towards her mistress's safety, did not discourage the hope which Wayland's words expressed. She re-entered the postern-door, and locked it behind her, while Wayland, taking the horse's bridle in his hand, and walking close by its head, they began in silence their dubious and moonlight journey.

Although Wayland Smith used the utmost dispatch which he could make, yet this mode of travelling was so slow, that when morning began to dawn through the eastern mist, he found himself not farther than about ten miles distant from Cumnor. "Now, a plague upon all smooth-spoken hosts!" said Wayland, unable longer to suppress his mortification and uneasiness. "Had the false loon, Giles Gosling, but told me plainly two days since, that I was to reckon nought upon him, I had shifted better for myself. But they have such a custom of promising whatever is called for, that it is not till the steed is to be shod you find they are out of iron. Had I but known, I could have made twenty shifts; nay, for that matter, and in so good a cause, I would have thought little to have prigged a prancer from the next common—it had but been sending back the brute to the head-borough. The farcy and the founders confound every horse in the stables of the Black Bear!"

The lady endeavoured to comfort her guide, observing, that the dawn would enable him to make more speed.

"True, madam," replied he; "but then it will enable other folks to take note of us, and that may prove an ill beginning of our journey. I had not

cared a spark from anvil about the matter, had we been farther advanced on our way. But this Berkshire has been notoriously haunted ever since I knew the country, with that sort of malicious elves, who sit up late and rise early, for no other purpose than to pry into other folks' affairs. I have been endangered by them ere now. But do not fear," he added, "good madam; for wit, meeting with opportunity, will not miss to find a salve for every sore."

The alarms of her guide made more impression on the countess's mind than the comfort which he judged fit to administer along with it. She looked anxiously around her, and as the shadows withdrew from the landscape, and the heightening glow of the eastern sky promised the speedy rise of the sun, expected at every turn that the increasing light would expose them to the view of the vengeful pursuers, or present some dangerous and insurmountable obstacle to the prosecution of their journey. Wayland Smith perceived her uneasiness, and, displeased with himself for having given her cause of alarm, strode on with affected alacrity, now talking to the horse as one expert in the language of the stable, now whistling to himself low and interrupted snatches of tunes, and now assuring the lady there was no danger; while at the same time he looked sharply around to see that there was nothing in sight which might give the lie to his words while they were issuing from his mouth. Thus did they journey on, until an unexpected incident gave them the means of continuing their pilgrimage with more speed and convenience.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Richard. A horse!—a horse!—my kingdom for a horse!
Catesby.——My lord, I'll help you to a horse.

Richard III.

OUR travellers were in the act of passing a small thicket of trees close by the road-side, when the first living being presented himself whom they had seen since their departure from Cumnor Place. This was a stupid lout, seemingly a farmer's boy, in a grey jerkin, with his head bare, his hose about his heels, and huge startups upon his feet. He held by the bridle what of all things they most wanted—a palfrey, namely, with a side-saddle, and all other garniture for a woman's mounting; and he hailed Wayland Smith with, "Zur, be ye zure the party?"

"Ay, that I be, my lad," answered Wayland, without an instant's hesitation; and it must be owned that consciences, trained in a stricter school of morality might have given way to an occasion so tempting. While he spoke, he caught the rein out of the boy's hand, and almost at the same time helped down the countess from his own horse, and aided her to mount on that which chance had thus presented for her acceptance. Indeed, so naturally did the whole take place, that the countess, as it afterwards appeared, never suspected but what the horse had been placed there to meet them by the precaution of the guide or some of his friends.

The lad, however, who was thus hastily dispossessed of his charge, began to stare hard, and

scratch his head, as if seized with some qualms of conscience for delivering up the animal on such brief explanation.—"I be right zure thou be'st the party," said he, muttering to himself, "but thou shouldst ha zaid *Beans*, thou know'st."

"Ay, ay," said Wayland, speaking at a venture; "and thou *Bacon*, thou know'st."

"Noa, Noa," said the lad; "bide ye—bide ye—it was *Pease* ye should ha said."

"Well, well," answered Wayland, "pease be it, a' God's name, though bacon were the better password."

And, being by this time mounted on his own horse, he caught the rein of the palfrey from the uncertain hold of the hesitating young boor, flung him a small piece of money, and made amends for lost time by riding briskly off without farther parley. The lad was still visible from the hill up which they were riding; and Wayland, as he looked back, beheld him standing with his fingers in his hair, as immoveable as a guide-post, and his head turned in the direction in which they were escaping from him. At length, just as they topped the hill, he saw the clown stoop to lift up the silver groat which his benevolence had imparted.—"Now this is what I call a god send," said Wayland; "this is a bonny well-ridden bit of a going thing, and it will carry us so far till we get you as well mounted, and then we will send it back to satisfy the hue and cry."

But he was deceived in his expectations; and fate, which seemed at first to promise so fairly, soon threatened to turn the incident, which he thus gloried in, into the cause of their utter ruin.

They had not ridden a short mile from the place where they left the lad, before they heard a man's voice shouting on the wind behind them, "Robbery! robbery!—Stop thief!" and similar exclamations, which Wayland's conscience readily assured him must arise out of the transaction to which he had been just accessory.

"I had better have gone barefoot all my life," he said; "it is the hue and cry, and I am a lost man! Ah! Wayland, Wayland, many a time thy father said horse-flesh would be the death of thee. Were I once safe among the horse-coursers in Smithfield, or Turnball-street, they should have leave to hang me as high as St Paul's, if I e'er meddled more with nobles, knights, or gentlewomen."

Amidst these dismal reflections, he turned his head repeatedly to see by whom he was chased, and was much comforted when he could discover only a single rider, who was, however, well mounted, and came after them at a speed which left them no chance of escaping, even had the lady's strength permitted her to ride as fast as her palfrey might have been able to gallop.

"There may be fair play betwixt us sure," thought Wayland, "where there is but one man on each side, and yonder fellow sits on his horse more like a monkey than a cavalier. Pshaw! if it come to the worst, it will be easy unhorsing him. Nay, 'snails! I think his horse will take the matter in his own hand, for he has the bridle betwixt his teeth. Oons! what care I for him?" said he, as the pursuer drew yet nearer; "it is but the little animal of a mercer from Abingdon, when all is over."

Even so it was, as the experienced eye of Wayland had descried at a distance. For the valiant mercer's horse, which was a beast of mettle, feeling himself put to his speed, and discerning a couple of horses riding fast, at some hundred yards' distance before him, betook himself to the road with such alacrity, as totally deranged the seat of his rider, who not only came up with, but passed, at full gallop, those whom he had been pursuing, pulling the reins with all his might, and ejaculating, "Stop! stop!" an interjection which seemed rather to regard his own palfrey, than what seamen call "the chase." With the same involuntary speed, he shot a-head (to use another nautical phrase) about a furlong, ere he was able to stop and turn his horse; and then rode back towards our travellers, adjusting, as well as he could, his disordered dress, resettling himself in the saddle, and endeavouring to substitute a bold and martial frown for the confusion and dismay which sate upon his visage during his involuntary career.

Wayland had just time to caution the lady not to be alarmed, adding, "this fellow is a gull, and I will use him as such."

When the mercer had recovered breath and audacity enough to confront them, he ordered Wayland, in a menacing tone, to deliver up his palfrey.

"How?" said the smith, in King Cambyzes' vein, "are we commanded to stand and deliver on the king's high-way? Then out, Excalibar, and tell this knight of prowess, that dire blows must decide between us."

"Haro and help, and hue and cry, every true man!" said the mercer, "I am withstood in seeking to recover mine own."

"Thou swearest thy gods in vain, foul paynim," said Wayland, "for I will through with my purpose, were death at the end on't. Nevertheless, know, thou false man of frail cambric and ferrateen, that I am he, even the pedlar, whom thou didst boast to meet on Maiden-castle moor, and despoil of his pack; wherefore betake thee to thy weapons presently."

"I spoke but in jest, man," said Goldthred; "I am an honest shopkeeper and citizen, who scorn to leap forth on any man from behind a hedge."

"Then, by my faith, most puissant mercer, I am sorry for my vow, which was, that wherever I met thee, I would despoil thee of thy palfrey, and bestow it upon my leman, unless thou couldst defend it by blows of force. But the vow is passed and registered—and all I can do for thee, is to leave the horse at Donnington, in the nearest hostelrie."

"But I tell thee, friend," said the mercer, "it is the very horse on which I was this day to carry Jane Thackham, of Shottesbrok, as far as the parish-church yonder, to become Dame Goldthred. She hath jumped out of the shot-window of old Gaffer Thackham's grange; and lo ye, yonder she stands, at the place where she should have met the palfrey, with her camlet riding-cloak, and ivory-handled whip, like a picture of Lot's wife. I pray you, in good terms, let me have back the palfrey."

"Grieved am I," said Wayland, "as much for the fair damsel, as for thee, most noble imp of muslin. But vows must have their course—thou wilt find the

palfrey at the Angel yonder at Donnington. It is all I may do for thee, with a safe conscience."

"To the devil with thy conscience!" said the dismayed mercer—"Wouldst thou have a bride walk to church on foot?"

"Thou mayst take her on thy crupper, Sir Goldthred," answered Wayland; "it will take down thy steed's mettle."

"And how if you—if you forget to leave my horse, as you propose?" said Goldthred, not without hesitation, for his soul was afraid within him.

"My pack shall be pledged for it—yonder it lies with Giles Gosling, in his chamber with the damask'd leathern hangings, stuffed full with velvet, single, double, treble-piled—rash-taffeta, and parapa—shag, damask, and mockado, plush, and grogram"—

"Hold! hold!" exclaimed the mercer; "nay, if there be, in truth and sincerity, but the half of these wares—But if ever I trust bumpkin with bonny Bayard again!"

"As you list for that, good Master Goldthred, and so good morrow to you—and well parted," he added, riding on cheerfully with the lady, while the discountenanced mercer rode back much slower than he came, pondering what excuse he should make to the disappointed bride, who stood waiting for her gallant groom in the midst of the king's high-way.

"Methought," said the lady, as they rode on, "yonder fool stared at me, as if he had some remembrance of me; yet I kept my muffler as high as I might."

"If I thought so," said Wayland, "I would ride back, and cut him over the pate—there would be no fear of harming his brains, for he never had so much as would make pap to a sucking gosling. We must now push on, however; and at Donnington we will leave the oaf's horse, that he may have no farther temptation to pursue us, and endeavour to assume such a change of shape as may baffle his pursuit, if he should persevere in it."

The travellers reached Donnington without farther alarm, where it became matter of necessity that the countess should enjoy two or three hours' repose, during which Wayland disposed himself, with equal address and alacrity, to carry through those measures on which the safety of their future journey seemed to depend.

Exchanging his pedlar's gaberdine for a smock-frock, he carried the palfrey of Goldthred to the Angel Inn, which was at the other end of the village from that where our travellers had taken up their quarters. In the progress of the morning, as he travelled about his other business, he saw the steed brought forth, and delivered to the cutting mercer himself; who, at the head of a valorous posse of the hue and cry, came to rescue by force of arms what was delivered to him without any other ransom than the price of a huge quantity of ale, drunk out by his assistants, thirsty, it would seem, with their walk, and concerning the price of which Master Goldthred had a fierce dispute with the head-borough, whom he had summoned to aid him in raising the country.

Having made this act of prudent, as well as just restitution, Wayland procured such change of ap-

parel for the lady, as well as himself, as gave them both the appearance of country people of the better class; it being farther resolved, that, in order to attract the less observation, she should pass upon the road for the sister of her guide. A good, but not a gay horse, fit to keep pace with his own, and gentle enough for a lady's use, completed the preparations for the journey; for making which he had been furnished with sufficient funds by Tressilian. And thus, about noon, after the countess had been refreshed by the sound repose of several hours, they resumed their journey, with the purpose of making the best of their way to Kenilworth, by Coventry and Warwick. They were not, however, destined to travel far, without meeting some cause of apprehension.

It is necessary to premise, that the landlord of the inn had informed them, a jovial party—intended, as he understood, to present some of the masks or mummeries, which made a part of the entertainment with which the queen was usually welcomed on the royal progresses—had left the village of Donnington an hour or two before them, in order to proceed to Kenilworth. Now it had occurred to Wayland, that, by attaching themselves in some sort to this group, as soon as they should overtake them on the road, they would be less likely to attract notice than if they continued to travel entirely by themselves. He communicated his idea to the countess, who, only anxious to arrive at Kenilworth without interruption, left him free to chuse the manner in which this was to be accomplished. They pressed forward their horses, therefore, with the purpose of overtaking the party of intended revelers, and making the journey in their company; and had just seen the little party, consisting partly of riders, partly of people on foot, crossing the summit of a gentle hill, at about half a mile's distance, and disappearing on the other side, when Wayland, who maintained the most circumspect observation of all that met his eye in every direction, was aware that a rider was coming up behind them on a horse of uncommon action, accompanied by a serving-man, whose utmost efforts were unable to keep up with his master's trotting hackney, and who, therefore, was fain to follow him at a hand gallop. Wayland looked anxiously back at these horsemen, became considerably disturbed in his manner, looked back again, and became pale, as he said to the lady—"That is Richard Varney's trotting gelding—I would know him among a thousand nags—this is a worse business than meeting the mercer."

"Draw your sword," answered the lady, "and pierce my bosom with it, rather than I should fall into his hands."

"I would rather by a thousand times," answered Wayland, "pass it through his body, or even mine own. But to say truth, fighting is not my best point, though I can look on cold iron like another, when needs must be. And, indeed, as for my sword—(put on I pray you)—it is a poor provant rapier, and I warrant you he has a special Toledo. He has a serving-man too; and I think it is the drunken ruffian Lambourne, upon the horse on which men say—(I pray you heartily to put on)—he did the great robbery of the west-country grazier. It is not that

VOL. III.

I fear either Varney or Lambourne in a good cause—(your palfrey will go yet faster if you urge him)—But yet—(nay, I pray you let him not break off into the gallop, lest they should see we fear them, and give chase—keep him only at the full trot)—But yet, through I fear them not, I would we were well rid of them, and that rather by policy than by violence. Could we once reach the party before us, we may herd among them, and pass unobserved, unless Varney be really come in express pursuit of us, and then, happy man be his dole!"

While he thus spoke, he alternately urged and restrained his horse, desirous to maintain the fleetest pace that was consistent with the idea of an ordinary journey on the road, but to avoid such rapidity of movement as might give rise to suspicion that they were flying.

At such a pace they ascended the gentle hill we have mentioned, and, looking from the top, had the pleasure to see that the party which had left Donnington before them, were in the little valley or bottom on the other side, where the road was traversed by a rivulet, beside which was a cottage or two. In this place they seemed to have made a pause, which gave Wayland the hope of joining them, and becoming a part of their company, ere Varney should overtake them. He was the more anxious, as his companion, though she made no complaints, and expressed no fear, began to look so deadly pale, that he was afraid she might drop from her horse. Notwithstanding this symptom of decaying strength, she pushed on her palfrey so briskly, that they joined the party in the bottom of the valley, ere Varney appeared on the top of the gentle eminence which they descended.

They found the company to which they meant to associate themselves in great disorder. The women with disheveled locks, and looks of great importance, ran in and out of one of the cottages, and the men stood around holding the horses, and looking silly enough, as is usual in cases where their assistance is not wanted.

Wayland and his charge paused, as if out of curiosity, and then gradually, without making any inquiries, or being asked any questions, they mingled with the group, as if they had always made part of it.

They had not stood there above five minutes, anxiously keeping as much to the side of the road as possible, so as to place the other travellers betwixt them and Varney, when Lord Leicester's master of the horse, followed by Lambourne, came riding fiercely down the hill, their horses' flanks and the rowels of their spurs showing bloody tokens of the rate at which they travelled. The appearance of the stationary group around the cottages, wearing their buckram suits in order to protect their masking dresses, having their light cart for transporting their scenery, and carrying various fantastic properties in their hands for the more easy conveyance,—let the riders at once into the character and purpose of the company.

"You are revelers," said Varney, "designing for Kenilworth?"

"*Recte quidem, domine spectatissime,*" answered one of the party.

"And why the devil stand you here," said Varney, "when your utmost dispatch will but bring you to Kenilworth in time? The queen dines at Warwick to-morrow, and you loiter here, ye knaves."

"In very truth, sir," said a little diminutive urchin, wearing a vizard with a couple of sprouting horns of an elegant scarlet hue, having moreover a black serge jerkin drawn close to his body by lacing, garnished with red stockings, and shoes so shaped as to resemble cloven feet,—*"in very truth, sir, and you are in the right on't. It is my father the devil, who, being taken in labour, has delayed our present purpose, by increasing our company with an imp too many."*

"The devil he has!" answered Varney; whose laugh, however, never exceeded a sarcastic smile.

"It is even as the juvenal hath said," added the masquer who spoke first; "our major devil, for this is but our minor one, is even now at *Lucina, fer opem*, within that very *tugurium*."

"By Saint George, or rather by the Dragon, who may be a kinsman of the fiend in the straw, a most comical chance!" said Varney. "How sayest thou, Lambourne, wilt thou stand godfather for the nonce?—if the devil were to chuse a gossip, I know no one more fit for the office."

"Saving always when my betters are in presence," said Lambourne, with the civil impudence of a servant who knows his services to be so indispensable, that his jest will be permitted to pass muster.

"And what is the name of this devil or devil's dam, who has timed her turns so strangely?" said Varney. "We can ill afford to spare any of our actors."

"*Gaudet nomine Sybillæ*," said the first speaker, "she is called Sybill Laneham, wife of Master Richard Laneham,"—

"Clerk to the council-chamber door," said Varney; "why she is inexcusable, having had experience how to have ordered her matters better. But who were those, a man and a woman I think, who rode so hastily up the hill before me even now?—do they belong to your company?"

Wayland was about to hazard a reply to this alarming inquiry, when the little diabolin again thrust in his oar.

"So please you," he said, coming close up to Varney, and speaking so as not to be overheard by his companions, "the man was our devil major, who has tricks enough to supply the lack of a hundred such as Dame Laneham; and the woman—if you please—is the sage person whose assistance is most particularly necessary to our distressed comrade."

"Oh, what, you have got the wise woman then?" said Varney. "Why truly, she rode like one bound to a place where she was needed—And you have a spare limb of Satan, besides, to supply the place of Mistress Laneham?"

"Ay, sir," said the boy, "they are not so scarce in this world as your honour's virtuous eminence would suppose—This master-fiend shall spit a few flashes of fire, and eruct a volume or two of smoke on the spot, if it will do you pleasure—you would think he had *Ætna* in his abdomen."

"I lack time just now, most hopeful imp of darkness, to witness his performance," said Varney; "but here is something for you all to drink the lucky hour—and so, as the play says, 'God be with your labour!'"

Thus speaking, he struck his horse with the spurs, and rode on his way.

Lambourne tarried a moment or two behind his master, and rummaged his pouch for a piece of silver, which he bestowed on the communicative imp, as he said, for his encouragement on his path to the infernal regions; some sparks of whose fire, he said, he could discover flashing from him already. Then having received the boy's thanks for his generosity, he also spurred his horse, and rode after his master as fast as fire flashes from flint.

"And now," said the wily imp, sideling close up to Wayland's horse, and cutting a gambol in the air, which seemed to vindicate his title to relationship with the prince of that element, "I have told them who *you* are, do you in return tell me *who I* am?"

"Either Flibbertigibbet," answered Wayland Smith, "or else an imp of the devil in good earnest."

"Thou hast hit it," answered Dickie Sludge; "I am thine own Flibbertigibbet, man; and I have broken forth of bounds, along with my learned preceptor, as I told thee I would do, whether he would or not.—But what lady hast thou got with thee? I saw thou wert at fault the first question was asked, and so I drew up for thy assistance. But I must know all who she is, dear Wayland."

"Thou shalt know fifty finer things, my dear ingle," said Wayland; "but a truce to thine inquiries just now; and since you are bound for Kenilworth, thither will I too, even for the love of thy sweet face and waggish company."

"Thou shouldst have said my waggish face and sweet company," said Dickie; "but how wilt thou travel with us—I mean in what character?"

"E'en in that thou hast assigned me, to be sure—as a juggler; thou know'st I am used to the craft," answered Wayland.

"Ay, but the lady?" answered Flibbertigibbet; "credit me, I think she is one, and thou art in a sea of troubles about her at this moment, as I can perceive by thy fidgeting."

"O, she, man!—she is a poor sister of mine," said Wayland—"she can sing and play o' the lute, would win the fish out o' the stream."

"Let me hear her instantly," said the boy; "I love the lute rarely; I love it of all things, though I never heard it."

"Then how canst thou love it, Flibbertigibbet?" said Wayland.

"As knights love ladies in old tales," answered Dickie—"on hearsay."

"Then love it on hearsay a little longer, till my sister is recovered from the fatigue of her journey," said Wayland;—muttering afterwards betwixt his teeth, "The devil take the imp's curiosity!—I must keep fair weather with him, or we shall fare the worse."

He then proceeded to state to Master Holiday his own talents as a juggler, with those of his sister as a musician. Some proof of his dexterity was de-

manded, which he readily gave in such a style of excellence, that, delighted at obtaining such an accession to their party, they readily acquiesced in the apology which he offered, when a display of his sister's talents was required. The new-comers were invited to partake of the refreshments with which the party were provided; and it was with some difficulty that Wayland Smith obtained an opportunity of being apart with his supposed sister during the meal; of which interval he availed himself to entreat her to forget for the present both her rank and her sorrows, and condescend, as the most probable chance of remaining concealed, to mix in the society of those with whom she was to travel.

The countess allowed the necessity of the case, and when they resumed their journey, endeavoured to comply with her guide's advice, by addressing herself to a female near her, and expressing her concern for the woman whom they were thus obliged to leave behind them.

"O, she is well attended, madam," replied the dame whom she addressed, who, from her jolly and laughter-loving demeanour, might have been the very emblem of the Wife of Bath; "and my gossip Laneham thinks as little of these matters as any one. By the ninth day, an the revels last so long, we shall have her with us at Kenilworth, even if she should travel with her bantling on her back."

There was something in this speech which took away all desire on the Countess of Leicester's part to continue the conversation; but having broken the charm by speaking to her fellow-traveller first, the good dame, who was to play Rare Gillian of Croydon, in one of the interludes, took care that silence did not again settle on the journey, but entertained her silent companion with a thousand anecdotes of revels, from the days of King Harry downwards, with the reception given them by the great folks, and all the names of those who played the principal characters; but ever concluding with "they would be nothing to the princely pleasures of Kenilworth."

"And when shall we reach Kenilworth?" said the countess, with an agitation which she in vain attempted to conceal.

"We that have horses may, with late riding, get to Warwick to-night, and Kenilworth may be distant some four or five miles,—but then we must wait till the foot-people come up; although it is like my good Lord of Leicester will have horses or light carriages to meet them, and bring them up without being travel-toiled, which last is no good preparation, as you may suppose, for dancing before your betters—And yet, Lord help me, I have seen the day I would have tramped five leagues of lea-land, and turned on my toe the whole evening after, as a juggler spins a pewter platter on the point of a needle. But age has clawed me somewhat in his clutch, as the song says; though, if I like the tune and like my partner, I'll dance the heys yet with any merry lass in Warwickshire, that writes that unhappy figure four with a round O after it."

If the countess was overwhelmed with the garrulity of this good dame, Wayland Smith, on his part, had enough to do to sustain and parry the constant attacks made upon him by the indefatigable curiosity of his old acquaintance Richard Sludge. Nature

had given that arch youngster a prying cast of disposition, which matched admirably with his sharp wit; the former inducing him to plant himself as a spy on other people's affairs, and the latter quality leading him perpetually to interfere, after he had made himself master of that which concerned him not. He spent the live-long day in attempting to peer under the countess's muffler, and apparently what he could there discern greatly sharpened his curiosity.

"That sister of thine, Wayland," he said, "has a fair neck to have been born in a smithy, and a pretty taper hand to have been used for twirling a spindle—faith, I'll believe in your relationship when the crow's egg is hatched into a cygnet."

"Go to," said Wayland, "thou art a prating boy, and should be breeched for thine assurance."

"Well," said the imp, drawing off, "all I say is,—remember you have kept a secret from me! and if I give thee not a Rowland for thine Oliver, my name is not Dickon Sludge."

This threat, and the distance at which Hobgoblin kept from him for the rest of the way, alarmed Wayland very much, and he suggested to his pretended sister, that, on pretext of weariness, she should express a desire to stop two or three miles short of the fair town of Warwick, promising to rejoin the troop in the morning. A small village inn afforded them a resting-place; and it was with secret pleasure that Wayland saw the whole party, including Dickon, pass on, after a courteous farewell, and leave them behind.

"To-morrow, madam," he said to his charge, "we will, with your leave, again start early, and reach Kenilworth before the rout which are to assemble there."

The countess gave assent to the proposal of her faithful guide; but, somewhat to his surprise, said nothing farther on the subject, which left Wayland under the disagreeable uncertainty whether or no she had formed any plan for her own future proceedings, as he knew her situation demanded circumspection, although he was but imperfectly acquainted with all its peculiarities. Concluding, however, that she must have friends within the castle, whose advice and assistance she could safely trust, he supposed his task would be best accomplished by conducting her thither in safety, agreeably to her repeated commands.

CHAPTER XXV.

Hark, the bells summon, and the bugle calls,
But she the fairest answers not—the tide
Of nobles and of ladies throngs the halls,
But she the loveliest must in secret hide.
What eyes were thine, proud prince, which in the gleam
Of yon gay meteors lost that better sense,
That o'er the glow-worm doth the star esteem
And merit's modest blush o'er courtly insolence?

The Glass Slipper.

THE unfortunate Countess of Leicester had, from her infancy upwards, been treated by those around her with indulgence as unbounded as injudicious. The natural sweetness of her disposition had saved

her from becoming insolent and ill-humoured; but the caprice which preferred the handsome and insinuating Leicester before Tressilian, of whose high honour and unalterable affection she herself entertained so firm an opinion—that fatal error, which ruined the happiness of her life, had its origin in the mistaken kindness that had spared her childhood the painful, but most necessary lesson, of submission and self-command. From the same indulgence, it followed that she had only been accustomed to form and to express her wishes, leaving to others the task of fulfilling them; and thus, at the most momentous period of her life, she was alike destitute of presence of mind, and of ability to form for herself any reasonable or prudent plan of conduct.

These difficulties pressed on the unfortunate lady with overwhelming force, on the morning which seemed to be the crisis of her fate. Overlooking every intermediate consideration, she had only desired to be at Kenilworth, and to approach her husband's presence; and now, when she was in the vicinity of both, a thousand considerations arose at once upon her mind, startling her with accumulated doubts and dangers, some real, some imaginary, and all exalted and exaggerated by a situation alike helpless, and destitute of aid and counsel.

A sleepless night rendered her so weak in the morning, that she was altogether unable to attend Wayland's early summons. The trusty guide became extremely distressed on the lady's account, and somewhat alarmed on his own, and was on the point of going alone to Kenilworth, in the hope of discovering Tressilian, and intimating to him the lady's approach, when about nine in the morning he was summoned to attend her. He found her dressed, and ready for resuming her journey, but with a paleness of countenance which alarmed him for her health. She intimated her desire that the horses might be got instantly ready; and resisted with impatience her guide's request, that she would take some refreshment before setting forward. "I have had," she said, "a cup of water—the wretch who is dragged to execution needs no stronger cordial, and that may serve me which suffices for him—do as I command you." Wayland Smith still hesitated. "What would you have?" said she—"Have I not spoken plainly?"

"Yes, madam," answered Wayland; "but may I ask what is your farther purpose?—I only wish to know, that I may guide myself by your wishes. The whole country is afloat, and streaming towards the Castle of Kenilworth. It will be difficult travelling thither, even if we had the necessary passports for safe-conduct and free-admittance—Unknown and unfriended, we may come by mishap.—Your ladyship will forgive my speaking my poor mind.—Were we not better try to find out the masquers, and again join ourselves with them?"—The countess shook her head, and her guide proceeded, "Then I see but one other remedy."

"Speak out, then," said the lady, not displeased, perhaps, that he should thus offer the advice which she was ashamed to ask; "I believe thee faithful—what wouldst thou counsel?"

"That I should warn Master Tressilian," said

Wayland, "that you are in this place. I am right certain he would get to horse with a few of Lord Sussex's followers, and ensure your personal safety."

"And is it to *me* you advise," said the countess, "to put myself under the protection of Sussex, the unworthy rival of the noble Leicester?" Then, seeing the surprise with which Wayland stared upon her, and afraid of having too strongly intimated her interest in Leicester, she added, "And for Tressilian, it must not be—mention not to him, I charge you, my unhappy name; it would but double *my* misfortunes, and involve *him* in dangers beyond the power of rescue." She paused; but when she observed that Wayland continued to look on her with that anxious and uncertain gaze, which indicated a doubt whether her brain was settled, she assumed an air of composure, and added, "Do thou but guide me to Kenilworth Castle, good fellow, and thy task is ended, since I will then judge what farther is to be done. Thou hast yet been true to me—here is something that will make thee rich amends."

She offered the artist a ring, containing a valuable stone. Wayland looked at it, hesitated a moment, and then returned it. "Not," he said, "that I am above your kindness, madam, being but a poor fellow, who have been forced, God help me! to live by worse shifts than the bounty of such a person as you. But, as my old master the farrier used to say to his customers, 'No cure no pay.' We are not yet in Kenilworth Castle, and it is time enough to discharge your guide, as they say, when you take your boots off. I trust in God your ladyship is as well assured of fitting reception when you arrive, as you may hold yourself certain of my best endeavours to conduct you thither safely. I go to get the horses; meantime let me pray you once more, as your poor physician as well as guide, to take some sustenance."

"I will—I will," said the lady, hastily. "Begone, begone instantly!—It is in vain I assume audacity," said she, when he left the room: "even this poor groom sees through my affectation of courage, and fathoms the very ground of my fears."

She then attempted to follow her guide's advice by taking some food, but was compelled to desist, as the effort to swallow even a single morsel gave her so much uneasiness as amounted well nigh to suffocation. A moment afterwards the horses appeared at the latticed window—the lady mounted, and found that relief from the free air and change of place, which is frequently experienced in similar circumstances.

It chanced well for the countess's purpose that Wayland Smith, whose previous wandering and unsettled life had made him acquainted with almost all England, was intimate with all the bye-roads, as well as direct communications, through the beautiful county of Warwick. For such and so great was the throng which flocked in all directions towards Kenilworth, to see the entry of Elizabeth into that splendid mansion of her prime favourite, that the principal roads were actually blockaded and interrupted, and it was only by circuitous bye-paths that the travellers could proceed on their journey.

The queen's purveyors had been abroad, sweep-

ing the farms and villages of those articles usually exacted during a royal progress, and for which the owners were afterwards to obtain a tardy payment from the Board of Green Cloth. The Earl of Leicester's household officers had been scouring the country for the same purpose; and many of his friends and allies, both near and remote, took this opportunity of ingratiating themselves, by sending large quantities of provisions and delicacies of all kinds, with game in huge quantities, and whole tons of the best liquors, foreign and domestic. Thus the high-roads were filled with droves of bullocks, sheep, and calves and hogs, and choked with loaded wains, whose axle-trees cracked under their burdens of wine-casks and hogsheads of ale, and huge hampers of grocery goods, and slaughtered game, and salted provisions, and sacks of flour. Perpetual stoppages took place as these wains became entangled; and their rude drivers, swearing and brawling till their wild passions were fully raised, began to debate precedence with their waggon-whips and quarter-staves; which occasional riots were usually quieted by a purveyor, deputy-marshal's-man, or some other person in authority, breaking the heads of both parties.

Here were, besides, players and mummers, jugglers and showmen of every description, traversing in joyous bands the paths which led to the Palace of Princely Pleasure; for so the travelling minstrels had termed Kenilworth in the songs which already had come forth in anticipation of the revels which were there expected. In the midst of this motley show, mendicants were exhibiting their real or pretended miseries, forming a strange, though common, contrast betwixt the vanities and the sorrows of human existence. All these floated along with the immense tide of population, whom mere curiosity had drawn together; and where the mechanic, in his leathern apron, elbowed the dink and dainty dame, his city mistress; where clowns, with hob-nailed shoes, were treading on the kibes of substantial burghers and gentlemen of worship; and where Joan of the dairy, with robust pace, and red sturdy arms, rowed her way onward, amongst those prim and pretty moppets whose sires were knights and squires.

The throng and confusion was, however, of a gay and cheerful character. All came forth to see and to enjoy, and all laughed at the trifling inconveniences which at another time might have chafed their temper. Excepting the occasional brawls which we have mentioned amongst that irritable race the carmen, the mingled sounds which arose from the multitude were those of light-hearted mirth, and tiptoe jollity. The musicians preluded on their instruments—the minstrels hummed their songs—the licensed jester whooped betwixt mirth and madness, as he brandished his bauble—the morrice-dancers jangled their bells—the rustics halloo'd and whistled—men laughed loud, and maidens giggled shrill; while many a broad jest flew like a shuttlecock from one party to be caught in the air and returned from the opposite side of the road by another, at which it was aimed.

No infliction can be so distressing to a mind absorbed in melancholy, as being plunged into a scene

of mirth and revelry, forming an accompaniment so dissonant from its own feelings. Yet, in the case of the Countess of Leicester, the noise and tumult of this giddy scene distracted her thoughts, and rendered her this sad service, that it became impossible for her to brood on her own misery, or to form terrible anticipations of her approaching fate. She travelled on, like one in a dream, following implicitly the guidance of Wayland; who, with great address, now threaded his way through the general throng of passengers, now stood still until a favourable opportunity occurred of again moving forward, and frequently turning altogether out of the direct road, followed some circuitous by-path, which brought them into the high-road again, after having given them the opportunity of traversing a considerable way with greater ease and rapidity.

It was thus he avoided Warwick, within whose castle (that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour which yet remains uninjured by time) Elizabeth had passed the previous night, and where she was to tarry until past noon, at that time the general hour of dinner throughout England, after which repast she was to proceed to Kenilworth. In the meanwhile, each passing group had something to say in the sovereign's praise, though not absolutely without the usual mixture of satire, which qualifies more or less our estimate of our neighbours, especially if they chance to be also our betters.

"Heard you," said one, "how graciously she spoke to Master Bailiff and the Recorder, and to good Master Griffin the preacher, as they kneeled down at her coach-window?"

"Ay, and how she said to little Aglionby, 'Master Recorder, men would have persuaded me that you were afraid of me, but truly I think, so well did you reckon up to me the virtues of a sovereign, that I have more reason to be afraid of you.'—And then with what grace she took the fair-wrought purse with the twenty gold sovereigns, seeming as though she would not willingly handle it, and yet taking it withal."

"Ay, ay," said another, "her fingers closed on it pretty willingly methought, when all was done; and methought, too, she weighed them for a second in her hand; as she would say, I hope they be avoirdupois."

"She needed not, neighbour," said a third; "it is only when the corporation pay the accounts of a poor handicraft like me, that they put him off with clipt coin.—Well, there is a God above all—Little Master Recorder, since that is the word, will be greater now than ever."

"Come, good neighbour," said the first speaker, "be not envious—She is a good queen and a generous—She gave the purse to the Earl of Leicester."

"I envious?—beshrew thy heart for the word!" replied the handicraft—"But she will give all to the Earl of Leicester anon, methinks."

"You are turning ill, lady," said Wayland Smith to the Countess of Leicester, and proposed that she should draw off from the road, and halt till she recovered. But, subduing her feelings at this, and different speeches to the same purpose, which caught her ear as they passed on, she insisted that

her guide should proceed to Kenilworth with all the haste which the numerous impediments of their journey permitted. Meanwhile, Wayland's anxiety at her repeated fits of indisposition, and her obvious distraction of mind, was hourly increasing; and he became extremely desirous, that, according to her reiterated requests, she should be safely introduced into the castle, where, he doubted not, she was secure of a kind reception, though she seemed unwilling to reveal on whom she reposed her hopes.

"An I were once rid of this peril," thought he, "and if any man shall find me playing squire of the body to a damosel-errant, he shall have leave to beat my brains out with my own sledge-hammer."

At length the princely castle appeared; upon improving which, and the domains around, the Earl of Leicester had, it is said, expended sixty thousand pounds sterling: a sum equal to half a million of our present money.

The outer wall of this splendid and gigantic structure enclosed seven acres, a part of which was occupied by extensive stables, and by a pleasure garden, with its trim arbours and parterres, and the rest formed the large base-court, or outer yard, of the noble castle. The lordly structure itself, which rose near the centre of this spacious enclosure, was composed of a huge pile of magnificent castellated buildings, apparently of different ages, surrounding an inner court, and bearing in the names attached to each portion of the magnificent mass, and in the armorial bearings which were there blazoned, the emblems of mighty chiefs who had long passed away, and whose history, could ambition have lent ear to it, might have read a lesson to the haughty favourite who had now acquired and was augmenting the fair domain. A large and massive keep, which formed the citadel of the castle, was of uncertain though great antiquity. It bore the name of Cæsar, perhaps from its resemblance to that in the Tower of London so called. Some antiquaries ascribed its foundation to the time of Kenelph, from whom the castle had its name, a Saxon King of Mercia, and others to an early æra after the Norman Conquest. On the exterior walls frowned the scutcheon of the Clintons, by whom they were founded in the reign of Henry I., and of the yet more redoubted Simon de Montfort, by whom, during the Barons' Wars, Kenilworth was long held out against Henry III. Here Mortimer, Earl of March, famous alike for his rise and his fall, had once gaily reveled, while his dethroned sovereign, Edward II., languished in its dungeons. Old John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster," had widely extended the castle, erecting that noble and massive pile which yet bears the name of Lancaster's Buildings; and Leicester himself had outdone the former possessors, princely and powerful as they were, by erecting another immense structure, which now lies crushed under its own ruins, the monument of its owner's ambition. The external wall of this royal castle was, on the south and west sides, adorned and defended by a lake partly artificial, across which Leicester had constructed a stately bridge, that Elizabeth might enter the castle by a path hitherto untrodden, instead of the usual entrance to the northward; over which he had erected a gate-house or barbican, which still exists,

and is equal in extent, and superior in architecture, to the baronial castle of many a northern chief.

Beyond the lake lay an extensive chase, full of red deer, fallow deer, roes, and every species of game, and abounding with lofty trees, from amongst which the extended front and massive towers of the castle were seen to rise in majesty and beauty. We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where princes feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour won, all is now desolate. The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp: and the massive ruins of the castle only serve to show what their splendour once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

It was with far different feelings that the unfortunate Countess of Leicester viewed those grey and massive towers, when she first beheld them rise above the embowering and richly shaded woods, over which they seemed to preside. She, the undoubted wife of the great earl, of Elizabeth's minion, and England's mighty favourite, was approaching the presence of her husband, and that husband's sovereign, under the protection, rather than the guidance, of a poor juggler; and though unquestioned mistress of that proud castle, whose lightest word ought to have had force sufficient to make its gates leap from their massive hinges to receive her, yet she could not conceal from herself the difficulty and peril which she must experience in gaining admission into her own halls.

The risk and difficulty, indeed, seemed to increase every moment, and at length threatened altogether to put a stop to her farther progress, at the great gate leading to a broad and fair road, which, traversing the breadth of the chase for the space of two miles, and commanding several most beautiful views of the castle and lake, terminated at the newly constructed bridge, to which it was an appendage, and which was destined to form the queen's approach to the castle on that memorable occasion.

Here the countess and Wayland found the gate at the end of this avenue, which opened on the Warwick road, guarded by a body of the queen's mounted yeomen of the guard, armed in corslets richly carved and gilded, and wearing morions instead of bonnets, having their carabines resting with the butt-end on their thighs. These guards, who did duty wherever the queen went in person, were here stationed under the direction of a pursuivant, graced with the Bear and Ragged Staff on his arm, as belonging to the Earl of Leicester, and peremptorily refused all admittance, excepting to such as were guests invited to the festival, or persons who were to perform some part in the mirthful exhibitions which were proposed.

The press was of consequence great around the entrance, and persons of all kinds presented every sort of plea for admittance; to which the guards turned an inexorable ear, pleading in return to fair words, and even to fair offers, the strictness of their orders, founded on the queen's well-known dislike to the rude pressing of a multitude. With those

whom such reasons did not serve, they dealt more rudely, repelling them without ceremony by the pressure of their powerful barbed horses, and good round blows from the stock of their carabines. These last manoeuvres produced undulations amongst the crowd, which rendered Wayland much afraid that he might perforce be separated from his charge in the throng. Neither did he know what excuse to make in order to obtain admittance, and he was debating the matter in his head with great uncertainty, when the earl's pursuivant, having cast an eye upon him, exclaimed, to his no small surprise, "Yeomen, make room for the fellow in the orange-tawny cloak—Come forward, Sir Coxcomb, and make haste. What, in the fiend's name, has kept you waiting? Come forward with your bale of woman's gear."

While the pursuivant gave Wayland this pressing yet uncourteous invitation, which, for a minute or two, he could not imagine was applied to him, the yeomen speedily made a free passage for him, while, only cautioning his companion to keep the muffler close around her face, he entered the gate leading her palfrey, but with such a drooping crest, and such a look of conscious fear and anxiety, that the crowd, not greatly pleased at any rate with the preference bestowed upon them, accompanied their admission with hooting, and a loud laugh of derision.

Admitted thus within the chase, though with no very flattering notice or distinction, Wayland and his charge rode forward, musing what difficulties it would be next their lot to encounter, through the broad avenue, which was sentineled on either side by a long line of retainers, armed with swords and partizans, richly dressed in the Earl of Leicester's liveries, and bearing his cognizance of the Bear and Ragged Staff, each placed within three paces of each other, so as to line the whole road from the entrance into the park to the bridge. And, indeed, when the lady obtained the first commanding view of the castle, with its stately towers rising from within a long sweeping line of outward walls, ornamented with battlements, and turrets, and plat-forms, at every point of defence, with many a banner streaming from its walls, and such a bustle of gay crests, and waving plumes, disposed on the terraces and battlements, and all the gay and gorgeous scene, her heart, unaccustomed to such splendour, sank as if it died within her, and for a moment she asked herself, what she had offered up to Leicester, to deserve to become the partner of this princely splendour. But her pride and generous spirit resisted the whisper which bade her despair.

"I have given him," she said, "all that woman has to give. Name and fame, heart and hand, have I given the lord of all this magnificence at the altar, and England's queen could give him no more. He is my husband—I am his wife—Whom God hath joined man cannot sunder. I will be bold in claiming my right; even the bolder that I come thus unexpected, and thus forlorn. I know my noble Dudley well! He will be something impatient at my disobeying him, but Amy will weep, and Dudley will forgive her."

These meditations were interrupted by a cry of

surprise from her guide Wayland, who suddenly felt himself grasped firmly round the body by a pair of long thin black arms, belonging to some one who had dropped himself out of an oak-tree, upon the croupe of his horse, amidst the shouts of laughter which burst from the sentinels.

"This must be the devil, or Flibbertigibbet again!" said Wayland, after a vain struggle to disengage himself, and unhorse the urchin who clung to him; "Do Kenilworth oaks bear such acorns?"

"In sooth do they, Master Wayland," said his unexpected adjunct, "and many others, too hard for you to crack, for as old as you are, without my teaching you. How would you have passed the pursuivant at the upper gate yonder, had not I warned him our principal juggler was to follow us? and here have I waited for you, having clambered up into the tree from the top of our wain; and I suppose they are all mad for want of me by this time."

"Nay, then, thou art a limb of the devil in good earnest," said Wayland. "I give thee way, good imp, and will walk by thy counsel; only as thou art powerful be merciful."

As he spoke, they approached a strong tower, at the south extremity of the long bridge we have mentioned, which served to protect the outer gate-way of the Castle of Kenilworth.

Under such disastrous circumstances, and in such singular company, did the unfortunate Countess of Leicester approach, for the first time, the magnificent abode of her almost princely husband.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

WHEN the Countess of Leicester arrived at the outer gate of the Castle of Kenilworth, she found the tower, beneath which its ample portal arch opened, guarded in a singular manner. Upon the battlements were placed gigantic warders, with clubs, battle-axes, and other implements of ancient warfare, designed to represent the soldiers of King Arthur; those primitive Britons, by whom, according to romantic tradition, the castle had been first tenanted, though history carried back its antiquity only to the times of the Heptarchy. Some of these tremendous figures were real men, dressed up with vizards and buskins; others were mere pageants composed of paste-board and buckram, which, viewed from beneath, formed a sufficiently striking representation of what was intended. But the gigantic porter who waited at the gate beneath, and actually discharged the duties of warder, owed none of his terrors to fictitious means. He was a man whose huge stature, thewes, sinews, and bulk in proportion, would have enabled him to enact Colbrand, Ascapart, or any other giant of romance, without raising himself nearer to heaven even by the altitude of a chopin. The legs and knees of this son of Anak were bare, as were his arms from a span below the shoulder; but his feet were defended with sandals,

fastened with cross straps of scarlet leather, studded with brazen knobs. A close jerkin of scarlet velvet, looped with gold, with short breeches of the same, covered his body and a part of his limbs; and he wore on his shoulders, instead of a cloak, the skin of a black bear. The head of this formidable person was uncovered, excepting by his shaggy black hair, which descended on either side around features of that huge, lumpish, and heavy cast, which are often annexed to men of very uncommon size, and which, notwithstanding some distinguished exceptions, have created a general prejudice against giants, as being a dull and sullen kind of persons. This tremendous warder was appropriately armed with a heavy club, spiked with steel. In fine, he represented excellently one of those giants of popular romance who figure in every fairy tale, or legend of knight-errantry.

The demeanour of this modern Titan, when Wayland Smith bent his attention to him, had in it something arguing much mental embarrassment and vexation; for sometimes he sate down for an instant on a massive stone bench, which seemed placed for his accommodation beside the gate-way, and then ever and anon he started up, scratching his huge head, and striding to and fro on his post, like one under a fit of impatience and anxiety. It was while the porter was pacing before the gate in this agitated manner, that Wayland, modestly, yet as a matter of course (not, however, without some mental misgiving), was about to pass him, and enter the portal arch. The porter, however, stopped his progress, bidding him, in a thundering voice, "Stand back!" and enforcing his injunction by heaving up his steel-shod mace, and dashing it on the ground before Wayland's horse's nose with such vehemence, that the pavement flashed fire, and the archway rang to the clamour. Wayland, availing himself of Dickie's hint, began to state that he belonged to a band of performers to which his presence was indispensable, that he had been accidentally detained behind, and much to the same purpose. But the warder was inexorable, and kept muttering and murmuring something betwixt his teeth, which Wayland could make little of; and addressing betwixt whiles a refusal of admittance, couched in language which was but too intelligible. A specimen of his speech might run thus.—"What, how now, my masters? (to himself) —Here's a stir—here's a coil.—(Then to Wayland) —You are a loitering knave, and shall have no entrance.—(Again to himself)—Here's a throng—here's a thrusting—I shall ne'er get through with it —Here's a—humph—ha—(To Wayland)—Back from the gate, or I'll break the pate of thee—(Once more to himself)—Here's a—no—I shall never get through it."

"Stand still," whispered Flibbertigibbet into Wayland's ear, "I know where the shoe pinches, and will tame him in an instant."

He dropped down from the horse, and skipping up to the porter, plucked him by the tail of the bear-skin, so as to induce him to decline his huge head, and whispered something in his ear. Not at the command of the lord of some eastern talisman, did ever Afrite change his horrid frown into a look of smooth submission, more suddenly than the gi-

gantic porter of Kenilworth relaxed the terrors of his look, at the instant Flibbertigibbet's whisper reached his ears. He flung his club upon the ground, and caught up Dickie Sludge, raising him to such a distance from the earth, as might have proved perilous had he chanced to let him slip.

"It is even so," he said, with a thundering sound of exultation—"it is even so, my little dandieprat—But who the devil could teach it thee?"

"Do not thou care about that," said Flibbertigibbet; "but"—he looked at Wayland and the lady, and then sunk what he had to say in a whisper, which needed not be a loud one, as the giant held him for his convenience close to his ear. The porter then gave Dickie a warm caress, and set him on the ground with the same care which a careful housewife uses in replacing a cracked china cup upon her mantle-piece, calling out at the same time to Wayland and the lady, "In with you—in with you—and take heed how you come too late another day when I chance to be porter."

"Ay, ay, in with you," added Flibbertigibbet; "I must stay a short space with mine honest Philistine, my Goliath of Gath here; but I will be with you anon, and at the bottom of all your secrets, were they as deep and dark as the castle-dungeon."

"I do believe thou wouldst," said Wayland; "but I trust the secret will be soon out of my keeping, and then I shall care the less whether thou or any one knows it."

They now crossed the entrance tower, which obtained the name of the gallery-tower, from the following circumstance:—The whole bridge, extending from the entrance to another tower on the opposite side of the lake, called Mortimer's Tower, was so disposed as to make a spacious tilt-yard, about one hundred and thirty yards in length, and ten in breadth, strewn with the finest sand, and defended on either side by strong and high palisades. The broad and fair gallery, destined for the ladies who were to witness the feats of chivalry presented on this area, was erected on the northern side of the outward tower, to which it gave name. Our travellers passed slowly along the bridge or tilt-yard, and arrived at Mortimer's Tower, at its farthest extremity, through which the approach led into the outer, or base court of the castle. Mortimer's Tower bore on its front the scutcheon of the Earl of March, whose daring ambition overthrew the throne of Edward II. and aspired to share his power with the "She-wolf of France," to whom the unhappy monarch was wedded. The gate, which opened under this ominous memorial, was guarded by many warders in rich liveries; but they offered no opposition to the entrance of the countess and her guide, who, having passed by license of the principal porter at the gallery-tower, were not, it may be supposed, liable to interruption from his deputies. They entered accordingly, in silence, the great outward court of the castle, having then full before them that vast and lordly pile, with all its stately towers; each gate open, as if in sign of unlimited hospitality, and the apartments filled with noble guests of every degree, besides dependents, retainers, domestics of every description, and all the appendages and promoters of mirth and revelry.

Amid this stately and busy scene Wayland halted his horse, and looked upon the lady, as if waiting her commands what was next to be done, since they had safely reached the place of destination. As she remained silent, Wayland, after waiting a minute or two, ventured to ask her in direct terms, what were her next commands. She raised her hand to her forehead, as if in the act of collecting her thoughts and resolution, while she answered him in a low and suppressed voice, like the murmurs of one who speaks in a dream—"Commands? I may indeed claim right to command, but who is there will obey me?"

Then suddenly raising her head like one who has formed a decisive resolution, she addressed a gaily dressed domestic, who was crossing the court with importance and bustle in his countenance.—"Stop, sir," she said, "I desire to speak with the Earl of Leicester."

"With whom, an it please you?" said the man, surprised at the demand; and then looking upon the mean equipage of her who used towards him such a tone of authority, he added with insolence, "Why, what Bess of Bedlam is this, would ask to see my lord on such a day as the present?"

"Friend," said the countess, "be not insolent—my business with the earl is most urgent."

"You must get some one else to do it, were it thrice as urgent," said the fellow.—"I should summon my lord from the queen's royal presence to do *your* business, should I?—I were like to be thanked with a horse-whip. I marvel our old porter took not measure of such ware with his club, instead of giving them passage; but his brain is addled with getting his speech by heart."

Two or three persons stopped, attracted by the fleeing way in which the serving-man expressed himself; and Wayland, alarmed both for himself and the lady, hastily addressed himself to one who appeared the most civil, and thrusting a piece of money into his hand, held a moment's counsel with him, on the subject of finding a place of temporary retreat for the lady. The person to whom he spoke, being one in some authority, rebuked the others for their incivility, and commanding one fellow to take care of the strangers' horses, he desired them to follow him. The countess retained presence of mind sufficient to see that it was absolutely necessary she should comply with his request; and, leaving the rude lacqueys and grooms to crack their brutal jests about light heads, light heels, and so forth, Wayland and she followed in silence the deputy-usher who undertook to be their conductor.

They entered the inner court of the castle by the great gate-way, which extended betwixt the principal keep or donjon, called Cæsar's Tower, and a stately building which passed by the name of King Henry's Lodging; and were thus placed in the centre of the noble pile, which presented on its different fronts magnificent specimens of every species of castellated architecture, from the Conquest to the reign of Elizabeth, with the appropriate style and ornaments of each.

Across this inner court also they were conducted by their guide to a small but strong tower, occupying the north-east angle of the building, adjacent to the great hall, and filling up a space betwixt the im-

mense range of kitchens and the end of the great hall itself. The lower part of this tower was occupied by some of the household officers of Leicester, owing to its convenient vicinity to the places where their duty lay; but in the upper storey, which was reached by a narrow winding stair, was a small chamber, which, in the great demand for lodgings, had been on the present occasion fitted up for the reception of guests, though generally said to have been used as a place of confinement for some unhappy person who had been there murdered. Tradition called this prisoner Mervyn, and transferred his name to the tower. That it had been used as a prison was not improbable; for the floor of each storey was arched, the walls of tremendous thickness, while the space of the chamber did not exceed fifteen feet square. The window, however, was pleasant, though narrow, and commanded a delightful view of what was called the Pleasance; a space of ground enclosed and decorated with arches, trophies, statues, fountains, and other architectural monuments, which formed one access from the castle itself into the garden. There was a bed in the apartment, and other preparations for the reception of a guest, to which the countess paid but slight attention, her notice being instantly arrested by the sight of writing materials placed on the table (not very commonly to be found in the bed-rooms of those days), which instantly suggested the idea of writing to Leicester, and remaining private until she had received his answer.

The deputy-usher having introduced them into this commodious apartment, courteously asked Wayland, whose generosity he had experienced, whether he could do any thing farther for his service. Upon receiving a gentle hint that some refreshment would not be unacceptable, he presently conveyed the smith to the buttery-hatch, where dressed provisions of all sorts were distributed, with hospitable profusion, to all who asked for them. Wayland was readily supplied with some light provisions, such as he thought would best suit the faded appetite of the lady, and did not omit the opportunity of himself making a hasty but hearty meal on more substantial fare. He then returned to the apartment in the turret, where he found the countess, who had finished her letter to Leicester; and, in lieu of a seal and silken thread, had secured it with a braid of her own beautiful tresses, secured by what is called a true-love knot.

"Good friend," said she to Wayland, "whom God hath sent to aid me at my utmost need, I do beseech thee, as the last trouble you shall take for an unfortunate lady, to deliver this letter to the noble Earl of Leicester. Be it received as it may," she said, with features agitated betwixt hope and fear, "thou, good fellow, shall have no more cumber with me. But I hope the best; and if ever lady made a poor man rich, thou hast surely deserved it at my hand, should my happy days ever come round again. Give it, I pray you, into Lord Leicester's own hand, and mark how he looks on receiving it."

Wayland, on his part, readily undertook the commission, but anxiously prayed the lady, in his turn, to partake of some refreshment; in which he at length prevailed, more through importunity, and her

desire to see him begone on his errand, than from any inclination the countess felt to comply with his request. He then left her, advising her to lock her door on the inside, and not to stir from her little apartment—and went to seek an opportunity of discharging her errand, as well as of carrying into effect a purpose of his own, which circumstances had induced him to form.

In fact, from the conduct of the lady during the journey—her long fits of profound silence—the irresolution and uncertainty which seemed to pervade all her movements, and the obvious incapacity of thinking and acting for herself, under which she seemed to labour, Wayland had formed the not improbable opinion, that the difficulties of her situation had in some degree affected her understanding.

When she had escaped from the seclusion of Cumnor Place, and the dangers to which she was there exposed, it would have seemed her most rational course to retire to her father's, or elsewhere, at a distance from the power of those by whom these dangers had been created. When, instead of doing so, she demanded to be conveyed to Kenilworth, Wayland had been only able to account for her conduct, by supposing that she meant to put herself under the tutelage of Tressilian, and to appeal to the protection of the queen. But now, instead of following this natural course, she entrusted him with a letter to Leicester, the patron of Varney, and within whose jurisdiction at least, if not under his express authority, all the evils she had already suffered were inflicted upon her. This seemed an unsafe, and even a desperate measure, and Wayland felt anxiety for his own safety, as well as that of the lady, should he execute her commission before he had secured the advice and countenance of a protector. He therefore resolved, before delivering the letter to Leicester, that he would seek out Tressilian, and communicate to him the arrival of the lady at Kenilworth; and thus at once rid himself of all further responsibility, and devolve the task of guiding and protecting this unfortunate lady upon the patron who had at first employed him in her service.

"He will be a better judge than I am," said Wayland, "whether she is to be gratified in this humour of appeal to my Lord of Leicester, which seems like an act of insanity; and, therefore, I will turn the matter over on his hands, deliver him the letter, receive what they list to give me by way of guerdon, and then show the Castle of Kenilworth a pair of light heels; for, after the work I have been engaged in, it will be, I fear, neither a safe nor wholesome place of residence; and I would rather shoe colts on the coldest common in England, than share in their gayest revels."

CHAPTER XXVII.

In my time I have seen a boy do wonders.

Robin, the red tinker, had a boy

Would ha' run through a cat-hole.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER'S *Coxcomb*.

AMID the universal bustle which filled the castle and its environs, it was no easy matter to find out

any individual; and Wayland was still less likely to light upon Tressilian, whom he sought so anxiously, because, sensible of the danger of attracting attention, in the circumstances in which he was placed, he dared not make general inquiries among the retainers or domestics of Leicester. He learned, however, by indirect questions, that, in all probability, Tressilian must have been one of a large party of gentlemen in attendance on the Earl of Sussex, who had accompanied their patron that morning to Kenilworth, when Leicester had received them with marks of the most formal respect and distinction. He farther learned, that both earls, with their followers, and many other nobles, knights, and gentlemen, had taken horse, and gone towards Warwick several hours since, for the purpose of escorting the queen to Kenilworth.

Her majesty's arrival, like other great events, was delayed from hour to hour; and it was now announced by a breathless post, that her majesty being detained by her gracious desire to receive the homages of her lieges, who had thronged to wait upon her at Warwick, it would be the hour of twilight ere she entered the castle. The intelligence released for a time those who were upon duty, in the immediate expectation of the queen's appearance, and ready to play their part in the solemnities with which it was to be accompanied; and Wayland, seeing several horsemen enter the castle, was not without hopes that Tressilian might be of the number. That he might not lose an opportunity of meeting his patron in case this should be the case, Wayland placed himself in the base-court of the castle, near Mortimer's Tower, and watched every one who went or came by the bridge, the extremity of which was protected by that building. Thus stationed, nobody could enter or leave the castle without his observation; and most anxiously did he study the garb and countenance of every horseman, as, passing from under the opposite gallery-tower, they paced slowly, or curveted, along the tilt-yard, and approached the entrance of the base-court.

But while Wayland gazed thus eagerly to discover him whom he saw not, he was pulled by the sleeve by one by whom he himself would not willingly have been seen.

This was Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, who, like the imp whose name he bore, and whom he had been accoutred in order to resemble, seemed to be ever at the ear of those who thought least of him. Whatever were Wayland's internal feelings, he judged it necessary to express pleasure at their unexpected meeting.

"Ha! is it thou, my minikin—my miller's thumb—my prince of caco-demons—my little mouse?"

"Ay," said Dickie, "the mouse which gnawed asunder the toils, just when the lion who was caught in them began to look wonderfully like an ass."

"Why, thou little hop-the-gutter, thou art as sharp as vinegar this afternoon. But tell me, how didst thou come off with yonder jolter-headed giant, whom I left thee with?—I was afraid he would have stripped thy clothes, and so swallowed thee, as men peel and eat a roasted chesnut."

"Had he done so," replied the boy, "he would have had more brains in his guts than ever he had

in his noddle. But the giant is a courteous monster, and more grateful than many other folks whom I have helped at a pinch, Master Wayland Smith."

"Beshrew me, Flibbertigibbet," replied Wayland, "but thou art sharper than a Sheffield whittle! I would I knew by what charm you muzzled yonder old bear?"

"Ay, that is in your own manner," answered Dickie; "you think fine speeches will pass muster instead of good will. However, as to this honest porter, you must know, that when we presented ourselves at the gate yonder, his brain was overburthened with a speech that had been penned for him, and which proved rather an overmatch for his gigantic faculties. Now this same pithy oration had been indited, like sundry others, by my learned magister, Erasmus Holiday, so I had heard it often enough to remember every line. As soon as I heard him blundering, and floundering like a fish upon dry land, through the first verse, and perceived him at a stand, I knew where the shoe pinched, and helped him to the next word, when he caught me up in an ecstasy, even as you saw but now. I promised, as the price of your admission, to hide me under his bearish gaberdine, and prompt him in the hour of need. I have just now been getting some food in the castle, and am about to return to him."

"That's right—that's right, my dear Dickie," replied Wayland; "haste thee, for Heaven's sake! else the poor giant will be utterly disconsolate for want of his dwarfish auxiliary—Away with thee, Dickie."

"Ay, ay!" answered the boy—"Away with Dickie, when we have got what good of him we can.—You will not let me know the story of this lady, then, who is as much sister of thine as I am?"

"Why, what good would it do thee, thou silly elf?" said Wayland.

"O, stand ye on these terms?" said the boy; "well, I care not greatly about the matter,—only, I never smell out a secret, but I try to be either at the right or the wrong end of it; and so good evening to ye."

"Nay, but, Dickie," said Wayland, who knew the boy's restless and intriguing disposition too well not to fear his enmity—"stay, my dear Dickie—part not with old friends so shortly!—Thou shalt know all I know of the lady one day."

"Ay!" said Dickie; "and that day may prove a nigh one.—Fare thee well, Wayland—I will to my large-limbed friend, who, if he have not so sharp a wit as some folks, is at least more grateful for the service which other folks render him. And so again, good evening to ye."

So saying, he cast a somerset through the gateway, and, lighting on the bridge, ran with the extraordinary agility, which was one of his distinguished attributes, towards the gallery-tower, and was out of sight in an instant.

"I would to God I were safe out of this castle again!" prayed Wayland, internally; "for now that this mischievous imp has put his finger in the pie, it cannot but prove a mess fit for the devil's eating. I would to Heaven Master Tressilian would appear!"

Tressilian, whom he was thus anxiously expecting in one direction, had returned to Kenilworth by an-

other access. It was indeed true, as Wayland had conjectured, that, in the earlier part of the day, he had accompanied the earls on their calvacade towards Warwick, not without hope that he might in that town hear some tidings of his emissary. Being disappointed in this expectation, and observing Varney amongst Leicester's attendants, seeming as if he had some purpose of advancing to and addressing him, he conceived, in the present circumstances, it was wisest to avoid the interview. He, therefore, left the presence-chamber when the high-sheriff of the county was in the very midst of his dutiful address to her majesty; and, mounting his horse, rode back to Kenilworth by a remote and circuitous road, and entered the castle by a small sally-port in the western wall, at which he was readily admitted as one of the followers of the Earl of Sussex, towards whom Leicester had commanded the utmost courtesy to be exercised. It was thus that he met not Wayland, who was impatiently watching his arrival, and whom he himself would have been, at least, equally desirous to have seen.

Having delivered his horse to the charge of his attendant, he walked for a space in the Pleasance and in the garden, rather to indulge in comparative solitude his own reflections, than to admire those singular beauties of nature and art which the magnificence of Leicester had there assembled. The greater part of the persons of condition had left the castle for the present, to form part of the earl's cavalcade; others, who remained behind, were on the battlements, outer walls, and towers, eager to view the splendid spectacle of the royal entry. The garden, therefore, while every other part of the castle resounded with the human voice, was silent, but for the whispering of the leaves, the emulous warbling of the tenants of a large aviary, with their happier companions who remained denizens of the free air, and the plashing of the fountains, which, forced into the air from sculptures of fantastic and grotesque forms, fell down with ceaseless sound into the great basins of Italian marble.

The melancholy thoughts of Tressilian cast a gloomy shade on all the objects with which he was surrounded. He compared the magnificent scenes which he here traversed, with the deep woodland and wild moorland which surrounded Lidcote Hall, and the image of Amy Robsart glided like a phantom through every landscape which his imagination summoned up. Nothing is perhaps more dangerous to the future happiness of men of deep thought and retired habits, than the entertaining an early, long, and unfortunate attachment. It frequently sinks so deep into the mind, that it becomes their dream by night and their vision by day—mixes itself with every source of interest and enjoyment; and when blighted and withered by final disappointment, it seems as if the springs of the heart were dried up along with it. This aching of the heart, this languishing after a shadow which has lost all the gaiety of its colouring, this dwelling on the remembrance of a dream from which we have been long roughly awakened, is the weakness of a gentle and generous heart, and it was that of Tressilian.

He himself at length became sensible of the necessity of forcing other objects upon his mind; and for

this purpose he left the Pleasance, in order to mingle with the noisy crowd upon the walls, and view the preparation for the pageants. But as he left the garden, and heard the busy hum, mixed with music and laughter, which floated around him, he felt an uncontrollable reluctance to mix with society, whose feelings were in a tone so different from his own, and resolved, instead of doing so, to retire to the chamber assigned him, and employ himself in study until the tolling of the great castle-bell should announce the arrival of Elizabeth.

Tressilian crossed accordingly by the passage betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the great hall, and ascended to the third story of Mervyn's Tower, and applying himself to the door of the small apartment which had been allotted to him, was surprised to find it was locked. He then recollected that the deputy-chamberlain had given him a master-key; advising him, in the present confused state of the castle, to keep his door as much shut as possible. He applied this key to the lock, the bolt revolved, he entered, and in the same instant saw a female form seated in the apartment, and recognized that form to be Amy Robsart. His first idea was, that a heated imagination had raised the image on which it doated into visible existence; his second, that he beheld an apparition—the third and abiding conviction, that it was Amy herself: paler, indeed, and thinner than in the days of heedless happiness, when she possessed the form and hue of a wood-nymph, with the beauty of a sylph; but still Amy, unequaled in loveliness by aught which had ever visited his eyes.

The astonishment of the countess was scarce less than that of Tressilian, although it was of shorter duration, because she had heard from Wayland that he was in the castle. She had started up at his first entrance, and now stood facing him, the paleness of her cheeks having given way to a deep blush.

"Tressilian," she said, at length, "why come you here?"

"Nay, why come *you* here, Amy," returned Tressilian, "unless it be at length to claim that aid, which, as far as one man's heart and arm can extend, shall instantly be rendered to you?"

She was silent a moment, and then answered in a sorrowful, rather than an angry tone,—“I require no aid, Tressilian, and would rather be injured than benefited by any which your kindness can offer me. Believe me, I am near one whom law and love oblige to protect me.”

"The villain then hath done you the poor justice which remained in his power," said Tressilian; "and I behold before me the wife of Varney!"

"The wife of Varney!" she replied, with all the emphasis of scorn; "With what base name, sir, does your boldness stigmatize the—the—the"—She hesitated, dropped her tone of scorn, looked down, and was confused and silent, for she recollected what fatal consequences might attend her completing the sentence with "the Countess of Leicester," which were the words that had naturally suggested themselves. It would have been a betrayal of the secret, on which her husband had assured her that his fortunes depended, to Tressilian, to Sussex, to

the queen, and to the whole assembled court. "Never," she thought, "will I break my promised silence. I will submit to every suspicion rather than that."

The tears rose to her eyes, as she stood silent before Tressilian; while, looking on her with mingled grief and pity, he said, "Alas! Amy, your eyes contradict your tongue! That speaks of a protector, willing and able to watch over you; but these tell me you are ruined and deserted by the wretch to whom you have attached yourself."

She looked on him, with eyes in which anger sparkled through her tears, but only repeated the word "wretch!" with a scornful emphasis.

"Yes, *wretch!*" said Tressilian; "for were he aught better, why are you here, and alone in my apartment? why was not fitting provision made for your honourable reception?"

"In your apartment?" repeated Amy; "in *your* apartment? It shall instantly be relieved of my presence." She hastened towards the door; but the sad recollection of her deserted state at once pressed on her mind, and, pausing on the threshold, she added, in a tone unutterably pathetic, "Alas! I had forgot—I know not where to go"—

"I see—I see it all!" said Tressilian, springing to her side, and leading her back to the seat, on which she sunk down—"You *do* need aid—you *do* need protection, though you will not own it; and you shall not need it in vain. Leaning on my arm, as the representative of your excellent and broken-hearted father, on the very threshold of the castle-gate, you shall meet Elizabeth; and the first deed she shall do in the halls of Kenilworth, shall be an act of justice to her sex and her subjects. Strong in my good cause, and in the queen's justice, the power of her minion shall not shake my resolution. I will instantly seek Sussex."

"Not for all that is under heaven!" said the countess much alarmed, and feeling the absolute necessity of obtaining time, at least, for consideration. "Tressilian, you were wont to be generous—Grant me one request, and believe, if it be your wish to save me from misery and from madness, you will do more by making me the promise I ask of you, than Elizabeth can do for me with all her power."

"Ask me any thing for which you can allege reason," said Tressilian; "but demand not of me"—

"O, limit not your boon, dear Edmund!" exclaimed the countess—"you once loved that I should call you so—Limit not your boon to reason! for my case is all madness, and phrenzy must guide the counsels which alone can aid me."

"If you speak thus wildly," said Tressilian, astonishment again overpowering both his grief and his resolution, "I must believe you indeed incapable of thinking or acting for yourself."

"Oh no!" she exclaimed, sinking on one knee before him, "I am not mad—I am but a creature unutterably miserable, and, from circumstances the most singular, dragged on to a precipice by the arm of him who thinks he is keeping me from it—even by yours, Tressilian—by yours, whom I have honoured, respected—all but loved—and yet loved too—loved too, Tressilian—though not as you wished me."

There was an energy—a self-possession—an abandonment in her voice and manner—a total resignation of herself to his generosity, which, together with the kindness of her expressions to himself, moved him deeply. He raised her, and, in broken accents, entreated her to be comforted.

"I cannot," she said, "I will not be comforted, till you grant me my request! I will speak as plainly as I dare—I am now awaiting the commands of one who has a right to issue them—The interference of a third person—of you, in especial, Tressilian, will be ruin—utter ruin to me. Wait but four-and-twenty hours, and it may be that the poor Amy may have the means to show that she values, and can reward, your disinterested friendship—that she is happy herself, and has the means to make you so—It is surely worth your patience, for so short a space?"

Tressilian paused, and weighing in his mind the various probabilities which might render a violent interference on his part more prejudicial than advantageous, both to the happiness and reputation of Amy; considering also that she was within the walls of Kenilworth, and could suffer no injury in a castle honoured with the queen's residence, and filled with her guards and attendants,—he conceived, upon the whole, that he might render her more evil than good service, by intruding upon her his appeal to Elizabeth in her behalf. He expressed his resolution cautiously however, doubting naturally whether Amy's hopes of extricating herself from her difficulties rested on any thing stronger than a blinded attachment to Varney, whom he supposed to be her seducer.

"Amy," he said, while he fixed his sad and expressive eyes on hers, which, in her ecstasy of doubt, terror, and perplexity, she cast up towards him, "I have ever remarked, that when others called thee girlish and wilful, there lay under that external semblance of youthful and self-willed folly, deep feeling and strong sense. In this I will confide, trusting your own fate in your own hands for the space of twenty-four hours, without my interference by word or act."

"Do you promise me this, Tressilian?" said the countess. "Is it possible you can yet repose so much confidence in me? Do you promise, as you are a gentleman and a man of honour, to intrude in my matters, neither by speech nor action, whatever you may see or hear that seems to you to demand your interference?—Will you so far trust me?"

"I will, upon my honour!" said Tressilian; "but when that space is expired"—

"When that space is expired," she said, interrupting him, "you are free to act as your judgment shall determine."

"Is there nought besides which I can do for you, Amy?" said Tressilian.

"Nothing," said she, "save to leave me—that is, if—I blush to acknowledge my helplessness by asking it—if you can spare me the use of this apartment for the next twenty-four hours."

"This is most wonderful!" said Tressilian; "what hope or interest can you have in a castle, where you cannot command even an apartment?"

"Argue not, but leave me," she said; and added,

as he slowly and unwillingly retired, "Generous Edmund! the time may come, when Amy may show she deserved thy noble attachment."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

What, man, ne'er lack a draught, when the full can
Stands at thine elbow, and craves emptying!—
Nay, fear not me, for I have no delight
To watch men's vices, since I have myself
Of virtue nought to boast of—I'm a striker,
Would have the world strike with me, pell-mell, all.

Pandæmonium.

TRESSILIAN, in strange agitation of mind, had hardly stepped down the first two or three steps of the winding staircase, when, greatly to his surprise and displeasure, he met Michael Lambourne, wearing an impudent familiarity of visage, for which Tressilian felt much disposed to throw him down stairs; until he remembered the prejudice which Amy, the only object of his solicitude, was likely to receive from his engaging in any act of violence at that time, and in that place.

He therefore contented himself with looking sternly upon Lambourne, as upon one whom he deemed unworthy of notice, and attempted to pass him in his way down stairs, without any symptom of recognition. But Lambourne, who, amidst the profusion of that day's hospitality, had not failed to take a deep, though not an overpowering cup of sack, was not in the humour of humbling himself before any man's looks. He stopped Tressilian upon the staircase without the least bashfulness or embarrassment, and addressed him as if he had been on kind and intimate terms:—"What! no grudge between us I hope upon old scores, Master Tressilian?—nay, I am one who remember former kindness rather than latter feud—I'll convince you that I meant honestly and kindly, ay, and comfortably by you."

"I desire none of your intimacy," said Tressilian—"keep company with your mates."

"Now see how hasty he is!" said Lambourne; "and how these gentles, that are made, questionless, out of the porcelain clay of the earth, look down upon poor Michael Lambourne! You would take Master Tressilian now for the most maid-like, modest, simpering squire of dames, that ever made love when candles were long i' the stuff—snuff—call you it?—Why you would play the saint on us, Master Tressilian, and forget that even now thou hast a commodity in thy very bed-chamber, to the shame of my lord's castle, ha! ha! ha! Have I touched you, Master Tressilian?"

"I know not what you mean," said Tressilian, inferring, however, too surely, that this licentious ruffian must have been sensible of Amy's presence in his apartment; "but if," he continued, "thou art varlet of the chambers and lackest a fee, there is one to leave mine unmolested."

Lambourne looked at the piece of gold, and put it in his pocket, saying—"Now, I know not but you might have done more with me by a kind word, than by this chiming rogue. But after all he pays well that pays with gold—and Mike Lambourne was

never a make-bate, or a spoil-sport, or the like. E'en live and let others live, that is my motto—only, I would not let some folks cock their beaver at me neither, as if they were made of silver ore, and I of Dutch pewter. So if I keep your secret, Master Tressilian, you may look sweet on me at least; and were I to want a little backing or countenance, being caught, as you see the best of us may be, in a sort of peccadillo—why, you owe it me—and so e'en make your chamber serve you and that same bird in bower beside—it's all one to Mike Lambourne."

"Make way, sir!" said Tressilian, unable to bridle his indignation, "you have had your fee."

"Um?" said Lambourne, giving place, however, while he sulkily muttered between his teeth, repeating Tressilian's words—"Make way—and you have had your fee—but it matters not, I will spoil no sport, as I said before; I am no dog in the manger—mind that."

He spoke louder and louder, as Tressilian, by whom he felt himself overawed, got farther and farther out of hearing.

"I am no dog in the manger—but I will not carry coals neither—mind that, my Master Tressilian; and I will have a peep at this wench, whom you have quartered so commodiously in your old haunted room—afraid of ghosts belike, and not too willing to sleep alone. If I had done this now in a strange lord's castle, the word had been,—The porter's lodge for the knave! and,—Have him flogged—trundle him down stairs like a turnip!—Ay, but your virtuous gentlemen take strange privileges over us, who are downright servants of our senses. Well—I have my Master Tressilian's head under my belt by this lucky discovery, that is one thing certain; and I will try to get a sight of this Lindabrides of his, that is another."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Now fare thee well, my master—if true service
Be guerdon'd with hard e'e, uncut the tow-line,
And let our barks across the pathless flood
Hold different courses —

Shipwreck.

TRESSILIAN walked into the outer yard of the castle, scarce knowing what to think of his late strange and most unexpected interview with Amy Robsart, and dubious if he had done well, being intrusted with the delegated authority of her father, to pass his word so solemnly to leave her to her own guidance for so many hours. Yet how could he have denied her request,—dependent, as she had too probably rendered herself, upon Varney? Such was his natural reasoning. The happiness of her future life might depend upon his not driving her to extremities; and since no power of Tressilian's could extricate her from the power of Varney, supposing he was to acknowledge Amy to be his wife, what title had he to destroy the hope of domestic peace, which might yet remain to her, by setting enmity betwixt them? Tressilian resolved, therefore, scrupulously to observe his word pledged to

Amy, both because it had been given, and because, as he still thought, while he considered and reconsidered that extraordinary interview, it could not with justice or propriety have been refused.

In one respect, he had gained much towards securing effectual protection for this unhappy and still beloved object of his early affection. Amy was no longer mewed up in a distant and solitary retreat, under the charge of persons of doubtful reputation. She was in the Castle of Kenilworth, within the verge of the royal court for the time, free from all risk of violence, and liable to be produced before Elizabeth on the first summons. These were circumstances which could not but assist greatly the efforts which he might have occasion to use in her behalf.

While he was thus balancing the advantages and perils which attended her unexpected presence in Kenilworth, Tressilian was hastily and anxiously accosted by Wayland, who, after hastily ejaculating, "Thank God! your worship is found at last!" proceeded with breathless caution to pour into his ear the intelligence, that the lady had escaped from Cumnor Place.

"And is at present in this castle," said Tressilian; "I know it, and I have seen her—Was it by her own choice she found refuge in my apartment?"

"No," answered Wayland; "but I could think of no other way of safely bestowing her, and was but too happy to find a deputy-usher who knew where you were quartered;—in jolly society truly, the hall on the one hand, and the kitchen on the other!"

"Peace! this is no time for jesting," answered Tressilian, sternly.

"I wot that but too well," said the artist, "for I have felt these three days as if I had an halter round my neck. This lady knows not her own mind—she will have none of your aid—commands you not to be named to her—and is about to put herself into the hands of my Lord Leicester. I had never got her safe under your chamber, had she known the owner of it."

"Is it possible?" said Tressilian. "But she may have hopes the earl will exert his influence in her favour over his villainous dependent."

"I know nothing of that," said Wayland—"but I believe, if she is to reconcile herself with either Leicester or Varney, the side of the Castle of Kenilworth which will be safest for us will be the outside, from which we can fastest fly away. It is not my purpose to abide an instant after delivery of the letter to Leicester, which waits but your commands to find its way to him. See, here it is—but no—a plague on it!—I must have left it in my dog-hole, in the hay-loft yonder, where I am to sleep."

"Death and fury!" said Tressilian, transported beyond his usual patience; "thou hast not lost that on which may depend a stake more important than a thousand such lives as thine?"

"Lost it!" answered Wayland, readily; "that were a jest indeed! No, sir, I have it carefully put up with my night-sack, and some matters I have occasion to use—I will fetch it in an instant."

"Do so!" said Tressilian; "be faithful, and thou shalt be well rewarded. But if I have reason

to suspect thee, a dead dog were in better case than thou!"

Wayland bowed, and took his leave with seeming confidence and alacrity, but, in fact, filled with the utmost dread and confusion. The letter was lost, that was certain, notwithstanding the apology which he had made to appease the impatient displeasure of Tressilian. It was lost—it might fall into wrong hands—it would then certainly occasion a discovery of the whole intrigue in which he had been engaged; nor, indeed, did Wayland see much prospect of its remaining concealed, in any event. He felt much hurt, besides, at Tressilian's burst of impatience.

"Nay, if I am to be paid in this coin, for services where my neck is concerned, it is time I should look to myself. Here have I offended, for aught I know, to the death, the lord of this stately castle, whose word were as powerful to take away my life, as the breath which speaks it to blow out a farthing candle. And all this for a mad lady, and a melancholy gallant; who, on the loss of a four-nooked bit of paper, has his hand on his poignado, and swears death and fury!—Then there is the doctor and Varney—I will save myself from the whole mess of them—Life is dearer than gold—I will fly this instant, though I leave my reward behind me."

These reflections naturally enough occurred to a mind like Wayland's, who found himself engaged far deeper than he had expected in a train of mysterious and unintelligible intrigues, in which the actors seemed hardly to know their own course. And yet, to do him justice, his personal fears were, in some degree, counterbalanced by his compassion for the deserted state of the lady.

"I care not a groat for Master Tressilian," he said; "I have done more than bargain by him, and I have brought his errant-damosel within his reach, so that he may look after her himself; but I fear the poor thing is in much danger amongst these stormy spirits. I will to her chamber, and tell her the fate which has befallen her letter, that she may write another if she list. She cannot lack a messenger, I trow, where there are so many lacqueys that can carry a letter to their lord. And I will tell her also that I leave the castle, trusting her to God, her own guidance, and Master Tressilian's care and looking after.—Perhaps she may remember the ring she offered me—it was well earned, I trow; but she is a lovely creature, and—marry hang the ring! I will not bear a base mind for the matter. If I fare ill in this world for my good nature, I will have better chance in the next.—So now for the lady, and then for the road."

With the stealthy step and jealous eye of the cat that steals on her prey, Wayland resumed the way to the countess's chamber, sliding along by the side of the courts and passages, alike observant of all around him, and studious himself to escape observation. In this manner he crossed the outward and inward castle-yard, and the great arched passage, which, running betwixt the range of kitchen offices and the hall, led to the bottom of the little winding-stair that gave access to the chambers of Mervyn's Tower.

The artist congratulated himself on having escaped

the various perils of his journey, and was in the act of ascending by two steps at once, when he observed that the shadow of a man, thrown from a door which stood ajar, darkened the opposite wall of the staircase. Wayland drew back cautiously, went down to the inner court-yard, spent about a quarter of an hour, which seemed at least quadruple its usual duration, in walking from place to place, and then returned to the tower, in hopes to find that the lurker had disappeared. He ascended as high as the suspicious spot—there was no shadow on the wall—he ascended a few yards farther—the door was still ajar, and he was doubtful whether to advance or retreat, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and Michael Lambourne bolted out upon the astonished Wayland. "Who the devil art thou? and what seek'st thou in this part of the castle? March into that chamber, and be hanged to thee!"

"I am no dog, to go at every man's whistle," said the artist, affecting a confidence which was belied by a timid shake in his voice.

"Say'st thou me so?—Come hither, Lawrence Staples."

A huge ill-made and ill-looking fellow, upwards of six feet high, appeared at the door, and Lambourne proceeded; "If thou be'st so fond of this tower, my friend, thou shalt see its foundations, good twelve feet below the bed of the lake, and tenanted by certain jolly toads, snakes, and so forth, which thou wilt find mighty good company. Therefore, once more I ask you in fair play, who thou art, and what thou seek'st here?"

If the dungeon-grate once clashes behind me, thought Wayland, I am a gone man.—He therefore answered submissively, he "was the poor juggler whom his honour had met yesterday in Weatherly-bottom."

"And what juggling trick art thou playing in this tower? Thy gang," said Lambourne, "lie over against Clinton's Buildings."

"I came here to see my sister," said the juggler, "who is in Master Tressilian's chamber, just above."

"Aha!" said Lambourne, smiling, "here be truths—upon my honour, for a stranger, this same Master Tressilian makes himself at home among us, and furnishes out his cell handsomely, with all sort of commodities.—Hark thee, sirrah!—This will be a precious tale of the sainted Master Tressilian, and will be welcome to some folks as a purse of broad pieces to me—Hark ye, fellow," he continued, addressing Wayland, "thou shalt not give puss a hint to steal away—we must catch her in her form. So, back with that pitiful sheep-biting visage of thine, or I will fling thee from the window of the tower, and try if your juggling skill can save your bones."

"Your worship will not be so hard-hearted, I trust," said Wayland; "poor folks must live. I trust your honour will allow me to speak with my sister?"

"Sister on Adam's side, I warrant," said Lambourne; "or, if otherwise, the more knave thou. But sister or no sister, thou diest on point of fox, if thou comest a prying to this tower once more! And now I think of it, uds daggers and death! I will see thee out of the castle, for this is a more main concern than thy jugglery."

"But, please your worship," said Wayland, "I am to enact Arion in the pageant upon the lake this very evening."

"I will act it myself, by Saint Christopher!" said Lambourne—"Orion, call'st thou him?—I will act Orion, his belt and his seven stars to boot. Come along, for a rascal knave as thou art—follow me!—Or stay—Lawrence, do thou bring him along."

Lawrence seized by the collar of the cloak the unresisting juggler, while Lambourne, with hasty steps, led the way to that same sally-port, or secret postern, by which Tressilian had returned to the castle, and which opened in the western wall, at no great distance from Mervyn's Tower.

While traversing with a rapid foot the space betwixt the tower and the sally-port, Wayland in vain racked his brain for some device which might avail the poor lady, for whom, notwithstanding his own imminent danger, he felt deep interest. But when he was thrust out of the castle, and informed by Lambourne, with a tremendous oath, that instant death would be the consequence of his again approaching it, he cast up his hands and eyes to heaven, as if to call God to witness he had stood to the uttermost in defence of the oppressed; then turned his back on the proud towers of Kenilworth, and went his way to seek a humbler and safer place of refuge.

Lawrence and Lambourne gazed a little while after Wayland, and then turned to go back to their tower, when the former thus addressed his companion: "Never credit me, Master Lambourne, if I can guess why thou hast driven this poor caitiff from the castle just when he was to bear a part in the show that was beginning, and all this about a wench."

"Ah, Lawrence," replied Lambourne, "thou art thinking of Black Joan Jugges of Slingdon, and hast sympathy with human frailty. But coraggio, most noble Duke of the Dungeon and Lord of Limbo, for thou art as dark in this matter as thine own dominions of Little-ease. My most reverend Seigneur of the Low Countries of Kenilworth, know that our most notable master, Richard Varney, would give as much to have a hole in this same Tressilian's coat, as would make us some fifty midnight carousals, with the full leave of bidding the steward go snick up, if he came to startle us too soon from our goblets."

"Nay, an that be the case, thou hast right," said Lawrence Staples, the upper warder, or, in common phrase, the first jailer of Kenilworth Castle, and of the liberty and honour belonging thereto; "but how will you manage when you are absent at the queen's entrance, Master Lambourne; for methinks thou must attend thy master there?"

"Why thou, mine honest prince of prisons, must keep ward in my absence—Let Tressilian enter if he will, but see thou let no one come out. If the damsel herself would make a break, as 'tis not unlike she may, scare her back with rough words—she is but a paltry player's wench after all."

"Nay, for that matter," said Lawrence, "I might shut the iron wicket upon her, that stands without the double door, and so force per force she will be bound to her answer without more trouble."

"Then Tressilian will not get access to her," said

Lambourne, reflecting a moment. "But 'tis no matter—she will be detected in his chamber, and that is all one.—But confess, thou old bat's-eyed dungeon-keeper, that you fear to keep awake by yourself in that Mervyn's Tower of thine."

"Why, as to fear, Master Lambourne," said the fellow, "I mind it not the turning of a key; but strange things have been heard and seen in that tower.—You have heard, for as short time as you have been in Kenilworth, that it is haunted by the spirit of Arthur ap Mervyn, a wild chief taken by fierce Lord Mortimer, when he was one of the Lords Marchers of Wales, and murdered, as they say, in that same tower which bears his name?"

"O, I have heard the tale five hundred times," said Lambourne, "and how the ghost is always most vociferous when they boil leeks and stir-about, or fry toasted cheese in the culinary regions. Santo Diavolo, man, hold thy tongue, I know all about it."

"Ay, but thou dost not though," said the turnkey, "for as wise as thou wouldst make thyself. Ah, it is an awful thing to murder a prisoner in his ward!—You, that may have given a man a stab in a dark street, know nothing of it. To give a mutinous fellow a knock on the head with the keys, and bid him be quiet, that's what I call keeping order in the ward; but to draw weapon and slay him, as was done to this Welch lord, *that* raises you a ghost that will render your prison-house untenable by any decent captive for some hundred years. And I have that regard for my prisoners, poor things, that I have put good squires and men of worship, that have taken a ride on the highway, or slandered my Lord of Leicester, or the like, fifty feet under ground, rather than I would put them into that upper chamber yonder that they call Mervyn's Bower. Indeed, by good Saint Peter of the Fetters, I marvel my noble lord, or Master Varney, would think of lodging guests there; and if this Master Tressilian could get any one to keep him company, and in especial a pretty wench, why truly I think he was in the right on't."

"I tell thee," said Lambourne, leading the way into the turnkey's apartment, "thou art an ass—Go bolt the wicket on the stair, and trouble not thy noddle about ghosts.—Give me the wine-stoup, man; I am somewhat heated with chafing with yonder rascal."

While Lambourne drew a long draught from a pitcher of claret, which he made use of without any cup, the warder went on, vindicating his own belief in the supernatural.

"Thou hast been few hours in this castle, and hast been for the whole space so drunk, Lambourne, that thou art deaf, dumb, and blind. But we should hear less of your bragging, were you to pass a night with us at full moon, for then the ghost is busiest; and more especially when a rattling wind sets in from the north-west, with some sprinkling of rain, and now and then a growl of thunder. Body o' me! what crackings and clashings, what groanings and what howlings will there be at such times in Mervyn's Bower, right as it were over our heads, till the matter of two quarts of distilled waters has not been enough to keep my lads and me together."

"Pshaw, man!" replied Lambourne, on whom his

last draught, joined to repeated visitation of the pitcher upon former occasions, began to make some innovation, "thou speak'st thou know'st not what about spirits. No one knows justly what to say about them; and, in short, least said may in that matter be soonest amended. Some men believe in one thing, some in another—it is all matter of fancy. I have known them of all sorts, my dear Lawrence Lock-the-Door, and sensible men too. There's a great lord—we'll pass his name, Lawrence—he believes in the stars and the moon, the planets and their courses, and so forth, and that they twinkle exclusively for his benefit; when in sober, or rather in drunken truth, Lawrence, they are only shining to keep honest fellows like me out of the kennel. Well, sir, let his humour pass, he is great enough to indulge it.—Then look ye, there is another—a very learned man, I promise you, and can vent Greek and Hebrew as I can Thieves' latin—he has an humour of sympathies and antipathies—of changing lead into gold and the like—why via let that pass too, and let him pay those in transmigrated coin, who are fools enough to let it be current with them.—Then here comest thou thyself, another great man, though neither learned nor noble, yet full six feet high, and thou, like a purblind mole, must needs believe in ghosts and goblins, and such like.—Now, there is, besides, a great man—that is, a great little man, or a little great man, my dear Lawrence—and his name begins with V, and what believes he? Why nothing, honest Lawrence—nothing in earth, heaven, or hell; and for my part, if I believe there is a devil, it is only because I think there must be some one to catch our friend by the back 'when soul and body sever,' as the ballad says—for your antecedent will have a consequent—*raro antecedentem*, as Doctor Bricham was wont to say—But this is Greek to you now, honest Lawrence; and in sooth learning is dry work—Hand me the pitcher once more."

"In faith, if you drink more, Michael," said the warder, "you will be in sorry case either to play Arion or to wait on your master on such a solemn night; and I expect each moment to hear the great bell toll for the muster at Mortimer's Tower, to receive the queen."

While Staples remonstrated, Lambourne drank; and then setting down the pitcher, which was nearly emptied, with a deep sigh, he said, in an under tone, which soon rose to a high one as his speech proceeded, "Never mind, Lawrence—if I be drunk, I know that shall make Varney uphold me sober. But, as I said, never mind; I can carry my drink discreetly. Moreover, I am to go on the water as Orion, and shall take cold unless I take something comfortable before hand. Not play Orion! Let us see the best roarer that ever strained his lungs for twelve pence outmouth me. What if they see me a little disguised?—Wherefore should any man be sober to-night? answer me that—It is matter of loyalty to be merry—and I tell thee, there are those in the castle, who if they are not merry when drunk, have little chance to be merry when sober—I name no names, Lawrence. But your pottle of sack is a fine shoeing-horn to pull on a loyal humour, and a merry one. Huzza for Queen Elizabeth!—for the noble Leicester!—for the worshipful Master Varney!

VOL. III.

—and for Michael Lambourne, that can turn them all round his finger!"

So saying, he walked down stairs, and across the inner court.

The warder looked after him, shook his head, and, while he drew close and locked a wicket, which, crossing the staircase, rendered it impossible for any one to ascend higher than the storey immediately beneath Mervyn's Bower, as Tressilian's chamber was named, he thus soliloquized with himself—"It's a good thing to be a favourite—I well nigh lost mine office, because one frosty morning Master Varney thought I smelled of aquavitæ; and this fellow can appear before him drunk as a wine-skin, and yet meet no rebuke. But then he is a pestilent clever fellow withal, and no one can understand above one half of what he says."

CHAPTER XXX.

Now bid the steeple rock—she comes, she comes!—
Speak for us, bells—speak for us, shrill-tongued tuckets.
Stand to thy linstock, gunner; let thy cannon
Play such a peal, as if a paynim foe
Came stretch'd in turban'd ranks to storm the ramparts.
We will have pageants too—but that craves wit,
And I'm a rough-hewn soldier.

The Virgin Queen—a Tragi-Comedy.

TRESSILIAN, when Wayland had left him, as mentioned in the last chapter, remained uncertain what he ought next to do, when Raleigh and Blount came up to him arm in arm, yet, according to their wont, very eagerly disputing together. Tressilian had no great desire for their society in the present state of his feelings, but there was no possibility of avoiding them; and indeed he felt that, bound by his promise not to approach Amy, or take any step in her behalf, it would be his best course at once to mix with general society, and to exhibit on his brow as little as he could of the anguish and uncertainty which sate heavy at his heart. He therefore made a virtue of necessity, and hailed his comrades with, "All mirth to you, gentlemen. Whence come ye?"

"From Warwick, to be sure," said Blount; "we must needs home to change our habits, like poor players, who are fain to multiply their persons to outward appearance by change of suits; and you had better do the like, Tressilian."

"Blount is right," said Raleigh; "the queen loves such marks of deference, and notices, as wanting in respect, those who, not arriving in her immediate attendance, may appear in their soiled and ruffled riding-dress. But look at Blount himself, Tressilian, for the love of laughter, and see how his villanous tailor hath appareled him—in blue, green, and crimson, with carnation ribbons, and yellow roses in his shoes!"

"Why, what wouldst thou have?" said Blount. "I told the cross-legged thief to do his best, and spare no cost; and methinks these things are gay enough—gayer than thine own—I'll be judged by Tressilian."

"I agree—I agree," said Walter Raleigh. "Judge betwixt us, Tressilian, for the love of heaven!"

Tressilian, thus appealed to, looked at them both,

and was immediately sensible at a single glance, that honest Blount had taken upon the tailor's warrant the pied garments which he had chosen to make, and was as much embarrassed by the quantity of points and ribbons which garnished his dress, as a clown is in a holiday suit; while the dress of Raleigh was a well-fancied and rich suit, which the wearer bore as a garb too well adapted to his elegant person to attract particular attention. Tressilian said, therefore, "That Blount's dress was finest, but Raleigh's the best fancied."

Blount was satisfied with his decision. "I knew mine was finest," he said; "if that knave, Doublestitch, had brought me home such a simple doublet as that of Raleigh's, I would have beat his brains out with his own pressing-iron. Nay, if we must be fools, ever let us be fools of the first head, say I."

"But why gettest thou not on thy braveries, Tressilian?" said Raleigh.

"I am excluded from my apartment by a silly mistake," said Tressilian, "and separated for the time from my baggage. I was about to seek thee, to beseech a share of thy lodging."

"And welcome," said Raleigh; "it is a noble one. My lord of Leicester has done us that kindness, and lodged us in princely fashion. If his courtesy be extorted reluctantly, it is at least extended far. I would advise you to tell your streight to the earl's chamberlain—you will have instant redress."

"Nay, it is not worth while, since you can spare me room," replied Tressilian—"I would not be troublesome.—Has any one come hither with you?"

"O, ay," said Blount; "Varney and a whole tribe of Leicesterians, besides about a score of us honest Sussex folks.—We are all, it seems, to receive the queen at what they call the gallery-tower, and witness some fooleries there; and then we're to remain in attendance upon the queen in the great hall, God bless the mark, while those who are now waiting upon her grace get rid of their slough, and doff their riding-suits. Heaven help me, if her grace should speak to me, I shall never know what to answer!"

"And what has detained them so long at Warwick?" said Tressilian, unwilling that their conversation should return to his own affairs.

"Such a succession of fooleries," said Blount, "as were never seen at Bartholomew-fair. We have had speeches and players, and dogs and bears, and men making monkies, and women moppets of themselves—I marvel the queen could endure it. But ever and anon came in something of 'the lovely light of her gracious countenance,' or some such trash. Ah! vanity makes a fool of the wisest. But, come, let us on to this same gallery-tower,—though I see not what thou, Tressilian, canst do with thy riding-dress and boots."

"I will take my station behind thee, Blount," said Tressilian, who saw that his friend's unusual finery had taken a strong hold of his imagination; "thy goodly size and gay dress will cover my defects."

"And so thou shalt, Edmund," said Blount. "In faith I am glad thou think'st my garb well-fancied, for all Master Wittypate here; for when one does

a foolish thing, it is right to do it handsomely."

So saying, Blount cocked his beaver, threw out his leg, and marched manfully forward, as if at the head of his brigade of pikemen, ever and anon looking with complaisance on his crimson stockings, and the huge yellow roses which blossomed on his shoes. Tressilian followed, wrapped in his own sad thoughts, and scarce minding Raleigh, whose quick fancy, amused by the awkward vanity of his respectable friend, vented itself in jests, which he whispered into Tressilian's ear.

In this manner they crossed the long bridge, or tilt-yard, and took their station, with other gentlemen of quality, before the outer gate of the gallery or entrance-tower. The whole amounted to about forty persons, all selected as of the first rank under that of knighthood, and were disposed in double rows on either side of the gate, like a guard of honour, within the close hedge of pikes and partizans, which was formed by Leicester's retainers, wearing his liveries. The gentlemen carried no arms, save their swords and daggers. These gallants were as gaily dressed as imagination could devise; and as the garb of the time permitted a great display of expensive magnificence, nought was to be seen but velvet and cloth of gold and silver, ribbons, feathers, gems, and golden chains. In spite of his more serious objects of distress, Tressilian could not help feeling, that he, with his riding-suit, however handsome it might be, made rather an unworthy figure among these "fierce vanities," and the rather because he saw that his dishabille was the subject of wonder among his own friends, and of scorn among the partizans of Leicester.

We could not suppress this fact, though it may seem something at variance with the gravity of Tressilian's character; but the truth is, that a regard for personal appearance is a species of self-love, from which the wisest are not exempt, and to which the mind clings so instinctively, that not only the soldier advancing to almost inevitable death, but even the doomed criminal who goes to certain execution, shows an anxiety to array his person to the best advantage. But this is a digression.

It was the twilight of a summer night (9th July, 1575), the sun having for some time set, and all were in anxious expectation of the queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and their numbers were still rather on the increase. A profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen, and barrels of ale set a-broach in different places of the road, had kept the populace in perfect love and loyalty towards the queen and her favourite, which might have somewhat abated had fasting been added to watching. They passed away the time, therefore, with the usual popular amusements of whooping, hallooing, shrieking, and playing rude tricks upon each other, forming the chorus of discordant sounds usual on such occasions. These prevailed all through the crowded roads and fields, and especially beyond the gate of the chase, where the greater number of the common sort were stationed; when, all of a sudden, a single rocket was seen to shoot into the atmosphere, and, at the instant, far-heard over flood and field, the great bell of the castle tolled.

Immediately there was a pause of dead silence, succeeded by a deep hum of expectation, the united voice of many thousands, none of whom spoke above their breath; or, to use a singular expression, the whisper of an immense multitude.

"They come now, for certain," said Raleigh. "Tressilian, that sound is grand. We hear it from this distance, as mariners, after a long voyage, hear, upon their night-watch, the tide rush upon some distant and unknown shore."

"Mass!" answered Blount; "I hear it rather as I used to hear mine own kine lowing from the close of Wittens-westlowe."

"He will assuredly graze presently," said Raleigh to Tressilian; "his thought is all of fat oxen and fertile meadows—he grows little better than one of his own beeves, and only becomes grand when he is provoked to pushing and goring."

"We shall have him at that presently," said Tressilian, "if you spare not your wit."

"Tush, I care not," answered Raleigh; "but thou too, Tressilian, hast turned a kind of owl, that flies only by night; hast exchanged thy songs for screechings, and good company for an ivy-tod."

"But what manner of animal art thou thyself, Raleigh," said Tressilian, "that thou holdest us all so lightly?"

"Who, I?" replied Raleigh. "An eagle am I that never will think of dull earth, while there is a heaven to soar in, and a sun to gaze upon."

"Well bragged, by Saint Barnaby!" said Blount; "But, good Master Eagle, beware the cage, and beware the fowler. Many birds have flown as high, that I have seen stuffed with straw, and hung up to scare kites.—But hark, what a dead silence hath fallen on them at once!"

"The procession pauses," said Raleigh, "at the gate of the chase, where a sibyl, one of the *faticæ*, meets the queen, to tell her fortune. I saw the verses; there is little savour in them, and her grace has been already crammed full with such poetical compliments. She whispered to me during the recorder's speech yonder, at Ford-mill, as she entered the liberties of Warwick, how she was '*per-tæsa barbaræ loquelæ*.'"

"The queen whispered to *him*!" said Blount, in a kind of soliloquy; "Good God, to what will this world come!"

His farther meditations were interrupted by a shout of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous, that the country echoed for miles round. The guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the queen was to advance, caught up the acclamation, which ran like wildfire to the castle, and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the Royal Chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements; but the noise of drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was but faintly heard, amidst the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the park, and, broadening and brightening as it came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led

towards the gallery-tower; and which, as we have already noticed, was lined on either hand by the retainers of the Earl of Leicester. The word was passed along the line, "The queen! The queen! Silence, and stand fast!" Onward came the cavalcade, illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horsemen, which cast a light like that of broad day all around the procession, but especially on the principal groupe, of which the queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a milk-white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity; and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage, you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court, who rode beside her majesty, had taken especial care that their own external appearance should not be more glorious than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnificence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far-famed for splendour and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers, free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host, as of her master of the horse. The black steed which he mounted had not a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the earl at large expense for this royal occasion. As the noble steed chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth, and specked his well-formed limbs as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held, and the proud animal which he bestrode; for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship, and all other exercises belonging to his quality. He was bare-headed, as were all the courtiers in the train; and the red torch-light shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject, to show himself sensible of the high honour which the queen was conferring on him, and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the occasion, some of the earl's personal attendants remarked, that he was unusually pale, and they expressed to each other their fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health.

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and had charge of his lordship's black velvet bonnet, garnished with a clasp of diamonds, and surmounted by a white plume.

He kept his eye constantly on his master ; and, for reasons with which the reader is not unacquainted, was, among Leicester's numerous dependents, he who was most anxious that his lord's strength and resolution should carry him successfully through a day so agitating. For although Varney was one of the few—the very few moral monsters, who contrive to lull to sleep the remorse of their own bosoms, and are drugged into moral insensibility by atheism, as men in extreme agony are lulled by opium, yet he knew that in the breast of his patron there was already awakened the fire that is never quenched, and that his lord felt, amid all the pomp and magnificence we have described, the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. Still, however, assured as Lord Leicester stood, by Varney's own intelligence, that his countess laboured under an indisposition which formed an unanswerable apology to the queen for her not appearing at Kenilworth, there was little danger, his wily retainer thought, that a man so ambitious would betray himself by giving way to any external weakness.

The train, male and female, who attended immediately upon the queen's person, were of course of the bravest and the fairest,—the highest born nobles, and the wisest counsellors, of that distinguished reign, to repeat whose names were but to weary the reader. Behind came a long crowd of knights and gentlemen, whose rank and birth, however distinguished, were thrown into shade, as their persons into the rear of a procession, whose front was of such august majesty.

Thus marshaled, the cavalcade approached the gallery-tower, which formed, as we have often observed, the extreme barrier of the castle.

It was now the part of the huge porter to step forward ; but the lubbard was so overwhelmed with confusion of spirit,—the contents of one immense black-jack of double ale, which he had just drunk to quicken his memory, having at the same time treacherously confused the brain it was intended to clear,—that he only groaned piteously, and remained sitting on his stone seat ; and the queen would have passed on without greeting, had not the gigantic warder's secret ally, Flibbertigibbet, who lay perdu behind him, thrust a pin into the rear of the short femoral garment which we elsewhere described.

The porter uttered a sort of a yell, which came not amiss into his part, started up with his club, and dealt a sound douse or two on each side of him ; and then, like a coach-horse pricked by the spur, started off at once into full career of his address, and by dint of active prompting on the part of Dickie Sludge, delivered, in sounds of gigantic intonation, a speech which may be thus abridged ;—the reader being to suppose that the first lines were addressed to the throng who approached the gateway ; the conclusion, at the approach of the queen, upon sight of whom, as struck by some heavenly vision, the gigantic warder dropped his club, resigned his keys, and gave open way to the goddess of the night, and all her magnificent train.

“ What stir, what turmoil, have we for the nones ?
Stand back, my masters, or beware your bones !

Sirs, I 'm a warder, and no man of straw,
My voice keeps order, and my club gives law.
Yet soft—nay stay—what vision have we here ?
What dainty darling's this ?—what peerless peer ?
What loveliest face, that loving ranks enfold,
Like brightest diamond cased in purest gold ?
Dazzled and blind, mine office I forsake,
My club, my key, my knee, my homage take.
Bright paragon, pass on in joy and bliss ;—
Beshrew the gate that opes not wide at such a sight as this ! ”

Elizabeth received most graciously the homage of the herculean porter, and bending her head to him in requital, passed through his guarded tower, from the top of which was poured a clamorous blast of warlike music, which was replied to by other bands of minstrelsy placed at different points on the castle walls, and by others again stationed in the chase ; while the tones of the one, as they yet vibrated on the echoes, were caught up and answered by new harmony from different quarters.

Amidst these bursts of music, which, as if the work of enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by distant space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance was gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains alone could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth crossed the gallery-tower, and came upon the long bridge, which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower, and which was already as light as day, so many torches had been fastened to the palisades on either side. Most of the nobles here alighted, and sent their horses to the neighbouring village of Kenilworth, following the queen on foot, as did the gentlemen who had stood in array to receive her at the gallery-tower.

On this occasion, as at different times during the evening, Raleigh addressed himself to Tressilian, and was not a little surprised at his vague and unsatisfactory answers ; which, joined to leaving his apartment without any assigned reason, appearing in an undress when it was likely to be offensive to the queen, and some other symptoms of irregularity which he thought he discovered, led him to doubt whether his friend did not labour under some temporary derangement.

Meanwhile, the queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge, than a new spectacle was provided ; for as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed, floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-coloured silken mantle, bound with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ancles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair, she wore a crown or chaplet of artificial misletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony

tipped with silver. Two nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake, renowned in the stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Mountforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets, great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport, which the castle and its environs, which lake or land could afford.

The queen received this address also with great courtesy, and made answer in raillery, "We thought this lake had belonged to our own dominions, fair dame; but since so famed a lady claims it for hers, we will be glad at some other time to have further communing with you touching our joint interests."

With this gracious answer the Lady of the Lake vanished, and Arion, who was amongst the maritime deities, appeared upon his dolphin. But Lambourne, who had taken upon him the part in the absence of Wayland, being chilled with remaining immersed in an element to which he was not friendly, having never got his speech by heart, and not having, like the porter, the advantage of a prompter, paid it off with impudence, tearing off his vizard, and swearing, "Cogs bones! he was none of Arion or Orion either, but honest Mike Lambourne, that had been drinking her majesty's health from morning till midnight, and was come to bid her heartily welcome to Kenilworth Castle."

This unpremeditated buffoonery answered the purpose probably better than the set speech would have done. The queen laughed heartily, and swore (in her turn) that he had made the best speech she had heard that day. Lambourne, who instantly saw his jest had saved his bones, jumped on shore, gave his dolphin a kick, and declared he would never meddle with fish again, except at dinner.

At the same time that the queen was about to enter the castle, that memorable discharge of fire-works by water and land took place, which Master Laneham, formerly introduced to the reader, has strained all his eloquence to describe.

"Such," says the clerk of the council-chamber door, "was the blaze of burning darts, the gleams of stars coruscant, the streams and hail of fiery sparks, lightnings of wild-fire, and flight-shot of thunder-bolts, with continuance, terror, and vehemency, that the heavens thundered, the waters surged, and the earth shook; and for my part,

hardy as I am, it made me very vengeably afraid."*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Nay, this is matter for the month of March,
When hares are maddest. Either speak in reason,
Giving cold argument the wall of passion,
Or I break up the court.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

It is by no means our purpose to describe minutely all the princely festivities of Kenilworth, after the fashion of Master Robert Laneham, whom we quoted in the conclusion of the last chapter. It is sufficient to say, that under discharge of the splendid fire-works, which we have borrowed Laneham's eloquence to describe, the queen entered the base-court of Kenilworth, through Mortimer's Tower, and moving on through pageants of heathen gods and heroes of antiquity, who offered gifts and compliments on the bended knee, at length found her way to the great hall of the castle, gorgeously hung for her reception with the richest silken tapestry, blazing with torches, misty with perfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. At the upper end of the splendid apartment, was a state canopy, overshadowing a royal throne, and beside was a door, which opened to a long suite of apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the queen and her ladies, whenever it should be her pleasure to be private.

The Earl of Leicester having handed the queen up to her throne, and seated her there, knelt down before her, and kissing the hand which she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily mingled with loyal devotion, he thanked her, in terms of the deepest gratitude, for the highest honour which a sovereign could render to a subject. So handsome did he look when kneeling before her, that Elizabeth was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer than there was, strictly speaking, necessity for; and ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near, as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness, that seemed to intimate, she would, if she dared, have made the motion of a slight caress.

She at length raised him, and, standing beside the throne, he explained to her the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation, all of which received her prompt and gracious approbation. The earl then prayed her majesty for permission, that he himself, and the no-

* See Laneham's Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Killingworth Castle, in 1575, a very diverting tract, written by as great a coxcomb as ever blotted paper. The original is extremely rare, but it has been twice reprinted; once in Mr Nichols's very curious and interesting collection of the progresses and public processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i.; and more lately in No. I. of a work termed *Kenilworth Illustrated*, beautifully printed at Chiswick, for Meridew of Coventry and Radclyff of Birmingham, and which, if continued with the same good taste and execution, will be one of the finest antiquarian publications that has lately appeared.

bles who had been in attendance upon her during the journey, might retire for a few minutes, and put themselves into a guise more fitting for dutiful attendance; during which space, those gentlemen of worship (pointing to Varney, Blount, Tressilian, and others), who had already put themselves into fresh attire, would have the honour of keeping her presence-chamber.

"Be it so, my lord," answered the queen; "you could manage a theatre well, who can thus command a double set of actors. For ourselves, we will receive your courtesies this evening but clownishly, since it is not our purpose to change our riding attire, being in effect something fatigued with a journey, which the concourse of our good people hath rendered slow, though the love they have shown our person hath, at the same time, made it delightful."

Leicester, having received this permission, retired accordingly, and was followed by those nobles who had attended the queen to Kenilworth in person. The gentlemen who had preceded them, and were of course dressed for the solemnity, remained in attendance. But being most of them of rather inferior rank, they remained at an awful distance from the throne which Elizabeth occupied. The queen's sharp eye soon distinguished Raleigh amongst them, with one or two others who were personally known to her, and she instantly made them a sign to approach, and accosted them very graciously. Raleigh, in particular, the adventure of whose cloak, as well as the incident of the verses, remained on her mind, was very graciously received; and to him she most frequently applied for information concerning the names and rank of those who were in presence. These he communicated concisely, and not without some traits of humorous satire, by which Elizabeth seemed much amused. "And who is yonder clownish fellow?" she said, looking at Tressilian, whose soiled dress on this occasion greatly obscured his good mien.

"A poet, if it please your grace," replied Raleigh.

"I might have guessed that from his careless garb," said Elizabeth. "I have known some poets so thoughtless as to throw their cloaks into gutters."

"It must have been when the sun dazzled both their eyes and their judgment," answered Raleigh.

Elizabeth smiled, and proceeded, "I asked that slovenly fellow's name, and you only told me his profession."

"Tressilian is his name," said Raleigh, with internal reluctance, for he foresaw nothing favourable to his friend from the manner in which she took notice of him.

"Tressilian!" answered Elizabeth. "O, the Menelaus of our romance. Why, he has dressed himself in a guise that will go far to exculpate his fair and false Helen. And where is Farnham, or whatever his name is—my Lord of Leicester's man, I mean—the Paris of this Devonshire tale?"

With still greater reluctance Raleigh named and pointed out to her Varney, for whom the tailor had done all that art could perform in making his exterior agreeable; and who, if he had not grace, had a sort of tact and habitual knowledge of breeding, which came in place of it.

The queen turned her eye from the one to the

other—"I doubt," she said, "this same poetical Master Tressilian, who is too learned, I warrant me, to remember what presence he was to appear in, may be one of those of whom Geoffrey Chaucer says wittily, the wisest clerks are not the wisest men. I remember that Varney is a smooth-tongued varlet. I doubt this fair runaway had reasons for breaking her faith."

To this Raleigh durst make no answer, aware how little he should benefit Tressilian by contradicting the queen's sentiments; and not at all certain, on the whole, whether the best thing that could befall him, would not be that she should put an end at once by her authority to this affair, upon which it seemed to him Tressilian's thoughts were fixed with unavailing and distressing pertinacity. As these reflections passed through his active brain, the lower door of the hall opened, and Leicester, accompanied by several of his kinsmen, and of the nobles who had embraced his faction, re-entered the castle-hall.

The favourite earl was now appareled all in white, his shoes being of white velvet; his understocks (or stockings) of knit silk, his upper stocks of white velvet, lined with cloth of silver, which was shown at the slashed part of the middle thigh; his doublet of cloth of silver, the close jerkin of white velvet, embroidered with silver and seed-pearl; his girdle and the scabbard of his sword of white velvet with golden buckles; his poniard and sword hilted and mounted with gold; and over all, a rich loose robe of white satin, with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter itself around his knee, completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester; which were so well matched by his fair stature, graceful gesture, fine proportion of body, and handsome countenance, that at that moment he was admitted by all who saw him, as the goodliest person whom they had ever looked upon. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired, but in point of splendour and gracefulness Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency. "We have one piece of royal justice," she said, "to attend to. It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well as in the character of mother and guardian of the English people."

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands; and a similar cold fit came over Varney, whose eyes (seldom during that evening removed from his patron) instantly perceived, from the change in his looks, slight as that was, of what the queen was speaking. But Leicester had wrought his resolution up to the point which, in his crooked policy, he judged necessary; and when Elizabeth added—"It is of the matter of Varney and Tressilian we speak—is the lady here, my lord?" his answer was ready:—"Gracious madam, she is not."

Elizabeth bent her brows and compressed her lips. "Our orders were strict and positive, my lord," was her answer.

"And should have been obeyed, good my liege," answered Leicester, "had they been expressed in the form of the lightest wish. But—Varney, step

forward—this gentleman will inform your grace of the cause why the lady (he could not force his rebellious tongue to utter the words—*his wife*) cannot attend on your royal presence.”

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what indeed he firmly believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for neither did he dare, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife), to wait on her grace.

“Here,” said he, “are attestations from a most learned physician, whose skill and honour are well known to my good Lord of Leicester; and from an honest and devout protestant, a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose house she is at present bestowed, that she now labours under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this castle and the neighbourhood of Oxford.”

“This alters the matter,” said the queen, taking the certificates in her hand, and glancing at their contents—“Let Tressilian come forward.—Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart deeply on this same Amy Robsart, or Varney. Our power, thanks to God and the willing obedience of a loving people, is worth something, but there are some things which it cannot compass. We cannot, for example, command the affections of a giddy young girl, or make her love sense and learning better than a courtier's fine doublet; and we cannot control sickness, with which it seems this lady is afflicted; who may not, by reason of such infirmity, attend our court here, as we had required her to do. Here are the testimonials of the physician who hath her under his charge, and the gentleman in whose house she resides, so setting forth.”

“Under your majesty's favour,” said Tressilian, hastily; and, in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practised on the queen, forgetting, in part at least, his own promise to Amy, “these certificates speak not the truth.”

“How, sir!” said the queen,—“Impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! But you shall have a fair hearing. In our presence the meanest of our subjects shall be heard against the proudest, and the least known against the most favoured; therefore you shall be heard fairly, but beware you speak not without a warrant. Look at these certificates in your own hand, and say manfully if you impugn the truth of them, and upon what evidence.”

As the queen spoke, his promise and all its consequences rushed on the mind of the unfortunate Tressilian, and while it controlled his natural inclination to pronounce that a falsehood which he knew from the evidence of his senses to be untrue, gave an indecision and irresolution to his appearance and utterance, which made strongly against him in the mind of Elizabeth, as well as of all who beheld him. He turned the papers over and over, as if he had been an idiot, incapable of comprehending their contents. The queen's impatience began to become visible.—“You are a scholar, sir,” she said, “and of some note, as I have heard; yet you seem wondrous slow in reading text hand—How say you, are these certificates true or no?”

“Madam,” said Tressilian, with obvious embar-

rassment and hesitation, anxious to avoid admitting evidence which he might afterwards have reason to confute, yet equally desirous to keep his word to Amy, and to give her, as he had promised, space to plead her own cause in her own way—“Madam—Madam, your grace calls on me to admit evidence which ought to be proved valid by those who found their defence upon them.”

“Why, Tressilian, thou art critical as well as poetical,” said the queen, bending on him a brow of displeasure; “methinks, these writings, being produced in the presence of the noble earl to whom this castle pertains, and his honour being appealed to as the guarantee of their authenticity, might be evidence enough for thee. But since thou lists to be so formal—Varney, or rather my Lord of Leicester, for the affair becomes yours (these words, though spoken at random, thrilled through the earl's marrow and bones), what evidence have you as touching these certificates?”

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Leicester,—“So please your majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here in presence, knows Master Anthony Foster's hand and his character.”

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans on usurious interest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he knew him as a wealthy and independent franklin, supposed to be worth much money; and verified the certificate produced to be his handwriting.

“And who speaks to the doctor's certificate?” said the queen: “Alasco, methinks, is his name.”

Masters, her majesty's physician (not the less willingly that he remembered his repulse from Say's Court, and thought that his present testimony might gratify Leicester, and mortify the Earl of Sussex and his faction), acknowledged he had more than once consulted with Doctor Alasco, and spoke of him as a man of extraordinary learning and hidden acquirements, though not altogether in the regular course of practice. The Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, and the old Countess of Rutland, next sang his praises, and both remembered the thin beautiful Italian hand in which he was wont to write his receipts, and which corresponded to the certificate produced as his.

“And now, I trust, Master Tressilian, this matter is ended,” said the queen. “We will do something ere the night is older to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty something more than boldly; but we were no woman had we not compassion for the wounds which true love deals; so we forgive your audacity, and your uncleansed boots withal, which have well nigh overpowered my Lord of Leicester's perfumes.”

So spoke Elizabeth, whose nicety of scent was one of the characteristics of her organization; as appeared long afterwards, when she expelled Essex from her presence, on a charge against his boots, similar to that which she now expressed against those of Tressilian.

But Tressilian had by this time collected himself, astonished as he had at first been by the audacity of the falsehood so feasibly supported, and placed in array against the evidence of his own eyes. He

rushed forward, kneeled down, and caught the queen by the skirt of her robe. "As you are christian woman," he said, "madam, as you are crowned queen, to do equal justice among your subjects—as you hope yourself to have fair hearing (which God grant you) at that last bar at which we must all plead, grant me one small request! Decide not this matter so hastily. Give me but twenty-four hours' interval, and I will, at the end of that brief space, produce evidence which will show to demonstration, that these certificates, which state this unhappy lady to be now ill at ease in Oxfordshire, are false as hell!"

"Let go my train, sir!" said Elizabeth, who was startled at his vehemence, though she had too much of lion in her to fear; "the fellow must be distraught—that witty knave, my godson Harrington, must have him into his rhymes of Orlando Furioso!—And yet, by this light, there is something strange in the vehemence of his demand.—Speak, Tressilian; what wilt thou do if, at the end of these four-and-twenty hours, thou canst not confute a fact so solemnly proved as this lady's illness?"

"I will lay down my head on the block," answered Tressilian.

"Pshaw!" replied the queen. "God's light! thou speak'st like a fool. What head falls in England but by just sentence of English law?—I ask thee, man—if thou hast sense to understand me—wilt thou, if thou shalt fail in this improbable attempt of thine, render me a good and sufficient reason why thou doest undertake it?"

Tressilian paused, and again hesitated; because he felt convinced, that if, within the interval demanded, Amy should become reconciled to her husband, he would in that case do her the worst of offices, by again ripping up the whole circumstances before Elizabeth, and showing how that wise and jealous princess had been imposed upon by false testimonials. The consciousness of this dilemma renewed his extreme embarrassment of look, voice, and manner; he hesitated, looked down, and on the queen repeating her question with a stern voice and flashing eye, he admitted with faltering words, "That it might be—he could not positively—that is, in certain events—explain the reasons and grounds on which he acted."

"Now, by the soul of King Henry," said the queen, "this is either moon-struck madness, or very knavery!—Seest thou, Raleigh, thy friend is far too Pindaric for this presence. Have him away, and make us quit of him, or it shall be the worse for him; for his flights are too unbridled for aught but Parnassus, or Saint Luke's Hospital. But come back instantly thyself, when he is placed under fitting restraint.—We wish we had seen the beauty which could make such havoc in a wise man's brain."

Tressilian was again endeavouring to address the queen, when Raleigh, in obedience to the orders he had received, interfered, and, with Blount's assistance, half led half forced him out of the presence-chamber, where he himself indeed began to perceive his presence did his cause more harm than good.

When they had attained the ante-chamber, Raleigh entreated Blount to see Tressilian safely conducted

into the apartments allotted to the Earl of Sussex's followers, and, if necessary, recommended that a guard should be mounted on him.

"This extravagant passion," he said, "and, as it would seem, the news of the lady's illness, has utterly wrecked his excellent judgment. But it will pass away if he be kept quiet. Only let him break forth again at no rate; for he is already far in her highness's displeasure, and should she be again provoked, she will find for him a worse place of confinement, and sterner keepers."

"I judged as much as that he was mad," said Nicholas Blount, looking down upon his own crimson stockings and yellow roses, "whenever I saw him with these damned boots, which stunk so in her nostrils.—I will but see him stowed, and be back with you presently.—But, Walter, did the queen ask who I was?—methought she glanced an eye at me."

"Twenty—twenty eye-glances she sent, and I told her all how thou wert a brave soldier, and a—But for God's sake, get off Tressilian."

"I will—I will," said Blount; "but methinks this court-haunting is no such bad pastime, after all. We shall rise by it, Walter, my brave lad. Thou saidst I was a good soldier, and a—What besides, dearest Walter?"

"An all unutterable—codshead.—For God's sake begone."

Tressilian, without farther resistance or expostulation, followed, or rather suffered himself to be conducted by Blount to Raleigh's lodging, where he was formally installed into a small truckle-bed, placed in a wardrobe and designed for a domestic. He saw but too plainly, that no remonstrances would avail to procure the help or sympathy of his friends, until the lapse of the time for which he had pledged himself to remain inactive, should enable him either to explain the whole circumstances to them, or remove from him every pretext or desire of farther interference with the fortunes of Amy, by her having found means to place herself in a state of reconciliation with her husband.

With great difficulty, and only by the most patient and mild remonstrances with Blount, he escaped the disgrace and mortification of having two of Sussex's stoutest yeomen quartered in his apartment. At last, however, when Nicholas had seen him fairly deposited in his truckle-bed, and had bestowed one or two hearty kicks, and as hearty curses, on the boots, which, in his lately acquired spirit of foppery, he considered as a strong symptom, if not the cause, of his friend's malady, he contented himself with the modified measure of locking the door on the unfortunate Tressilian; whose gallant and disinterested efforts to save a female who had treated him with ingratitude, thus terminated, for the present, in the displeasure of his sovereign, and the conviction of his friends that he was little better than a madman.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The wisest sovereigns err like private men,
 And royal hand has sometimes laid the sword
 Of chivalry upon a worthless shoulder,
 Which better had been branded by the hangman.
 What then?—Kings do their best—and they and we
 Must answer for the intent, and not the event.

Old Play.

"It is a melancholy matter," said the queen, when Tressilian was withdrawn, "to see a wise and learned man's wit thus pitifully unsettled. Yet this public display of his imperfection of brain plainly shows us that his supposed injury and accusation were fruitless; and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, we remember your suit formerly made to us in behalf of your faithful servant Varney, whose good gifts and fidelity, as they are useful to you, ought to have due reward from us; knowing well that your lordship, and all you have, are so earnestly devoted to our service. And we render Varney the honour more especially, that we are a guest, and we fear a chargeable and troublesome one, under your lordship's roof; and also for the satisfaction of the good old knight of Devon, Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he hath married; and we trust the especial mark of grace which we are about to confer, will reconcile him to his son-in-law.—Your sword, my Lord of Leicester."

The earl unbuckled his sword, and, taking it by the point, presented on bended knee the hilt to Elizabeth.

She took it slowly, drew it from the scabbard, and while the ladies who stood around turned away their eyes with real or affected shuddering, she noted with a curious eye the high polish and rich damasked ornaments upon the glittering blade.

"Had I been a man," she said, "methinks, none of my ancestors would have loved a good sword better. As it is with me, I like to look on one; and could, like the *fata Morgana*, of whom I have read in some Italian rhymes—were my godson Harrington here, he could tell me the passage—even trim my hair, and arrange my head-gear, in such a steel mirror as this is.—Richard Varney, come forth and kneel down. In the name of God and Saint George, we dub thee knight! Be faithful, brave, and fortunate.—Arise, Sir Richard Varney."

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the sovereign who had done him so much honour.

"The buckling of the spur, and what other rites remain," said the queen, "may be finished to-morrow in the chapel; for we intend Sir Richard Varney a companion in his honours. And as we must not be partial in conferring such distinction, we mean on this matter to confer with our cousin of Sussex."

That noble earl, who, since his arrival at Kenilworth, and indeed since the commencement of this progress, had found himself in a subordinate situation to Leicester, was now wearing a heavy cloud on his brow—a circumstance which had not escaped the queen, who hoped to appease his discontent, and to follow out her system of balancing policy by a mark

of peculiar favour, the more gratifying as it was tendered at a moment when his rival's triumph appeared to be complete.

At the summons of Queen Elizabeth, Sussex hastily approached her person; and being asked on which of his followers, being a gentleman and of merit, he would wish the honour of knighthood to be conferred, he answered, with more sincerity than policy, that he would have ventured to speak for Tressilian, to whom he conceived he owed his own life, and who was a distinguished soldier and scholar, besides a man of unstained lineage, "only," he said, "he feared the events of that night"—And then he stopped.

"I am glad your lordship is thus considerate," said Elizabeth; "the events of this night would make us, in the eyes of our subjects, as mad as this poor brain-sick gentleman himself—for we ascribe his conduct to no malice—should we chuse this moment to do him grace?"

"In that case," said the Earl of Sussex, somewhat discountenanced, "your majesty will allow me to name my master of the horse, Master Nicholas Blount, a gentleman of fair estate and ancient name, who has served your majesty both in Scotland and Ireland, and brought away bloody marks on his person, all honourably taken and requited."

The queen could not help shrugging her shoulders slightly even at this second suggestion; and the Duchess of Rutland, who read in the queen's manner that she had expected Sussex would have named Raleigh, and thus would have enabled her to gratify her own wish while she honoured his recommendation, only waited the queen's assent to what he had proposed, and then said, that she hoped, since these two high nobles had been each permitted to suggest a candidate for the honours of chivalry, she, in behalf of the ladies in presence, might have a similar indulgence.

"I were no woman to refuse you such a boon," said the queen, smiling.

"Then," pursued the duchess, "in the name of these fair ladies present, I request your majesty to confer the rank of knighthood on Walter Raleigh, whose birth, deeds of arms, and promptitude to serve our sex with sword or pen, deserve such distinction from us all."

"Gramercy, fair ladies," said Elizabeth, smiling, "your boon is granted; and the gentle squire Lack-cloak shall become the good knight Lack-cloak, at your desire. Let the two aspirants for the honour of chivalry step forward."

Blount was not as yet returned from seeing Tressilian, as he conceived, safely disposed of; but Raleigh came forth, and, kneeling down, received at the hand of the virgin queen that title of honour, which was never conferred on a more distinguished or more illustrious object.

Shortly afterwards Nicholas Blount entered, and, hastily apprized by Sussex, who met him at the door of the hall, of the queen's gracious purpose towards him, he was desired to advance towards the throne. It is a sight sometimes seen, and it is both ludicrous and pitiable, when an honest man of plain common sense is surprised, by the coquetry of a pretty woman, or any other cause, into those frivolous

fopperies which only sit well upon the youthful, the gay, and those to whom long practice has rendered them a second nature. Poor Blount was in this situation. His head was already giddy from a consciousness of unusual finery, and the supposed necessity of suiting his manners to the gaiety of his dress; and now this sudden view of promotion altogether completed the conquest of the newly inhaled spirit of foppery over his natural disposition, and converted a plain, honest, awkward man, into a coxcomb of a new and most ridiculous kind.

The knight-expectant advanced up the hall, the whole length of which he had unfortunately to traverse, turning out his toes with so much zeal, that he presented his leg at every step with its broadside foremost, so that it greatly resembled an old-fashioned knife with a curved point, when seen sideways. The rest of his gait was in proportion to this unhappy amble; and the implied mixture of bashful fear, and self-satisfaction, was so unutterably ridiculous, that Leicester's friends did not suppress a titter, in which many of Sussex's partisans were unable to resist joining, though ready to eat their nails with mortification. Sussex himself lost all patience, and could not forbear whispering into the ear of his friend, "Curse thee! canst thou not walk like a man and a soldier?" an interjection which only made honest Blount start and stop, until a glance at his yellow roses and crimson stockings restored his self-confidence; when on he went, at the same pace as before.

The queen conferred on poor Blount the honour of knighthood with a marked sense of reluctance. That wise princess was fully aware of the propriety of using great circumspection and economy in bestowing those titles of honour, which the Stuarts, who succeeded to her throne, distributed with such imprudent liberality as greatly diminished their value. Blount had no sooner arisen and retired, than she turned to the Duchess of Rutland. "Our woman wit," she said, "dear Rutland, is sharper than that of those proud things in doublet and hose. See'st thou, out of these three knights, thine is the only true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon?"

"Sir Richard Varney, surely—the friend of my Lord of Leicester—surely *he* has merit," replied the duchess.

"Varney has a sly countenance, and a smooth tongue," replied the queen: "I fear me he will prove a knave—but the promise was of ancient standing. My Lord of Sussex must have lost his own wits, I think, to recommend to us, first a madman like Tressilian, and then a clownish fool like this other fellow. I protest, Rutland, that while he sate on his knees before me, mopping and mowing as if he had scalding porridge in his mouth, I had much to forbear cutting him over the pate, instead of striking his shoulder."

"Your majesty gave him a smart *accolade*," said the duchess; "we who stood behind heard the blade clatter on his collar-bone, and the poor man fidgeted too as if he felt it."

"I could not help it, wench," said the queen, laughing; "but we will have this same Sir Nicholas sent to Ireland or Scotland, or somewhere, to rid our court of so antic a chevalier."

The discourse became then more general, and soon after there was a summons to the banquet.

In order to obey this signal, the company were under the necessity of crossing the inner court of the castle, that they might reach the new buildings, containing the large banqueting-room, in which preparations for supper were made upon a scale of profuse magnificence, corresponding to the occasion.

In the course of this passage, and especially in the court-yard, the new-made knights were assailed by the heralds, pursuivants, minstrels, &c., with the usual cry of *Largesse, largesse, chevaliers très hardis!* an ancient invocation, intended to awaken the bounty of the acolytes of chivalry towards those whose business it was to register their armorial bearings, and celebrate the deeds by which they were illustrated. The call was of course liberally and courteously answered by those to whom it was addressed. Varney gave his largesse with an affectation of complaisance and humility. Raleigh bestowed his with the graceful ease peculiar to one who has attained his own place, and is familiar with its dignity. Honest Blount gave what his tailor had left him of his half-year's rent, dropping some pieces in his hurry, then stooping down to look for them, and then distributing them amongst the various claimants, with the anxious face and mien of the parish beadle dividing a dole among paupers.

These donations were accepted with the usual clamour and *vivats* of applause common on such occasions; but as the parties gratified were chiefly dependents of Lord Leicester, it was Varney whose name was repeated with the loudest acclamations. Lambourne, especially, distinguished himself by his vociferations of "Long life to Sir Richard Varney!—Health and honour to Sir Richard!—Never was a more worthy knight dubbed!"—then, suddenly sinking his voice, he added,—"since the valiant Sir Pandarus of Troy,"—a winding up of his clamorous applause, which set all men a laughing who were within hearing of it.

It is unnecessary to say any thing farther of the festivities of the evening, which were so brilliant in themselves, and received with such obvious and willing satisfaction by the queen, that Leicester retired to his own apartment, with all the giddy raptures of successful ambition. Varney, who had changed his splendid attire, and now waited on his patron in a very modest and plain undress, attended to do the honours of the earl's *coucher*.

"How! Sir Richard," said Leicester, smiling, "your new rank scarce suits the humility of this attendance."

"I would disown that rank, my lord," said Varney, "could I think it was to remove me to a distance from your lordship's person."

"Thou art a grateful fellow," said Leicester; "but I must not allow you to do what would abate you in the opinion of others."

While thus speaking, he still accepted, without hesitation, the offices about his person, which the new-made knight seemed to render as eagerly as if he had really felt, in discharging the task, that pleasure which his words expressed.

"I am not afraid of men's misconstruction," he

said, in answer to Leicester's remark, "since there is not—(permit me to undo the collar)—a man within the castle, who does not expect very soon to see persons of a rank far superior to that which, by your goodness, I now hold, rendering the duties of the bed-chamber to you, and accounting it an honour."

"It might, indeed, so have been," said the earl, with an involuntary sigh; and then presently added, "My gown, Varney—I will look out on the night. Is not the moon near to the full?"

"I think so, my lord, according to the calendar," answered Varney.

There was an abutting window, which opened on a small projecting balcony of stone, battlemented as is usual in Gothic castles. The earl undid the lattice, and stepped out into the open air. The station he had chosen commanded an extensive view of the lake, and woodlands beyond, where the clear moonlight rested on the clear blue waters, and the distant masses of oak and elm trees. The moon rode high in the heavens, attended by thousands and thousands of inferior luminaries. All seemed already to be hushed in the nether world, excepting occasionally the voice of the watch (for the yeomen of the guard performed that duty wherever the queen was present in person) and the distant baying of the hounds, disturbed by the preparations amongst the grooms and prickers for a magnificent hunt, which was to be the amusement of the next day.

Leicester looked out on the blue arch of heaven, with gestures and a countenance expressive of anxious exultation; while Varney, who remained within the darkened apartment, could (himself unnoticed) with a secret satisfaction, see his patron stretch his hands with earnest gesticulation towards the heavenly bodies.

"Ye distant orbs of living fire," so ran the muttered invocation of the ambitious earl, "ye are silent while you wheel your mystic rounds, but Wisdom has given to you a voice. Tell me, then, to what end is my high course destined? Shall the greatness to which I have aspired be bright, pre-eminent, and stable as your own; or am I but doomed to draw a brief and glittering train along the nightly darkness, and then to sink down to earth, like the base refuse of those artificial fires with which men emulate your rays?"

He looked on the heavens in profound silence for a minute or two longer, and then again stepped into the apartment, where Varney seemed to have been engaged in putting the earl's jewels into a casket.

"What said Alasco of my horoscope?" demanded Leicester. "You already told me, but it has escaped me, for I think but lightly of that art."

"Many learned and great men have thought otherwise," said Varney; "and, not to flatter your lordship, my own opinion leans that way."

"Ay, Saul among the prophets!" said Leicester—"I thought thou wert sceptical in all such matters as thou couldst neither see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that thy belief was limited by thy senses."

"Perhaps, my lord," said Varney, "I may be at present misled by my wish to find the predictions of astrology true on the present occasion. Alasco says, that your favourite planet is culminating, and that

the adverse influence—he would not use a plainer term—though not overcome, was evidently combust, I think he said, or retrograde."

"It is even so," said Leicester, looking at an abstract of astrological calculations which he had in his hand; "the stronger influence will prevail, and, as I think, the evil hour pass away.—Lend me your hand, Sir Richard, to doff my gown—and remain an instant, if it is not too burthensome to your knight-hood, while I compose myself to sleep. I believe the bustle of this day has fevered my blood, for it streams through my veins like a current of molten lead—remain an instant, I pray you—I would fain feel my eyes heavy ere I closed them."

Varney officiously assisted his lord to bed, and placed a massive silver night-lamp, with a short sword, on a marble table which stood close by the head of the couch. Either in order to avoid the light of the lamp, or to hide his countenance from Varney, Leicester drew the curtain, heavy with entwined silk and gold, so as completely to shade his face. Varney took a seat near the bed, but with his back towards his master, as if to intimate that he was not watching him, and quietly waited till Leicester himself led the way to the topic by which his mind was engrossed.

"And so, Varney," said the earl, after waiting in vain till his dependent should commence the conversation, "men talk of the queen's favour towards me."

"Ay, my good lord," said Varney; "of what can they else, since it is so strongly manifested?"

"She is indeed my good and gracious mistress," said Leicester, after another pause; "but it is written, 'Put not thy trust in princes.'"

"A good sentence and a true," said Varney, "unless you can unite their interest with yours so absolutely, that they must needs sit on your wrist like hooded hawks."

"I know what thou meanest," said Leicester, impatiently, "though thou art to-night so prudentially careful of what thou sayest to me.—Thou wouldst intimate, I might marry the queen if I would."

"It is your speech, my lord, not mine," answered Varney; "but whosoever be the speech, it is the thought of ninety-nine out of an hundred men throughout broad England."

"Ay, but," said Leicester, turning himself in his bed, "the hundredth man knows better. Thou, for example, knowest the obstacle that cannot be over-leaped."

"It must, my lord, if the stars speak true," said Varney, composedly.

"What talk'st thou of them," said Leicester, "that believest not in them or in aught else?"

"You mistake, my lord, under your gracious pardon," said Varney; "I believe in many things that predict the future; I believe, if showers fall in April, that we shall have flowers in May; that if the sun shines, grain will ripen; and I believe in much natural philosophy to the same effect, which, if the stars swear to me, I will say the stars speak the truth. And in like manner I will not disbelieve that which I see wished for and expected on earth, solely because the astrologers have read it in the heavens."

"Thou art right," said Leicester, again tossing himself on his couch—"Earth does wish for it. I have had advices from the reformed churches of Germany—from the Low Countries—from Switzerland, urging this as a point on which Europe's safety depends. France will not oppose it—the ruling party in Scotland look to it as their best security—Spain fears it, but cannot prevent it—and yet thou knowest it is impossible."

"I know not that, my lord," said Varney, "the countess is indisposed."

"Villain!" said Leicester, starting up on his couch, and seizing the sword which lay on the table beside him, "go thy thoughts that way?—thou wouldst not do murder!"

"For whom, or what, do you hold me, my lord?" said Varney, assuming the superiority of an innocent man subjected to unjust suspicion. "I said nothing to deserve such a horrid imputation as your violence infers. I said but that the countess was ill. And countess, and lovely and beloved as she is, surely your lordship must hold her to be mortal? She may die, and your lordship's hand become once more your own."

"Away! away!" said Leicester; "let me have no more of this."

"Good night, my lord," said Varney, seeming to understand this as a command to depart; but Leicester's voice interrupted his purpose.

"Thou 'scapest me not thus, sir fool," said he; "I think thy knighthood has addled thy brains—Confess, thou hast talked of impossibilities, as of things which may come to pass."

"My lord, long live your fair countess," said Varney; "but neither your love nor my good wishes can make her immortal. But God grant she live long to be happy herself, and to render you so. I see not but you may be King of England notwithstanding."

"Nay, now, Varney, thou art stark-mad," said Leicester.

"I would I were myself within the same nearness to a good estate of freehold," said Varney. "Have we not known in other countries, how a left-handed marriage might subsist betwixt persons of differing degree?—ay, and be no hindrance to prevent the husband from conjoining himself afterwards with a more suitable partner."

"I have heard of such things in Germany," said Leicester.

"Ay, and the most learned doctors in foreign universities justify the practice from the Old Testament," said Varney. "And after all, where is the harm? The beautiful partner, whom you have chosen for true love, has your secret hours of relaxation and affection. Her fame is safe—her conscience may slumber securely—You have wealth to provide royally for your issue, should Heaven bless you with offspring. Meanwhile you may give to Elizabeth ten times the leisure, and ten thousand times the affection, that ever Don Philip of Spain spared to her sister Mary; yet you know how she doated on him, though so cold and neglectful. It requires but a close mouth and an open brow, and you keep your Eleanor and your fair Rosamond far enough separate.—Leave me to build you a bower to which no jealous queen shall find a clue"

Leicester was silent for a moment, then sighed, and said, "It is impossible.—Good night, Sir Richard Varney—yet stay—Can you guess what meant Tressilian by showing himself in such careless guise before the queen to-day?—to strike her tender heart, I should guess, with all the sympathies due to a lover, abandoned by his mistress, and abandoning himself."

Varney, smothering a sneering laugh, answered, "He believed Master Tressilian had no such matter in his head."

"How!" said Leicester; "what mean'st thou? There is ever knavery in that laugh of thine, Varney."

"I only meant, my lord," said Varney, "that Tressilian has taken the sure way to avoid heart-breaking. He hath had a companion—a female companion—a mistress—a sort of player's wife or sister, as I believe,—with him in Mervyn's Bower, where I quartered him for certain reasons of my own."

"A mistress!—mean'st thou a paramour?"

"Ay, my lord; who else waits for hours in a gentleman's chamber?"

"By my faith, time and space fitting, this were a good tale to tell," said Leicester. "I ever distrusted those bookish, hypocritical, seeming virtuous scholars. Well—Master Tressilian makes somewhat familiar with my house—if I look it over, he is indebted to it for certain recollections. I would not harm him more than I can help. Keep eye on him, however, Varney."

"I lodged him for that reason," said Varney, "in Mervyn's Tower, where he is under the eye of my very vigilant, if he were not also my very drunken servant, Michael Lambourne, whom I have told your grace of."

"Grace!" said Leicester; "what mean'st thou by that epithet?"

"It came unawares, my lord; and yet it sounds so very natural, that I cannot recal it."

"It is thine own preferment that hath turned thy brain," said Leicester, laughing; "new honours are as heady as new wine."

"May your lordship soon have cause to say so from experience," said Varney; and, wishing his patron good night, he withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Here stands the victim—there the proud betrayer,
E'en as the hind pulled down by strangling dogs
Lies at the hunter's feet—who courteous proffers
To some high dame, the Dian of the chase,
To whom he looks for guerdon, his sharp blade,
To gash the sobbing throat.

The Woodsman.

WE are now to return to Mervyn's Bower, the apartment, or rather the prison, of the unfortunate Countess of Leicester; who for some time kept within bounds her uncertainty and her impatience. She was aware that, in the tumult of the day, there might be some delay ere her letter could be safely conveyed to the hands of Leicester, and that some time more might elapse ere he could extricate him-

self from the necessary attendance on Elizabeth, to come and visit her in her secret bower.—“I will not expect him,” she said, “till night—he cannot be absent from his royal guest, even to see me. He will, I know, come earlier if it be possible, but I will not expect him before night.”—And yet all the while she did expect him; and, while she tried to argue herself into a contrary belief, each hasty noise, of the hundred which she heard, sounded like the hurried step of Leicester on the staircase, hasting to fold her in his arms.

The fatigue of body which Amy had lately undergone, with the agitation of mind natural to so cruel a state of uncertainty, began by degrees strongly to affect her nerves, and she almost feared her total inability to maintain the necessary self-command through the scenes which might lie before her. But, although spoiled by an over-indulgent system of education, Amy had naturally a mind of great power, united with a frame which her share in her father's woodland exercises had rendered uncommonly healthy. She summoned to her aid such mental and bodily resources; and not unconscious how much the issue of her fate might depend on her own self-possession, she prayed internally for strength of body and for mental fortitude, and resolved, at the same time, to yield to no nervous impulse which might weaken either.

Yet when the great bell of the castle, which was placed in Cæsar's Tower, at no great distance from that called Mervyn's, began to send its pealing clamour abroad, in signal of the arrival of the royal procession, the din was so painfully acute to ears rendered nervously sensitive by anxiety, that she could hardly forbear shrieking with anguish, in answer to every stunning clash of the relentless peal.

Shortly afterwards, when the small apartment was at once enlightened by the shower of artificial fires with which the air was suddenly filled, and which crossed each other like fiery spirits, each bent on his own separate mission, or like salamanders executing a frolic dance in the region of the Sylphs, the countess felt at first as if each rocket shot close by her eyes, and discharged its sparks and flashes so nigh that she could feel a sense of the heat. But she struggled against these fantastic terrors, and compelled herself to arise, stand by the window, look out, and gaze upon a sight, which at another time would have appeared to her at once captivating and fearful. The magnificent towers of the castle were enveloped in garlands of artificial fire, or shrouded with tiaras of pale smoke. The surface of the lake glowed like molten iron, while many fire-works (then thought extremely wonderful, though now common), whose flame continued to exist in the opposing element, dived and rose, hissed and roared, and spouted fire, like so many dragons of enchantment sporting upon a burning lake.

Even Amy was for a moment interested by what was to her so new a scene. “I had thought it magical art,” she said, “but poor Tressilian taught me to judge of such things as they are. Great God! and may not these idle splendours resemble my own hoped-for happiness,—a single spark, which is instantly swallowed up by surrounding darkness,—a

precarious glow, which rises but for a brief space into the air, that its fall may be the lower? O Leicester! after all—all that thou hast said—hast sworn—that Amy was thy love, thy life, can it be that thou art the magician at whose nod these enchantments arise, and that she sees them, as an outcast, if not a captive?”

The sustained, prolonged, and repeated bursts of music, from so many different quarters, and at so many varying points of distance, which sounded as if not the Castle of Kenilworth only, but the whole country around, had been at once the scene of solemnizing some high national festival, carried the same oppressive thought still closer to her heart, while some notes would melt in distant and falling tones, as if in compassion for her sorrows, and some burst close and near upon her, as if mocking her misery, with all the insolence of unlimited mirth. “These sounds,” she said, “are mine—mine, because they are HIS; but I cannot say,—Be still—these loud strains suit me not; and the voice of the meanest peasant that mingles in the dance, would have more power to modulate the music, than the command of her who is mistress of all.”

By degrees the sounds of revelry died away, and the countess withdrew from the window at which she had sate listening to it. It was night, but the moon afforded considerable light in the room, so that Amy was able to make the arrangement which she judged necessary. There was hope that Leicester might come to her apartment as soon as the revel in the castle had subsided; but there was also risk she might be disturbed by some unauthorised intruder. She had lost confidence in the key, since Tressilian had entered so easily, though the door was locked on the inside; yet all the additional security she could think of, was to place the table across the door, that she might be warned by the noise should any one attempt to enter. Having taken these necessary precautions, the unfortunate lady withdrew to her couch, stretched herself down on it, mused in anxious expectation, and counted more than one hour after midnight, till exhausted nature proved too strong for love, for grief, for fear, nay even for uncertainty, and she slept.

Yes, she slept. The Indian sleeps at the stake, in the intervals between his tortures; and mental torments, in like manner, exhaust by long continuance the sensibility of the sufferer, so that an interval of lethargic repose must necessarily ensue, ere the pangs which they inflict can again be renewed.

The countess slept then for several hours, and dreamed that she was in the ancient house at Cumnor Place, listening for the low whistle with which Leicester often used to announce his presence in the court-yard, when arriving suddenly on one of his stolen visits. But on this occasion, instead of a whistle, she heard the peculiar blast of a bugle-horn, such as her father used to wind on the fall of the stag, and which huntsmen then called a *mort*. She ran, as she thought, to a window that looked into the court-yard, which she saw filled with men in mourning garments. The old curate seemed about to read the funeral service. Mumblazen, tricked out in an antique dress, like an ancient herald, held aloft a scutcheon, with its usual decorations of skulls,

cross-bones, and hour-glasses, surrounding a coat-of-arms, of which she could only distinguish that it was surmounted with an earl's coronet. The old man looked at her with a ghastly smile, and said, "Amy, are they not rightly quartered?" Just as he spoke, the horns again poured on her ear the melancholy yet wild strain of the mort, or death-note, and she awoke.

The countess awoke to hear a real bugle-note, or rather the combined breath of many bugles, sounding not the mort, but the jolly *réveillée*, to remind the inmates of the Castle of Kenilworth, that the pleasures of the day were to commence with a magnificent stag-hunting in the neighbouring chase. Amy started up from her couch, listened to the sound, saw the first beams of the summer morning already twinkle through the lattice of her window, and recollected, with feelings of giddy agony, where she was, and how circumstanced.

"He thinks not of me," she said—"he will not come nigh me! A queen is his guest, and what cares he in what corner of his huge castle a wretch like me pines in doubt, which is fast fading into despair?" At once a sound at the door, as of some one attempting to open it softly, filled her with an ineffable mixture of joy and fear; and, hastening to remove the obstacle she had placed against the door, and to unlock it, she had the precaution to ask, "Is it thou, my love?"

"Yes, my countess," murmured a whisper in reply.

She threw open the door, and exclaiming, "Leicester!" flung her arms around the neck of the man who stood without, muffled in his cloak.

"No—not quite Leicester," answered Michael Lambourne, for he it was, returning the caress with vehemence,—“not quite Leicester, my lovely and most loving duchess, but as good a man.”

With an exertion of force of which she would at another time have thought herself incapable, the countess freed herself from the profane and profaning grasp of the drunken debauchee, and retreated into the midst of her apartment, where despair gave her courage to make a stand.

As Lambourne, on entering, dropped the lap of his cloak from his face, she knew Varney's profligate servant; the very last person, excepting his detested master, by whom she would have wished to be discovered. But she was still closely muffled in her travelling dress, and as Lambourne had scarce ever been admitted to her presence at Cumnor Place, her person, she hoped, might not be so well known to him as his was to her, owing to Janet's pointing him frequently out as he crossed the court, and telling stories of his wickedness. She might have had still greater confidence in her disguise, had her experience enabled her to discover that he was much intoxicated; but this could scarce have consoled her for the risk which she might incur from such a character, in such a time, place, and circumstances.

Lambourne flung the door behind him as he entered, and folding his arms, as if in mockery of the attitude of distraction into which Amy had thrown herself, he proceeded thus: "Hark ye, most fair Callipolis—or most lovely countess of clouts, and divine duchess of dark corners—if thou takest all

that trouble of skewering thyself together, like a trussed fowl, that there may be more pleasure in the carving, even save thyself the labour. I like thy first frank manner the best—like thy present as little (he made a step towards her, and staggered) as little as—such a damned uneven floor as this, where a gentleman may break his neck, if he does not walk as upright as a posture-master on the tight-rope."

"Stand back!" said the countess; "do not approach nearer to me, on thy peril."

"My peril!—and stand off—Why, how now, madam? Must you have a better mate than honest Mike Lambourne? I have been in America, girl, where the gold grows, and have brought off such a load on't"—

"Good friend," said the countess, in great terror at the ruffian's determined and audacious manner, "I prithee begone, and leave me."

"And so I will, pretty one, when we are tired of each other's company—not a jot sooner."—He seized her by the arm, while, incapable of further defence, she uttered shriek upon shriek. "Nay, scream away if you like it," said he, still holding her fast; "I have heard the sea at the loudest, and I mind a squalling woman no more than a miauling kitten—Damn me!—I have heard fifty or a hundred screaming at once, when there was a town stormed."

The cries of the countess, however, brought unexpected aid, in the person of Lawrence Staples, who had heard her exclamations from his apartment below, and entered in good time to save her from being discovered, if not from more atrocious violence. Lawrence was drunk also, from the debauch of the preceding night; but fortunately his intoxication had taken a different turn from that of Lambourne.

"What the devil's noise is this in the ward?" he said—"What! man and woman together in the same cell? that is against rule. I will have decency under my rule, by Saint Peter of the Fetters."

"Get thee down stairs, thou drunken beast," said Lambourne; "Seest thou not the lady and I would be private?"

"Good sir, worthy sir!" said the countess, addressing the jailer, "do but save me from him, for the sake of mercy!"

"She speaks fairly," said the jailer, "and I will take her part. I love my prisoners, and I have had as good prisoners under my key, as they have had in Newgate or the Compter. And so, being one of my lambkins, as I say, no one shall disturb her in her pen-fold. So let go the woman, or I'll knock your brains out with my keys."

"I'll make a blood-pudding of thy midriff first," answered Lambourne, laying his left hand on his dagger, but still detaining the countess by the arm with his right—"So have at thee, thou old ostrich, whose only living is upon a bunch of iron keys."

Lawrence raised the arm of Michael, and prevented him from drawing his dagger; and as Lambourne struggled and strove to shake him off, the countess made a sudden exertion on her side, and slipping her hand out of the glove on which the ruffian still kept hold, she gained her liberty, and, escaping from the apartment, ran down stairs; while,

at the same moment, she heard the two combatants fall on the floor with a noise which increased her terror. The outer wicket offered no impediment to her flight, having been opened for Lambourne's admittance; so that she succeeded in escaping down the stair, and fled into the Pleasance, which seemed to her hasty glance the direction in which she was most likely to avoid pursuit.

Meanwhile, Lawrence and Lambourne rolled on the floor of the apartment, closely grappled together. Neither had, happily, opportunity to draw their daggers; but Lawrence found space enough to dash his heavy keys across Michael's face, and Michael, in return, grasped the turnkey so felly by the throat, that the blood gushed from nose and mouth; so that they were both gory and obscene spectacles, when one of the other officers of the household, attracted by the noise of the fray, entered the room, and with some difficulty effected the separation of the combatants.

"A murrain on you both," said the charitable mediator, "and especially on you, Master Lambourne! What the fiend lie you here for, fighting on the floor like two butchers' curs in the kennel of the shambles?"

Lambourne arose, and, somewhat sobered by the interposition of a third party, looked with something less than his usual brazen impudence of visage; "We fought for a wench, an thou must know," was his reply.

"A wench! Where is she?" said the officer.

"Why, vanished, I think," said Lambourne, looking around him; "unless Lawrence hath swallowed her. That filthy paunch of his swallows as many distressed damsels and oppressed orphans, as e'er a giant in King Arthur's history: they are his prime food; he devours them body, soul, and substance."

"Ay, ay! it's no matter," said Lawrence, gathering up his huge ungainly form from the floor; "but I have had your betters, Master Michael Lambourne, under the little turn of my forefinger and thumb; and I shall have thee, before all's done, under my hatches. The impudence of thy brow will not always save thy shin-bones from iron, and thy foul thirsty gullet from a hempen cord."—The words were no sooner out of his mouth, when Lambourne again made at him.

"Nay, go not to it again," said the sewer, "or I will call for him shall tame you both, and that is Master Varney—Sir Richard, I mean—he is stirring, I promise you—I saw him cross the court just now."

"Didst thou, by G—?" said Lambourne, seizing on the basin and ewer which stood in the apartment; "Nay, then, element do thy work—I thought I had enough of thee last night, when I floated about for Orion, like a cork on a cask of ale."

So saying, he fell to work to cleanse from his face and hands the signs of the fray, and get his apparel into some order.

"What hast thou done to him?" said the sewer, speaking aside to the jailer; "his face is fearfully swelled."

"It is but the imprint of the key of my cabinet—too good a mark for his gallows-face. No man shall abuse or insult my prisoners; they are my jewels, and I lock them in safe casket accordingly.—And

so, mistress, leave off your wailing—Hey! why surely there was a woman here?"

"I think you are all mad this morning," said the sewer; "I saw no woman here, nor no man neither in a proper sense, but only two beasts rolling on the floor."

"Nay, then I am undone," said the jailer; "the prison's broken, that is all. Kenilworth prison is broken, which was the strongest jail betwixt this and the Welch marches—ay, and a house that has had knights, and earls, and kings sleeping in it, as secure as if they had been in the Tower of London. It is broken, the prisoners fled, and the jailer in much danger of being hanged."

So saying, he retreated down to his own den to conclude his lamentations, or to sleep himself sober. Lambourne and the sewer followed him close; and it was well for them, since the jailer, out of mere habit, was about to lock the wicket after him; and had they not been within the reach of interfering, they would have had the pleasure of being shut up in the turret-chamber, from which the countess had been just delivered.

That unhappy lady, as soon as she found herself at liberty, fled, as we have already mentioned, into the Pleasance. She had seen this richly ornamented space of ground from the window of Mervyn's Tower; and it occurred to her, at the moment of her escape, that, among its numerous arbours, bowers, fountains, statues, and grottoes, she might find some recess, in which she could lie concealed until she had an opportunity of addressing herself to a protector, to whom she might communicate as much as she dared of her forlorn situation, and through whose means she might supplicate an interview with her husband.

"If I could see my guide," she thought, "I would learn if he had delivered my letter. Even if I could see Tressilian, it were better to risk Dudley's anger, by confiding my whole situation to one who is the very soul of honour, than to run the hazard of farther insult among the insolent menials of this ill-ruled place. I will not again venture into an enclosed apartment. I will wait, I will watch—amidst so many human beings, there must be some kind heart which can judge and compassionate what mine endures."

In truth, more than one party entered and traversed the Pleasance. But they were in joyous groups of four or five persons together, laughing and jesting in their own fulness of mirth and lightness of heart.

The retreat which she had chosen, gave her the easy alternative of avoiding observation. It was but stepping back to the farthest recess of a grotto, or namented with rustic work and moss-seats, and terminated by a fountain, and she might easily remain concealed, or at her pleasure discover herself to any solitary wanderer, whose curiosity might lead him to that romantic retirement. Anticipating such an opportunity, she looked into the clear basin, which the silent fountain held up to her like a mirror, and felt shocked at her own appearance; and doubtful at the same time, muffled and disfigured as her disguise made her seem to herself, whether any female (and it was from the compassion of her own

sex that she chiefly expected sympathy), would engage in conference with so suspicious an object. Reasoning thus like a woman, to whom external appearance is scarcely in any circumstances a matter of unimportance, and like a beauty who had some confidence in the power of her own charms, she laid aside her own travelling cloak and capotaine hat, and placed them beside her, so that she could assume them in an instant, ere one could penetrate from the entrance of the grotto to its extremity, in case the intrusion of Varney or of Lambourne should render such disguise necessary. The dress which she wore under these vestments was somewhat of a theatrical cast, so as to suit the assumed personage of one of the females who was to act in the pageant. Wayland had found the means of arranging it thus upon the second day of their journey, having experienced the service arising from the assumption of such a character on the preceding day. The fountain, acting both as a mirror and ewer, afforded Amy the means of a brief toilette, of which she availed herself as hastily as possible; then took in her hand her small casket of jewels, in case she might find them useful intercessors, and retiring to the darkest and most sequestered nook, sate down on a seat of moss, and awaited till fate should give her some chance of rescue, or of propitiating an intercessor.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Have you not seen the partridge quake,
Viewing the hawk approaching nigh?
She cuddles close beneath the brake,
Afraid to sit, afraid to fly.

PRIOR.

IT chanced upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train, who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase, was the princess, for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's maiden queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honoured, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber, ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance, and the gardens which it connected with the castle-yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the earl's arm affording his sovereign the occasional support which she required, where flights of steps, then a favourite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace, and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the queen and the earl—who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, and favoured servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple,

whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting-suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's sylvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *aiguillettes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons; and was, therefore, well suited at once to her height and to the dignity of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting-suit of Lincoln-green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric, which sustained a bugle-horn, and a wood-knife instead of a sword, became its master, as did his other vestments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

The conversation of Elizabeth and the favourite earl has not reached us in detail. But those who watched at some distance (and the eyes of courtiers and court ladies are right sharp), were of opinion that on no occasion did the dignity of Elizabeth, in gesture and motion, seem so decidedly to soften away into a mien expressive of indecision and tenderness. Her step was not only slow, but even unequal, a thing most unwonted in her carriage; her looks seemed bent on the ground; and there was a timid disposition to withdraw from her companion, which external gesture in females often indicates exactly the opposite tendency in the secret mind. The Duchess of Rutland, who ventured nearest, was even heard to aver, that she discerned a tear in Elizabeth's eye, and a blush on her cheek; and still farther, "She bent her looks on the ground to avoid mine," said the duchess; "she who, in her ordinary mood, could look down a lion." To what conclusion these symptoms led is sufficiently evident; nor were they probably entirely groundless. The progress of a private conversation betwixt two persons of different sexes, is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very distinct perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended; and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed, and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court; hounds yelled in their couples; and yeomen, rangers, and prickers, lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view; or, to speak more justly towards him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that have crossed his path by accident. The queen—an accomplished and handsome woman—the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain, had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed; and the earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown

in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

"No, Dudley," said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents—"No; I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her sovereign—No, Leicester, urge it no more—Were I as others, free to seek my own happiness—then, indeed—but it cannot—cannot be.—Delay the chase—delay it for half an hour—and leave me, my lord."

"How, leave you, madam!" said Leicester—"Has my madness offended you?"

"No, Leicester, not so!" answered the queen, hastily; "but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go—but go not far from hence—and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy."

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The queen stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself—"Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—but no—no—Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone."

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless and yet but too successful rival lay concealed.

The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient druidical monuments, called rocking-stones: the finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace towards the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look, and her mien its air of command.

It was then the queen became aware, that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain, which occupied the inmost recess of the twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria; and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented the Naiad whose inspirations gave laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue, or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form which approached her; and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady, who entered the grotto alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the queen knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands, perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned.

VOL. III.

Her dress was of pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian nymph,—such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure, where so many masquers and revelers were assembled; so that the queen's doubt of her being a living form was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and the fixed eye.

Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached within a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so cunningly fashioned, that by that doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality. She stopped, therefore, and fixed upon this interesting object her princely look with so much keenness, that the astonishment which had kept Amy immovable, gave way to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes, and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the sovereign. Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving this slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage; and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness,—“How now, fair nymph of this lovely grotto—art thou spell-bound and struck with dumbness by the charms of the wicked enchanter whom men term Fear?—We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee!”

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate countess dropped on her knee before the queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in the queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

“What may this mean?” she said; “this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel—what wouldst thou have with us?”

“Your protection, madam,” faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

“Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it,” replied the queen; “but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection?”

Amy hastily endeavoured to recal what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers which surrounded her, without endangering her husband; and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter out, “Alas! I know not.”

“This is folly, maiden!” said Elizabeth, impatiently; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant, which irritated her curiosity as well as interested her feelings. “The sick man

must tell his malady to the physician; nor are we accustomed to ask questions so oft without receiving an answer."

"I request—I implore," stammered forth the unfortunate countess,—“I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney.” She choked well nigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the queen.

“What, Varney—Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester!—What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?”

“I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to”——

“To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless,” said Elizabeth. “Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost.—Thou art,” she said, bending on the countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul,—“thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?”

“Forgive me—forgive me—most gracious princess!” said Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen.

“For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?” said Elizabeth; “for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches—Thou didst deceive thine old and honoured father—thy look confesses it—cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it—and married this same Varney.”

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the queen eagerly, with, “No, madam, no—as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would take me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of destruction!”

The queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy’s vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, “Why, God ha’ mercy, woman!—I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman,” she continued; for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practised on her,—“tell me, woman—for by God’s day, I WILL know!—whose wife, or whose paramour art thou! Speak out, and be speedy—Thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth!”

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of the precipice, which she saw but could not avoid, permitted not a moment’s respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, “The Earl of Leicester knows it all!”

“The Earl of Leicester!” said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment—“The Earl of Leicester!” she repeated, with kindling anger,—“Woman, thou art set on to this—thou doest belie him—he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord, and the truest-hearted gentleman in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!”

As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth hastily advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified countess, whom she still held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant queen.

Leicester was at this moment the centre of a splendid group of lords and ladies, assembled together under an arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place, to attend the commands of her majesty when the hunting party should go forward, and their astonishment may be imagined, when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance towards them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly, that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII. mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, emaciated, half-dead, yet still lovely female, whom the queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles, who pressed towards her, under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill. “Where is my Lord of Leicester?” she said, in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around—“Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!”

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveller, he could not gaze upon the smouldering chasm which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with a political affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning, the half uttered, half intimated congratulations of the courtiers upon the favour of the queen, carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning; from which most of them seemed to augur, that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and, supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded to the ears of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-call, that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment seat, “Knowest thou this woman?”

As at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester’s inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride, to burst its strong conjunction,

and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave, and battlement, stood fast; and it was the proud master himself, who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flag-stones on which she stood.

"Leicester," said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, "could I think thou hast practised on me—on me, thy sovereign—on me, thy confiding, thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!"

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swoln with contending emotions, and only replied, "My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers—to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service."

"What! my lords," said Elizabeth, looking around, "we are defied, I think—defied in the castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man!—My Lord Shrewsbury, you are Marshal of England, attach him of high treason!"

"Whom does your grace mean?" said Shrewsbury, much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

"Whom should I mean, but that traitor, Dudley, Earl of Leicester!—Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into instant custody.—I say, villain, make haste!"

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the queen than almost any others, replied bluntly, "And it is like your grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow, for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient."

"Patient—God's life!" exclaimed the queen,—"name not the word to me—thou know'st not of what he is guilty!"

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended sovereign, instantly (and, alas! how many women have done the same) forgot her own wrongs, and her own danger, in her apprehensions for him, and throwing herself before the queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, "He is guiltless, madam—he is guiltless—no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester."

"Why, minion," answered the queen, "didst not thou, thyself, say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?"

"Did I say so?" repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency, and of self-interest; "Oh, if I did, I foully belied him! May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!"

"Woman!" said Elizabeth, "I will know who has moved thee to this; or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace."

As the queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which

would overwhelm him for ever, if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honour, to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence, with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

"What means this saucy intrusion?" said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man altogether overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, my liege, pardon!—or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!"

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly towards Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung back, and, uttering a faint scream, besought of her majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—"but spare," she exclaimed, "my sight and hearing, what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain!"

"And, why, sweetheart?" said the queen, moved by a new impulse; "what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee?"

"Oh, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury—he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him."

"Beshrew me, but I think thou art distraught already," answered the queen.—"My Lord Hunsdon, look to this poor distressed young woman, and let her be safely bestowed, and in honest keeping, till we require her to be forthcoming."

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting, or by some other motive, offered their service to look after her; but the queen briefly answered, "Ladies, under favour, no.—You have all (give God thanks) sharp ears and nimble tongues—our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest.—Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech of her."

"By Our Lady!" said Hunsdon, taking in his strong sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, "she is a lovely child; and though a rough nurse, your grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own lady-birds of daughters."

So saying, he carried her off, unresistingly and almost unconsciously; his war-worn locks and long grey beard mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong square shoulder. The queen followed him with her eye—she had already, with that self-command which forms so necessary a part of a sovereign's accomplishments, suppressed

every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. "My Lord of Hunsdon," she said, "is but a rough nurse for so tender a babe."

"My Lord of Hunsdon," said the Dean of St Asaph, "I speak it not in defamation of his more noble qualities, hath a broad license in speech, and garnishes his discourse somewhat too freely with the cruel and superstitious oaths, which savour both of profaneness and of old papestrie."

"It is the fault of his blood, Mr Dean," said the queen, turning sharply round upon the reverend dignitary as she spoke; "and you may blame mine for the same distemperature. The Boleyns were ever a hot and plain-spoken race, more hasty to speak their mind than careful to chuse their expressions. And by my word—I hope there is no sin in that affirmation—I question if it were much cooled by mixing with that of Tudor."

As she made this last observation she smiled graciously, and stole her eyes almost insensibly round to seek those of the Earl of Leicester; to whom she now began to think she had spoken with hasty harshness upon the unfounded suspicion of a moment.

The queen's eye found the earl in no mood to accept the implied offer of conciliation. His own looks had followed, with late and rueful repentance, the faded form which Hunsdon had just borne from the presence; they now reposed gloomily on the ground, but more—so at least it seemed to Elizabeth—with the expression of one who has received an unjust affront, than of him who is conscious of guilt. She turned her face angrily from him, and said to Varney, "Speak, Sir Richard, and explain these riddles—thou hast sense and the use of speech, at least, which elsewhere we look for in vain."

As she said this, she darted another resentful glance towards Leicester, while the wily Varney hastened to tell his own story.

"Your majesty's piercing eye," he said, "has already detected the cruel malady of my beloved lady; which, unhappy that I am, I would not suffer to be expressed in the certificate of her physician, seeking to conceal what has now broken out with so much the more scandal."

"She is then distraught?" said the queen—"indeed we doubted not of it—her whole demeanour bears it out. I found her moping in a corner of yonder grotto; and every word which she spoke—which indeed I dragged from her as by the rack—she instantly recalled and forswore. But how came she hither? Why had you her not in safe-keeping?"

"My gracious liege," said Varney, "the worthy gentleman, under whose charge I left her, Master Anthony Foster, has come hither but now, as fast as man and horse can travel, to show me of her escape, which she managed with the art peculiar to many who are afflicted with this malady. He is at hand for examination."

"Let it be for another time," said the queen. "But, Sir Richard, we envy you not your domestic felicity; your lady railed on you bitterly, and seemed ready to swoon at beholding you."

"It is the nature of persons in her disorder, so please your grace," answered Varney, "to be ever most inveterate in their spleen against those whom, in their better moments, they hold nearest and dearest."

"We have heard so, indeed," said Elizabeth, "and give faith to the saying."

"May your grace then be pleased," said Varney, "to command my unfortunate wife to be delivered into the custody of her friends."

Leicester partly started; but, making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while Elizabeth answered sharply, "You are something too hasty, Master Varney; we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have license, however, to see her, that if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you—such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple—you may make it up, without further scandal to our court, or trouble to ourselves."

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked towards Leicester, and said, with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, "Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families; and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts. My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive."

Leicester smoothed his brow, as by an effort; but the trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, "that he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so, could commit no injury towards him."

Elizabeth seemed content with this reply, and intimated her pleasure that the sports of the morning should proceed. The bugles sounded—the hounds bayed—the horses pranced—but the courtiers and ladies sought the amusement to which they were summoned with hearts very different from those which had leaped to the morning's réveillée. There was doubt, and fear, and expectation on every brow, and surmise and intrigue in every whisper.

Blount took an opportunity to whisper into Raleigh's ear, "This storm came like a levanter in the Mediterranean."

"*Varium et mutabile*"—answered Raleigh, in a similar tone.

"Nay, I know nought of your Latin," said Blount; "but I thank God Tressilian took not the sea during that hurricano. He could scarce have missed shipwreck, knowing as he does so little how to trim his sails to a court gale."

"Thou wouldst have instructed him?" said Raleigh.

"Why, I have profited by my time as well as thou, Sir Walter," replied honest Blount. "I am knight as well as thou, and of the earlier creation."

"Now, God further thy wit," said Raleigh; "but for Tressilian, I would I knew what were the matter

with him. He told me this morning he would not leave his chamber for the space of twelve hours, or thereby, being bound by a promise. This lady's madness, when he shall learn it, will not, I fear, cure his infirmity. The moon is at the fullest, and men's brains are working like yeast. But hark! they sound to mount. Let us to horse, Blount; we young knights must deserve our spurs."

CHAPTER XXXV.

—Sincerity,

Thou first of virtues! let no mortal leave
The onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way.

HOME'S *Douglas*.

It was not till after a long and successful morning's sport, and a prolonged repast which followed the return of the queen to the castle, that Leicester at length found himself alone with Varney, from whom he now learned the whole particulars of the countess's escape, as they had been brought to Kenilworth by Foster; who, in his terror for the consequences, had himself posted thither with the tidings. As Varney, in his narrative, took especial care to be silent concerning those practices on the countess's health which had driven her to so desperate a resolution, Leicester, who could only suppose that she had adopted it out of jealous impatience, to attain the avowed state and appearance belonging to her rank, was not a little offended at the levity with which his wife had broken his strict commands, and exposed him to the resentment of Elizabeth.

"I have given," he said, "to this daughter of an obscure Devonshire gentleman, the proudest name in England. I have made her sharer of my bed and of my fortunes. I ask but of her a little patience, ere she launches forth upon the full current of her grandeur, and the infatuated woman will rather hazard her own shipwreck and mine, will rather involve me in a thousand whirlpools, shoals, and quicksands, and compel me to a thousand devices which shame me in mine own eyes, than tarry for a little space longer in the obscurity to which she was born.—So lovely, so delicate, so fond, so faithful—yet to lack in so grave a matter the patience which one might hope from the veriest fool—it puts me beyond my patience."

"We may post it over yet well enough," said Varney, "if my lady will be but ruled, and take on her the character which the time commands."

"It is but too true, Sir Richard," said Leicester; "there is indeed no other remedy. I have heard her termed thy wife in my presence, without contradiction. She must bear the title until she is far from Kenilworth."

"And long afterwards, I trust," said Varney; then instantly added, "For I cannot but hope it will be long after ere she bear the title of Lady Leicester—I fear me it may scarce be with safety during the life of this queen. But your lordship is best judge, you alone knowing what passages have taken place betwixt Elizabeth and you."

"You are right, Varney," said Leicester; "I

have this morning been both fool and villain; and when Elizabeth hears of my unhappy marriage, she cannot but think herself treated with that premeditated slight which women never forgive. We have once this day stood upon terms little short of defiance; and to those, I fear, we must again return."

"Is her resentment, then, so implacable?" said Varney.

"Far from it," replied the earl; "for, being what she is in spirit and in station, she has even this day been but too condescending, in giving me opportunities to repair what she thinks my faulty heat of temper."

"Ay," answered Varney, "the Italians say right—in lovers' quarrels, the party that loves most, is always most willing to acknowledge the greater fault. So then, my lord, if this union with the lady could be concealed, you stand with Elizabeth as you did."

Leicester sighed, and was silent for a moment, ere he replied—

"Varney, I think thou art true to me, and I will tell thee all. I do *not* stand where I did. I have spoken to Elizabeth—under what mad impulse I know not—on a theme which cannot be abandoned without touching every female feeling to the quick, and which yet I dare not and cannot prosecute. She can never, never forgive me, for having caused and witnessed those yieldings to human passion."

"We must do something, my lord," said Varney, "and that speedily."

"There is nought to be done," answered Leicester, despondingly; "I am like one that has long toiled up a dangerous precipice, and when he is within one perilous stride of the top, finds his progress arrested when retreat has become impossible. I see above me the pinnacle which I cannot reach—beneath me the abyss into which I must fall, as soon as my relaxing grasp and dizzy brain join to hurl me from my present precarious stance."

"Think better of your situation, my lord," said Varney—"let us try the experiment in which you have but now acquiesced. Keep we your marriage from Elizabeth's knowledge, and all may yet be well. I will instantly go to the lady myself—She hates me, because I have been earnest with your lordship, as she truly suspects, in opposition to what she terms her rights. I care not for her prejudices—She *shall* listen to me; and I will show her such reasons for yielding to the pressure of the times, that I doubt not to bring back her consent to whatever measures these exigencies may require."

"No, Varney," said Leicester; "I have thought upon what is to be done, and I will myself speak with Amy."

It was now Varney's turn to feel, upon his own account, the terrors which he affected to participate solely on account of his patron. "Your lordship will not yourself speak with the lady?"

"It is my fixed purpose," said Leicester; "fetch me one of the livery-cloaks; I will pass the sentinel as thy servant. Thou art to have free access to her."

"But, my lord"—

"I will have no *buts*," replied Leicester; "it shall be even thus, and not otherwise. Hunsdon

sleeps, I think, in Saintlowe's Tower. We can go thither from these apartments by the private passage, without risk of meeting any one. Or what if I do meet Hunsdon? he is more my friend than enemy, and thick-witted enough to adopt any belief that is thrust on him. Fetch me the cloak instantly."

Varney had no alternative save obedience. In a few minutes Leicester was muffled in the mantle, pulled his bonnet over his brows, and followed Varney along the secret passage of the castle which communicated with Hunsdon's apartments, in which there was scarce a chance of meeting any inquisitive person, and hardly light enough for any such to have satisfied their curiosity. They emerged at a door where Lord Hunsdon had, with military precaution, placed a sentinel, one of his own northern retainers as it happened, who readily admitted Sir Richard Varney and his attendant, saying only, in his northern dialect, "I would, man, thou couldst make the mad lady be still yonder; for her moans do sae dirl through my head, that I would rather keep watch on a snow-drift, in the wastes of Catlowdie."

They hastily entered, and shut the door behind them.

"Now, good devil, if there be one," said Varney within himself, "for once help a votary at a dead pinch, for my boat is amongst the breakers."

The Countess Amy, with her hair and her garments disheveled, was seated upon a sort of couch, in an attitude of the deepest affliction; out of which she was startled by the opening of the door. She turned hastily round, and, fixing her eye on Varney, exclaimed, "Wretch! art thou come to frame some new plan of villany?"

Leicester cut short her reproaches by stepping forward, and dropping his cloak, while he said, in a voice rather of authority than of affection, "It is with me, madam, you have to commune, not with Sir Richard Varney."

The change effected on the countess's look and manner was like magic. "Dudley!" she exclaimed, "Dudley! and art thou come at last?" And with the speed of lightning she flew to her husband, clung around his neck, and, unheeding the presence of Varney, overwhelmed him with caresses, while she bathed his face in a flood of tears; muttering at the same time, but in broken and disjointed monosyllables, the fondest expressions which love teaches his votaries.

Leicester, as it seemed to him, had reason to be angry with his lady for transgressing his commands, and thus placing him in the perilous situation in which he had that morning stood. But what displeasure could keep its ground before these testimonies of affection from a being so lovely, that even the negligence of dress, and the withering effects of fear and grief, which would have impaired the beauty of others, rendered hers but the more interesting? He received and repaid her caresses with fondness, mingled with melancholy, the last of which she seemed scarcely to observe, until the first transport of her own joy was over; when, looking anxiously in his face, she asked if he was ill.

"Not in my body, Amy," was his answer

"Then I will be well too.—O Dudley! I have

been ill!—very ill, since we last met!—for I call not this morning's horrible vision a meeting. I have been in sickness, in grief, and in danger—But thou art come, and all is joy, and health, and safety."

"Alas! Amy," said Leicester, "thou hast undone me!"

"I, my lord," said Amy, her cheek at once losing its transient flush of joy—"how could I injure that which I love better than myself?"

"I would not upbraid you, Amy," replied the earl; "but are you not here contrary to my express commands—and does not your presence here endanger both yourself and me?"

"Does it, does it indeed!" she exclaimed, eagerly; "then why am I here a moment longer? Oh, if you knew by what fears I was urged to quit Cumnor Place!—but I will say nothing of myself—only that if it might be otherwise, I would not willingly return *thither*;—yet if it concern your safety"——

"We will think, Amy, of some other retreat," said Leicester; "and you shall go to one of my northern castles, under the personage—it will be but needful, I trust, for a very few days—of Varney's wife."

"How, my Lord of Leicester!" said the lady, disengaging herself from his embraces; "is it to your wife you give the dishonourable counsel to acknowledge herself the bride of another—and of all men, the bride of that Varney?"

"Madam, I speak it in earnest—Varney is my true and faithful servant, trusted in my deepest secrets. I had better lose my right hand than his service at this moment. You have no cause to scorn him as you do."

"I could assign one, my lord," replied the countess; "and I see he shakes even under that assured look of his. But he that is necessary as your right hand to your safety, is free from any accusation of mine. May he be true to you; and that he may be true, trust him not too much or too far. But it is enough to say, that I will not go with him unless by violence, nor would I acknowledge him as my husband, were all"——

"It is a temporary deception, madam," said Leicester, irritated by her opposition, "necessary for both our safeties, endangered by you through female caprice, or the premature desire to seize on a rank to which I gave you title, only under condition that our marriage, for a time, should continue secret. If my proposal disgust you, it is yourself has brought it on both of us. There is no other remedy—you must do what your own impatient folly hath rendered necessary—I command you."

"I cannot put your commands, my lord," said Amy, "in balance with those of honour and conscience. I will NOT, in this instance, obey you. You may achieve your own dishonour, to which these crooked policies naturally tend, but I will do nought that can blemish mine. How could you again, my lord, acknowledge me as a pure and chaste matron, worthy to share your fortunes, when, holding that high character, I had strolled the country the acknowledged wife of such a profligate fellow as your servant Varney?"

"My lord," said Varney, interposing, "my lady is too much prejudiced against me, unhappily, to listen to what I can offer; yet it may please her better than what she proposes. She has good interest with Master Edmund Tressilian, and could doubtless prevail on him to consent to be her companion to Lidcote Hall, and there she might remain in safety until time permitted the developement of this mystery."

Leicester was silent, but stood looking eagerly on Amy, with eyes which seemed suddenly to glow as much with suspicion as displeasure.

The countess only said, "Would to God I were in my father's house!—When I left it, I little thought I was leaving peace of mind and honour behind me."

Varney proceeded with a tone of deliberation, "Doubtless this will make it necessary to take strangers into my lord's counsels; but surely the countess will be warrant for the honour of Master Tressilian, and such of her father's family"—

"Peace, Varney," said Leicester; "by Heaven I will strike my dagger into thee, if again thou namest Tressilian as a partner of my counsels!"

"And wherefore not?" said the countess; "unless they be counsels fitter for such as Varney, than for a man of stainless honour and integrity.—My lord, my lord, bend no angry brows on me—it is the truth, and it is I who speak it. I once did Tressilian wrong for your sake—I will not do him the further injustice of being silent when his honour is brought in question. I can forbear," she said, looking at Varney, "to pull the mask off hypocrisy, but I will not permit virtue to be slandered in my hearing."

There was a dead pause. Leicester stood displeased, yet undetermined, and too conscious of the weakness of his cause; while Varney, with a deep and hypocritical affectation of sorrow, mingled with humility, bent his eyes on the ground.

It was then that the Countess Amy displayed, in the midst of distress and difficulty, the natural energy of character, which would have rendered her, had fate allowed, a distinguished ornament of the rank which she held. She walked up to Leicester with a composed step, a dignified air, and looks in which strong affection essayed in vain to shake the firmness of conscious truth and rectitude of principle. "You have spoke your mind, my lord," she said, "in these difficulties with which, unhappily, I have found myself unable to comply. This gentleman—this person I would say—has hinted at another scheme, to which I object not but as it displeases you. Will your lordship be pleased to hear what a young and timid woman, but your most affectionate wife, can suggest in the present extremity?"

Leicester was silent, but bent his head towards the countess, as an intimation that she was at liberty to proceed.

"There hath been but one cause for all these evils, my lord," she proceeded; "and it resolves itself into the mysterious duplicity with which you have been induced to surround yourself. Extricate yourself at once, my lord, from the tyranny of these disgraceful trammels. Be like a true English gentleman, knight, and earl, who holds that truth is

the foundation of honour, and that honour is dear to him as the breath of his nostrils. Take your ill-fated wife by the hand, lead her to the footstool of Elizabeth's throne—Say, that in a moment of infatuation, moved by supposed beauty, of which none perhaps can now trace even the remains, I gave my hand to this Amy Robsart.—You will then have done justice to me, my lord, and to your own honour; and should law or power require you to part from me, I will oppose no objection—since I may then with honour hide a grieved and broken heart in those shades from which your love withdrew me."

There was so much of dignity, so much of tenderness in the countess's remonstrance, that it moved all that was noble and generous in the soul of her husband. The scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and the duplicity and tergiversation of which he had been guilty, stung him at once with remorse and shame.

"I am not worthy of you, Amy," he said, "that could weigh aught which ambition has to give against such a heart as thine. I have a bitter penance to perform, in disentangling, before sneering foes and astounded friends, all the meshes of my own deceitful policy.—And the queen—but let her take my head as she has threatened."

"Your head, my lord!" said the countess; "because you used the freedom and liberty of an English subject in chusing a wife? For shame; it is this distrust of the queen's justice, this apprehension of danger, which cannot but be imaginary, that, like scare-crows, have induced you to forsake the straightforward path, which, as it is the best, is also the safest."

"Ah, Amy, thou little knowest?" said Dudley; but, instantly checking himself, he added, "Yet she shall not find in me a safe or easy victim of arbitrary vengeance.—I have friends—I have allies—I will not, like Norfolk, be dragged to the block, as a victim to sacrifice. Fear not, Amy; thou shalt see Dudley bear himself worthy of his name. I must instantly communicate with some of those friends on whom I can best rely; for, as things stand, I may be made prisoner in my own castle."

"O, my good lord," said Amy, "make no faction in a peaceful state. There is no friend can help us so well as our own candid truth and honour. Bring but these to our assistance, and you are safe amidst a whole army of the envious and malignant. Leave these behind you, and all other defence will be fruitless—Truth, my noble lord, is well painted unarmed."

"But Wisdom, Amy," answered Leicester, "is arrayed in panoply of proof. Argue not with me on the means I shall use to render my confession—since it must be called so—as safe as may be; it will be fraught with enough of danger, do what we will.—Varney, we must hence.—Farewell, Amy, whom I am to vindicate as mine own, at an expense and risk of which thou alone couldst be worthy. You shall soon hear farther from me."

He embraced her fervently, muffled himself as before, and accompanied Varney from the apartment. The latter, as he left the room, bowed low, and, as he raised his body, regarded Amy with a peculiar expression, as if he desired to know how far

his own pardon was included in the reconciliation which had taken place betwixt her and her lord. The countess looked upon him with a fixed eye, but seemed no more conscious of his presence than if there had been nothing but vacant air on the spot where he stood.

"She has brought me to the crisis," he muttered—"She or I am lost. There was something—I wot not if it was fear or pity, that prompted me to avoid this fatal crisis. It is now decided—She or I must *perish*."

While he thus spoke, he observed, with surprise, that a boy, repulsed by the sentinel, made up to Leicester, and spoke with him. Varney was one of those politicians, whom not the slightest appearances escape without inquiry. He asked the sentinel what the lad wanted with him, and received for answer, that the boy had wished him to transmit a parcel to the mad lady, but that he cared not to take charge of it, such communication being beyond his commission. His curiosity satisfied in that particular, he approached his patron, and heard him say—"Well, boy, the packet shall be delivered."

"Thanks, good master serving-man," said the boy; and was out of sight in an instant.

Leicester and Varney returned with hasty steps to the earl's private apartment, by the same passage which had conducted them to Saintlowe's Tower.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

— I have said

This is an adulteress—I have said with whom :
More, she 's a traitor, and Camillo is
A federary with her, and one that knows
What she should shame to know herself.

Winter's Tale.

THEY were no sooner in the earl's cabinet, than, taking his tablets from his pocket, he began to write, speaking partly to Varney, and partly to himself:—"There are many of them close bounden to me, and especially those in good estate and high office; many who, if they look back towards my benefits, or forward towards the perils which may befall themselves, will not, I think, be disposed to see me stagger unsupported. Let me see—Knollis is sure, and through his means Guernsey and Jersey—Horsey commands in the Isle of Wight—My brother-in-law, Huntingdon, and Pembroke, have authority in Wales—Through Bedford I lead the puritans, with their interest, so powerful in all the boroughs—My brother of Warwick is equal, well nigh, to myself, in wealth, followers, and dependencies—Sir Owen Hopton is at my devotion; he commands the Tower of London, and the national treasure deposited there—My father and grandfather needed never to have stooped their heads to the block, had they thus forecast their enterprises.—Why look you so sad, Varney? I tell thee, a tree so deep-rooted is not easily to be torn up by the tempest."

"Alas! my lord," said Varney, with well acted passion, and then resumed the same look of despondency which Leicester had before noted.

"Alas!" repeated Leicester, "and wherefore alas, Sir Richard? Doth your new spirit of chivalry

supply no more vigorous ejaculation, when a noble struggle is impending? Or, if *alas* means thou wilt flinch from the conflict, thou mayest leave the castle, or go join mine enemies, whichever thou thinkest best."

"Not so, my lord," answered his confidant; "Varney will be found fighting or dying by your side. Forgive me, if, in love to you, I see more fully than your noble heart permits you to do, the inextricable difficulties with which you are surrounded. You are strong, my lord, and powerful; yet, let me say it without offence, you are so only by the reflected light of the queen's favour. While you are Elizabeth's favourite, you are all, save in name, like an actual sovereign. But let her call back the honours she has bestowed, and the prophet's gourd did not wither more suddenly. Declare against the queen, and I do not say that in the wide nation, or in this province alone, you would find yourself instantly deserted and outnumbered; but I will say, that even in this very castle, and in the midst of your vassals, kinsmen, and dependents, you would be a captive, nay a sentenced captive, should she please to say the word. Think upon Norfolk, my lord,—upon the powerful Northumberland—the splendid Westmoreland;—think on all who have made head against this sage princess. They are dead, captive, or fugitive. This is not like other thrones, which can be overturned by a combination of powerful nobles; the broad foundations which support it are in the extended love and affections of the people. You might share it with Elizabeth if you would; but neither yours, nor any other power, foreign or domestic, will avail to overthrow, or even to shake it."

He paused, and Leicester threw his tablets from him with an air of reckless despatch. "It may be as thou say'st," he said; "and, in sooth, I care not whether truth or cowardice dictate thy forebodings. But it shall not be said I fell without a struggle.—Give orders, that those of my retainers who served under me in Ireland be gradually drawn into the main keep, and let our gentlemen and friends stand on their guard, and go armed, as if they expected an onset from the followers of Sussex. Possess the town's-people with some apprehension; let them take arms, and be ready, at a signal given, to master the pensioners and yeomen of the guard."

"Let me remind you, my lord," said Varney, with the same appearance of deep and melancholy interest, "that you have given me orders to prepare for disarming the queen's guard. It is an act of high treason, but you shall nevertheless be obeyed."

"I care not," said Leicester, desperately;—"I care not. Shame is behind me—ruin before me; I must on."

Here there was another pause, which Varney at length broke with the following words: "It is come to the point I have long dreaded. I must either witness, like an ungrateful beast, the downfall of the best and kindest of masters, or I must speak what I would have buried in the deepest oblivion, or told by any other mouth than mine."

"What is that thou sayest, or wouldst say?" replied the earl; "we have no time to waste on words, when the times call us to action."

"My speech is soon made, my lord—would to God it were as soon answered. Your marriage is the sole cause of the threatened breach with your sovereign, my lord, is it not?"

"Thou knowest it is!" replied Leicester. "What needs so fruitless a question?"

"Pardon me, my lord," said Varney; "the use lies here. Men will wager their lands and lives in defence of a rich diamond, my lord; but were it not first prudent to look if there is no flaw in it?"

"What means this?" said Leicester, with eyes sternly fixed on his dependent; "of whom doest thou dare to speak?"

"It is—of the Countess Amy, my lord, of whom I am unhappily bound to speak; and of whom I *will* speak, were your lordship to kill me for my zeal."

"Thou mayest happen to deserve it at my hand," said the earl; "but speak on, I will hear thee."

"Nay, then, my lord, I will be bold. I speak for my own life as well as for your lordship's. I like not this lady's tampering and trickstering with this same Edmund Tressilian. You know him, my lord. You know he had formerly an interest in her, which it cost your lordship some pains to supersede. You know the eagerness with which he has pressed on the suit against me in behalf of this lady, the open object of which is to drive your lordship to an avowal of what I must ever call your most unhappy marriage, the point to which my lady also is willing, at any risk, to urge you."

Leicester smiled constrainedly. "Thou meanest well, good Sir Richard, and would, I think, sacrifice thine own honour, as well as that of any other person, to save me from what thou think'st a step so terrible. But remember,"—he spoke these words with the most stern decision,—"*you speak of the Countess of Leicester.*"

"I do, my lord," said Varney; "but it is for the welfare of the Earl of Leicester. My tale is but begun. I do most strongly believe that this Tressilian has, from the beginning of his moving in her cause, been in connivance with her ladyship the countess."

"Thou speak'st wild madness, Varney, with the sober face of a preacher. Where, or how, could they communicate together?"

"My lord," said Varney, "unfortunately I can show that but too well. It was just before the supplication was presented to the queen, in Tressilian's name, that I met him, to my utter astonishment, at the postern-gate, which leads from the demesne at Cumnor Place."

"Thou met'st him, villain! and why didst thou not strike him dead?" exclaimed Leicester.

"I drew on him, my lord, and he on me; and had not my foot slipped, he had not, perhaps, been again a stumbling-block in your lordship's path."

Leicester seemed struck mute with surprise. At length he answered, "What other evidence hast thou of this, Varney, save thine own assertion?—for, as I will punish deeply, I will examine coolly and warily. Sacred Heaven! but no—I will examine coldly and warily—coldly and warily." He repeated these words more than once to himself, as if in the very sound there was a sedative quality; and again compressing his lips, as if he feared some

violent expression might escape from them, he asked again, "What farther proof?"

"Enough, my lord," said Varney, "and to spare. I would it rested with me alone, for with me it might have been silenced for ever. But my servant, Michael Lambourne, witnessed the whole, and was, indeed, the means of first introducing Tressilian into Cumnor Place; and therefore I took him into my service, and retained him in it, though something of a debauched fellow, that I might have his tongue always under my own command." He then acquainted Lord Leicester how easy it was to prove the circumstance of their interview true, by evidence of Anthony Foster, with the corroborative testimonies of the various persons at Cumnor, who had heard the wager laid, and had seen Lambourne and Tressilian set off together. In the whole narrative, Varney hazarded nothing fabulous, excepting that, not indeed by direct assertion, but by inference, he led his patron to suppose that the interview bewixt Amy and Tressilian at Cumnor Place, had been longer than the few minutes to which it was in reality limited.

"And wherefore was I not told of all this?" said Leicester, sternly. "Why did all of ye—and in particular thou, Varney—keep back from me such material information?"

"Because, my lord," replied Varney, "the countess pretended to Foster and to me, that Tressilian had intruded himself upon her; and I concluded their interview had been in all honour, and that she would at her own time tell it to your lordship. Your lordship knows with what unwilling ears we listen to evil surmises against those whom we love; and, I thank Heaven, I am no make-bate or informer, to be the first to sow them."

"You are but too ready to receive them, however, Sir Richard," replied his patron. "How know'st thou that this interview was not in all honour, as thou hast said? Methinks the wife of the Earl of Leicester might speak for a short time with such a person as Tressilian, without injury to me, or suspicion to herself."

"Questionless, my lord," answered Varney; "had I thought otherwise, I had been no keeper of the secret. But here lies the rub—Tressilian leaves not the place without establishing a correspondence with a poor man, the landlord of an inn in Cumnor, for the purpose of carrying off the lady. He sent down an emissary of his, whom I trust soon to have in right sure keeping under Mervyn's Tower. Killigrew and Lambsbey are scouring the country in quest of him. The host is rewarded with a ring for keeping counsel—your lordship may have noted it on Tressilian's hand—here it is. This fellow, this agent, makes his way to the Place as a pedlar, holds conferences with the lady, and they make their escape together by night—rob a poor fellow of a horse by the way, such was their guilty haste; and at length reach this castle, where the Countess of Leicester finds refuge—I dare not say in what place."

"Speak, I command thee," said Leicester; "speak, while I retain sense enough to hear thee!"

"Since it must be so," answered Varney, "the lady resorted immediately to the apartment of Tressilian, where she remained many hours, partly in

company with him, and partly alone. I told you Tressilian had a paramour in his chamber—I little dreamed that paramour was”——

“Amy, thou wouldst say,” answered Leicester; “but it is false, false as the smoke of hell! Ambitious she may be—fickle and impatient—’tis a woman’s fault; but false to me!—never, never.—The proof—the proof of this?” he exclaimed, hastily.

“Carrol, the deputy marshal, ushered her thither by her own desire, on yesterday afternoon—Lambourne and the warder both found her there at an early hour this morning.”

“Was Tressilian there with her?” said Leicester, in the same hurried tone.

“No, my lord. You may remember,” answered Varney, “that he was that night placed with Sir Nicholas Blount, under arrest.”

“Did Carrol, or the other fellows, know who she was?” demanded Leicester.

“No, my lord,” replied Varney; “Carrol and the warder had never seen the countess, and Lambourne knew her not in her disguise; but, in seeking to prevent her leaving the cell, he obtained possession of one of her gloves, which, I think, your lordship may know.”

He gave the glove, which had the Bear and Ragged Staff, the earl’s impress, embroidered upon it in seed-pearls.

“I do, I do recognize it,” said Leicester. “They were my own gift. The fellow of it was on the arm which she threw this very day around my neck!”—He spoke this with violent agitation.

“Your lordship,” said Varney, “might yet further inquire of the lady herself, respecting the truth of these passages.”

“It needs not—it needs not,” said the tortured earl; “it is written in characters of burning light, as if they were branded on my very eye-balls! I see her infamy—I can see nought else; and,—gracious Heaven!—for this vile woman was I about to commit to danger the lives of so many noble friends—shake the foundation of a lawful throne—carry the sword and torch through the bosom of a peaceful land—wrong the kind mistress who made me what I am—and would, but for that hell-framed marriage, have made me all that man can be! All this I was ready to do for a woman, who trinkets and traffics with my worst foes!—And thou, villain, why didst thou not speak sooner?”

“My lord,” said Varney, “a tear from my lady would have blotted out all I could have said. Besides, I had not these proofs until this very morning, when Anthony Foster’s sudden arrival, with the examinations and declarations which he had extorted from the inn-keeper Gosling and others, explained the manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, and my own researches discovered the steps which she had taken here.”

“Now, may God be praised for the light he has given!—so full, so satisfactory, that there breathes not a man in England who shall call my proceeding rash, or my revenge unjust.—And yet, Varney, so young, so fair, so fawning, and so false! Hence, then, her hatred to thee, my trusty, my well-beloved servant, because you withstood her plots, and endangered her paramour’s life!”

“I never gave her any other cause of dislike, my lord,” replied Varney; “but she knew that my counsels went directly to diminish her influence with your lordship; and that I was, and have been, ever ready to peril my life against your enemies.”

“It is too, too apparent,” replied Leicester; “yet, with what an air of magnanimity she exhorted me to commit my head to the queen’s mercy, rather than wear the veil of falsehood a moment longer! Methinks, the angel of truth himself can have no such tones of high-souled impulse. Can it be so, Varney?—Can falsehood use thus boldly the language of truth?—Can infamy thus assume the guise of purity?—Varney, thou hast been my servant from a child—I have raised thee high—can raise thee higher. Think, think for me! Thy brain was ever shrewd and piercing—May she not be innocent? Prove her so, and all I have yet done for thee shall be as nothing—nothing—in comparison of thy recompense!”

The agony with which his master spoke, had some effect even on the hardened Varney, who, in the midst of his own wicked and ambitious designs, really loved his patron as well as such a wretch was capable of loving any thing; but he comforted himself, and subdued his self-reproaches, with the reflection, that if he inflicted upon the earl some immediate and transitory pain, it was in order to pave his way to the throne which, were this marriage dissolved by death or otherwise, he deemed Elizabeth would willingly share with his benefactor. He, therefore, persevered in his diabolical policy; and, after a moment’s consideration, answered the anxious queries of the earl with a melancholy look, as if he had in vain sought some exculpation for the countess; then suddenly raising his head, he said, with an expression of hope which instantly communicated itself to the countenance of his patron,—“Yet, wherefore, if guilty, should she have periled herself by coming hither? Why not rather have fled to her father’s, or elsewhere?—though that indeed, might have interfered with her desire to be acknowledged as Countess of Leicester.”

“True, true, true!” exclaimed Leicester, his transient gleam of hope giving way to the utmost bitterness of feeling and expression; “thou art not fit to fathom a woman’s depth of wit, Varney. I see it all. She would not quit the estate and title of the wittol who had wedded her. Ay, and if in my madness I had started into rebellion, or if the angry queen had taken my head, as she this morning threatened, the wealthy dower, which law would have assigned to the Countess Dowager of Leicester, had been no bad windfall to the beggarly Tressilian. Well might she goad me on to danger, which could not end otherwise than profitably to her.—Speak not for her, Varney! I will have her blood!”

“My lord,” replied Varney, “the wildness of your distress breaks forth in the wildness of your language.”

“I say, speak not for her!” replied Leicester; “she has dishonoured me—she would have murdered me—all ties are burst between us. She shall die the death of a traitress and adulteress, well merited both by the laws of God and man! And—what is this casket,” he said, “which was even now

thrust into my hand by a boy, with the desire I would convey it to Tressilian, as he could not give it to the countess? By Heaven! the words surprised me as he spoke them, though other matters chased them from my brain; but now they return with double force.—It is her casket of jewels! Force it open, Varney; force the hinges open with thy poniard.”

She refused the aid of my dagger once, thought Varney, as he unsheathed the weapon, to cut the string which bound a letter, but now it shall work a mightier ministry in her fortunes.

With this reflection, by using the three-cornered stiletto-blade as a wedge, he forced open the slender silver hinges of the casket. The earl no sooner saw them give way, than he snatched the casket from Sir Richard's hand, wrenched off the cover, and tearing out the splendid contents, flung them on the floor in a transport of rage, while he eagerly searched for some letter or billet, which should make the fancied guilt of his innocent countess yet more apparent. Then stamping furiously on the gems, he exclaimed, “Thus I annihilate the miserable toys for which thou hast sold thyself, body and soul—consigned thyself to an early and timeless death, and me to misery and remorse for ever!—Tell me not of forgiveness, Varney—She is doomed!”

So saying, he left the room, and rushed into an adjacent closet, the door of which he locked and bolted.

Varney looked after him, while something of a more human feeling seemed to contend with his habitual sneer. “I am sorry for his weakness,” he said, “but love has made him a child. He throws down and treads on these costly toys—with the same vehemence would he dash to pieces this fraillest toy of all, of which he used to rave so fondly. But that taste also will be forgotten when its object is no more. Well, he has no eye to value things as they deserve, and that nature has given to Varney. When Leicester shall be a sovereign, he will think as little of the gales of passion through which he gained that royal port, as ever did sailor in harbour of the perils of a voyage. But these tell-tale articles must not remain here—they are rather too rich vails for the drudges who dress the chamber.”

While Varney was employed in gathering together and putting them into a secret drawer of a cabinet that chanced to be open, he saw the door of Leicester's closet open, the tapestry pushed aside, and the earl's face thrust out—but with eyes so dead, and lips and cheeks so bloodless and pale, that he started at the sudden change. No sooner did his eyes encounter the earl's, than the latter withdrew his head, and shut the door of the closet. This manœuvre Leicester repeated twice, without speaking a word, so that Varney began to doubt whether his brain was not actually affected by his mental agony. The third time, however, he beckoned, and Varney obeyed the signal. When he entered, he soon found his patron's perturbation was not caused by insanity, but by the fellness of purpose which he entertained, contending with various contrary passions. They passed a full hour in close consultation; after which the Earl of Leicester, with an incredible exertion, dressed himself, and went to attend his royal guest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder.

Macbeth.

It was afterwards remembered, that, during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearing of Leicester and of Varney were totally different from their usual demeanour. Sir Richard Varney had been held rather a man of council and of action, than a votary of pleasure. Business, whether civil or military, seemed always to be his proper sphere; and while in festivals and revels, although he well understood how to trick them up and present them, his own part was that of a mere spectator; or if he exercised his wit, it was in a rough, caustic, and severe manner,—rather as if he scoffed at the exhibition and the guests, than shared the common pleasure.

But upon the present day his character seemed changed. He mixed among the younger courtiers and ladies, and appeared for the moment to be actuated by a spirit of light-hearted gaiety, which rendered him a match for the liveliest. Those who had looked upon him as a man given up to graver and more ambitious pursuits, a bitter sneerer and passer of sarcasms at the expense of those who, taking life as they find it, were disposed to snatch at each pastime it presents, now perceived with astonishment that his wit could carry as smooth an edge as their own, his laugh be as lively, and his brow as unclouded. By what art of damnable hypocrisy he could draw this veil of gaiety over the black thoughts of one of the worst of human bosoms, must remain unintelligible to all but his compeers, if any such ever existed; but he was a man of extraordinary powers, and those powers were unhappily dedicated in all their energy to the very worst of purposes.

It was entirely different with Leicester. However habituated his mind usually was to play the part of a good courtier, and appear gay, assiduous, and free from all care but that of enhancing the pleasure of the moment, while his bosom internally throbbed with the pangs of unsatisfied ambition, jealousy, or resentment, his heart had now a yet more dreadful guest, whose workings could not be overshadowed or suppressed; and you might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow, that his thoughts were far absent from the scenes in which he was compelling himself to play a part. He looked, moved, and spoke, as if by a succession of continued efforts; and it seemed as if his will had in some degree lost the promptitude of command over the acute mind and goodly form of which it was the regent. His actions and gestures, instead of appearing the consequence of simple volition, seemed, like those of an automaton, to wait the revolution of some internal machinery ere they could be performed; and his words fell from him piecemeal, interrupted, as if he had first to think what he was to say, then how it was to be said, and as if, after all, it was only by an effort of continued attention that he completed

a sentence without forgetting both the one and the other.

The singular effects which these distractions of mind produced upon the behaviour and conversation of the most accomplished courtier of England, as they were visible to the lowest and dullest menial who approached his person, could not escape the notice of the most intelligent princess of the age. Nor is there the least doubt, that the alternate negligence and irregularity of his manner, would have called down Elizabeth's severe displeasure on the Earl of Leicester, had it not occurred to her to account for it, by supposing that the apprehension of that displeasure which she had expressed towards him with such vivacity that very morning, was dwelling upon the spirits of her favourite, and, spite of his efforts to the contrary, distracted the usual graceful tenor of his mien, and the charms of his conversation. When this idea, so flattering to female vanity, had once obtained possession of her mind, it proved a full and satisfactory apology for the numerous errors and mistakes of the Earl of Leicester; and the watchful circle around observed with astonishment, that, instead of resenting his repeated negligence, and want of even ordinary attention (although these were points on which she was usually extremely rigorous), the queen sought, on the contrary, to afford him time and means to recollect himself, and deigned to assist him in doing so, with an indulgence which seemed altogether inconsistent with her usual character. It was clear, however, that this could not last much longer, and that Elizabeth must finally put another and more severe construction on Leicester's uncourteous conduct—when the earl was summoned by Varney to speak with him in a different apartment.

After having had the message twice delivered to him, he rose, and was about to withdraw, as it were, by instinct—then stopped, and turning round, entreated permission of the queen to absent himself for a brief space upon matters of pressing importance.

"Go, my lord," said the queen; "we are aware our presence must occasion sudden and unexpected occurrences, which require to be provided for on the instant. Yet, my lord, as you would have us believe ourself your welcome and honoured guest, we entreat you to think less of our good cheer, and favour us with more of your good countenance than we have this day enjoyed; for whether prince or peasant be the guest, the welcome of the host will always be the better part of the entertainment. Go, my lord; and we trust to see you return with an unwrinkled brow, and those free thoughts which you are wont to have at the disposal of your friends."

Leicester only bowed low in answer to this rebuke, and retired. At the door of the apartment he was met by Varney, who eagerly drew him apart and whispered in his ear, "All is well!"

"Has Masters seen her?" said the earl.

"He has, my lord; and as she would neither answer his queries, nor allege any reason for her refusal, he will give full testimony that she labours under a mental disorder, and may be best committed to the charge of her friends. The opportunity is therefore free, to remove her as we proposed."

"But Tressilian?" said Leicester.

"He will not know of her departure for some time," replied Varney; "it shall take place this very evening, and to-morrow he shall be cared for."

"No, by my soul!" answered Leicester; "I will take vengeance on him with mine own hand."

"You, my lord, and on so inconsiderable a man as Tressilian!—No, my lord, he hath long wished to visit foreign parts. Let me care for him—I will take care he returns not hither to tell tales."

"Not so, by Heaven, Varney!" exclaimed Leicester.—"Inconsiderable do you call an enemy, that hath had power to wound me so deeply, that my whole after life must be one scene of remorse and misery?—No; rather than forego the right of doing myself justice with my own hand on that accursed villain, I will unfold the whole truth at Elizabeth's footstool, and let her vengeance descend at once on them and on myself."

Varney saw with great alarm that his lord was wrought up to such a pitch of agitation, that if he gave not way to him, he was perfectly capable of adopting the desperate resolution which he had announced, and which was instant ruin to all the schemes of ambition which Varney had formed for his patron and for himself. But the earl's rage seemed at once uncontrollable and deeply concentrated; and while he spoke, his eyes shot fire, his voice trembled with excess of passion, and the light foam stood on his lip.

His confidant made a bold and successful effort to obtain the mastery of him even in this hour of emotion.—"My lord," he said, leading him to a mirror, "behold your reflection in that glass, and think if these agitated features belong to one who, in a condition so extreme, is capable of forming a resolution for himself."

"What, then, wouldst thou make me?" said Leicester, struck at the change in his own physiognomy, though offended at the freedom with which Varney made the appeal. "Am I to be thy ward, thy vassal,—the property and subject of my servant?"

"No, my lord," said Varney, firmly, "but be master of yourself and of your own passion. My lord, I, your born servant, am shamed to see how poorly you bear yourself in the storm of fury. Go to Elizabeth's feet, confess your marriage—impeach your wife and her paramour of adultery—and avow yourself, amongst all your peers, the wittol who married a country girl, and was cozened by her and her book-learned gallant.—Go, my lord—but first take farewell of Richard Varney, with all the benefits you ever conferred on him. He served the noble, the lofty, the high-minded Leicester, and was more proud of depending on him, than he would be of commanding thousands. But the abject lord who stoops to every adverse circumstance, whose judicious resolves are scattered like chaff before every wind of passion, him Richard Varney serves not. He is as much above him in constancy of mind, as beneath him in rank and fortune."

Varney spoke thus without hypocrisy; for, though the firmness of mind which he boasted was hardness and impenetrability, yet he really felt the ascendancy which he vaunted; while the interest which

he actually felt in the fortunes of Leicester, gave unusual emotion to his voice and manner.

Leicester was overpowered by his assumed superiority; it seemed to the unfortunate earl as if his last friend was about to abandon him. He stretched his hand towards Varney, as he uttered the words, "Do not leave me—What wouldst thou have me do?"

"Be thyself, my noble master," said Varney, touching the earl's hand with his lips, after having respectfully grasped it in his own; "Be yourself, superior to those storms of passion which wreck inferior minds. Are you the first who has been cozened in love? The first whom a vain and licentious woman has cheated into an affection, which she has afterwards scorned and misused? And will you suffer yourself to be driven frantic, because you have not been wiser than the wisest men whom the world has seen? Let her be as if she had not been—let her pass from your memory, as unworthy of ever having held a place there. Let your strong resolve of this morning, which I have both courage and zeal enough to execute, be like the fiat of a superior being, a passionless act of justice. She hath deserved death—let her die!"

While he was speaking, the earl held his hand fast, compressed his lips hard, and frowned, as if he laboured to catch from Varney a portion of the cold, ruthless, and dispassionate firmness which he recommended. When he was silent, the earl still continued to grasp his hand, until, with an effort at calm decision, he was able to articulate, "Be it so—she dies!—But one tear might be permitted."

"Not one, my lord," interrupted Varney, who saw by the quivering eye and convulsed cheek of his patron, that he was about to give way to a burst of emotion,—“Not a tear—the time permits it not—Tressilian must be thought of”——

"That indeed is a name," said the earl, "to convert tears into blood. Varney, I have thought on this, and I have determined—neither entreaty nor argument shall move me—Tressilian shall be my own victim."

"It is madness, my lord; but you are too mighty for me to bar your way to your revenge. Yet resolve at least to chuse fitting time and opportunity, and to forbear him until those shall be found."

"Thou shalt order me in what thou wilt," said Leicester, "only thwart me not in this."

"Then, my lord," said Varney, "I first request of you to lay aside the wild, suspected, and half-frenzied demeanour, which hath this day drawn the eyes of all the court upon you; and which, but for the queen's partial indulgence, which she hath extended towards you in a degree far beyond her nature, she had never given you the opportunity to atone for."

"Have I indeed been so negligent?" said Leicester, as one who awakes from a dream; "I thought I had coloured it well; but fear nothing, my mind is now eased—I am calm. My horoscope shall be fulfilled; and that it may be fulfilled, I will tax to the highest every faculty of my mind. Fear me not, I say—I will to the queen instantly—not thine own looks and language shall be more impenetrable than mine.—Hast thou aught else to say?"

"I must crave your signet-ring," said Varney, gravely, "in token to those of your servants whom I must employ, that I possess your full authority in commanding their aid."

Leicester drew off the signet-ring which he commonly used, and gave it to Varney with a haggard and stern expression of countenance; adding only, in a low half-whispered tone, but with terrific emphasis, the words, "What thou doest, do quickly."

Some anxiety and wonder took place, meanwhile, in the presence-hall, at the prolonged absence of the noble lord of the castle; and great was the delight of his friends, when they saw him enter as a man from whose bosom, to all human seeming, a weight of care had been just removed. Amply did Leicester that day redeem the pledge he had given to Varney, who soon saw himself no longer under the necessity of maintaining a character so different from his own, as that which he had assumed in the earlier part of the day, and gradually relapsed into the same grave, shrewd, caustic observer of conversation and incident, which constituted his usual part in society.

With Elizabeth, Leicester played his game as one to whom her natural strength of talent, and her weakness in one or two particular points, were well known. He was too wary to exchange, on a sudden, the sullen personage which he had played before he retired with Varney; but on approaching her, it seemed softened into a melancholy which had a touch of tenderness in it, and which, in the course of conversing with Elizabeth, and as she dropped in compassion one mark of favour after another to console him, passed into a flow of affectionate gallantry, the most assiduous, the most delicate, the most insinuating, yet at the same time the most respectful, with which a queen was ever addressed by a subject. Elizabeth listened, as in a sort of enchantment; her jealousy of power was lulled asleep; her resolution to forsake all social or domestic ties, and dedicate herself exclusively to the care of her people, began to be shaken; and once more the star of Dudley culminated in the court-horizon.

But Leicester did not enjoy this triumph over nature and over conscience, without its being embittered to him, not only by the internal rebellion of his feelings against the violence which he exercised over them, but by many accidental circumstances, which in the course of the banquet, and during the subsequent amusements of the evening, jarred upon that nerve, the least vibration of which was agony.

The courtiers were, for example, in the great hall, after having left the banqueting-room, awaiting the appearance of a splendid masque, which was the expected entertainment of this evening, when the queen interrupted a wild career of wit, which the Earl of Leicester was running against Lord Willoughby, Raleigh, and some other courtiers, by saying—"We will impeach you of high treason, my lord, if you proceed in this attempt to slay us with laughter. And here comes a thing may make us all grave at his pleasure, our learned physician Masters, with news belike of our poor suppliant, Lady Varney—nay, my lord, we will not have you leave us, for this being a dispute betwixt married persons, we do not hold our own experience deep

enough to decide thereon, without good counsel.—How now, Masters, what think'st thou of the runaway bride?"

The smile with which Leicester had been speaking, when the queen interrupted him, remained arrested on his lips, as if it had been carved there by the chisel of Michael Angelo, or of Chantrey; and he listened to the speech of the physician with the same immovable cast of countenance.

"The Lady Varney, gracious sovereign," said Masters, "is sullen, and would hold little conference with me touching the state of her health; talking wildly of being soon to plead her own cause before your own presence, and of answering no meaner person's inquiries."

"Now, the heavens forefend!" said the queen; "we have already suffered from the misconstructions and broils which seem to follow this poor brain-sick lady wherever she comes.—Think you not so, my lord?" she added, appealing to Leicester with something in her look that indicated regret, even tenderly expressed, for their disagreement of that morning. Leicester compelled himself to bow low. The utmost force he could exert was inadequate to the further effort of expressing in words his acquiescence in the queen's sentiment.

"You are vindictive," she said, "my lord; but we will find time and place to punish you. But once more to this same trouble-mirth, this Lady Varney—What of her health, Masters?"

"She is sullen, madam, as I already said," replied Masters, "and refuses to answer interrogatories, or be amenable to the authority of the mediciner. I conceive her to be possessed with a delirium, which I incline to term rather *hypochondria* than *phrenesis*; and I think she were best cared for by her husband in his own house, and removed from all this bustle of pageants, which disturbs her weak brain with the most fantastic phantoms. She drops hints as if she were some great person in disguise—some countess or princess perchance. God help them! such are the hallucinations of these infirm persons."

"Nay then," said the queen, "away with her with all speed. Let Varney care for her with fitting humanity; but let them rid the castle of her forthwith. She will think herself lady of all, I warrant you. It is pity so fair a form, however, should have an infirm understanding—What think you, my lord?"

"It is pity indeed," said the earl, repeating the words like a task which was set him.

"But perhaps," said Elizabeth, "you do not join with us in our opinion of her beauty; and indeed we have known men prefer a statelier and more Juno-like form, to that drooping fragile one, that hung its head like a broken lily. Ay, men are tyrants, my lord, who esteem the animation of the strife above the triumph of an unresisting conquest; and, like sturdy champions, love best those women who can wage contest with them.—I could think with you, Rutland, that give my Lord of Leicester such a piece of painted wax for a bride, he would have wished her dead ere the end of the honey-moon."

As she said this, she looked on Leicester so expressively, that, while his heart revolted against the egregious falsehood, he did himself so much violence

as to reply in a whisper, that Leicester's love was more lowly than her majesty deemed, since it was settled where he could never command, but must ever obey.

The queen blushed, and bid him be silent; yet looked as if she expected that he would not obey her commands. But at that moment the flourish of trumpets and kettle-drums from a high balcony which overlooked the hall, announced the entrance of the masquers, and relieved Leicester from the horrible state of constraint and dissimulation in which the result of his own duplicity had placed him.

The masque which entered consisted of four separate bands, which followed each other at brief intervals, each consisting of six principal persons and as many torch-bearers, and each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied.

The aboriginal Britons, who first entered, were ushered in by two ancient druids, whose hoary hair was crowned with a chaplet of oak, and who bore in their hands branches of mistletoe. The masquers who followed these venerable figures were succeeded by two bards, arrayed in white, and bearing harps, which they occasionally touched, singing at the same time certain stanzas of an ancient hymn to Belus, or the Sun. The aboriginal Britons had been selected from amongst the tallest and most robust young gentlemen in attendance on the court. Their masques were accommodated with long shaggy beards and hair; their vestments were of the hides of wolves and bears; while their legs, arms, and the upper parts of their bodies, being sheathed in flesh-coloured silk, on which were traced in grotesque lines representations of the heavenly bodies, and of animals and other terrestrial objects—gave them the lively appearance of our painted ancestors, whose freedom was first trenched upon by the Romans.

The sons of Rome, who came to civilize as well as to conquer, were next produced before the princely assembly; and the manager of the revels had correctly imitated the high crest and military habits of that celebrated people; accommodating them with the light yet strong buckler, and the short two-edged sword, the use of which had made them victors of the world. The Roman eagles were borne before them by two standard-bearers, who recited a hymn to Mars; and the classical warriors followed, with the grave and haughty step of men who aspired at universal conquest.

The third quadrille represented the Saxons, clad in the bear-skins which they had brought with them from the German forests, and bearing in their hands the redoubtable battle-axes which made such havoc among the natives of Britain. They were preceded by two scalds, who chaunted the praises of Odin.

Last came the knightly Normans, in their mail shirts and hoods of steel, with all the panoply of chivalry, and marshaled by two minstrels, who sung of war and ladies' love.

These four bands entered the spacious hall with the utmost order; a short pause being made, that the spectators might satisfy their curiosity as to each quadrille before the appearance of the next. They then marched completely round the hall, in order the

more fully to display themselves; and at length ranging their torch-bearers behind them, drew up in their several ranks, on the two opposite sides of the hall—so that the Romans confronting the Britons, and the Saxons the Normans, seemed to look on each other with eyes of wonder, which presently appeared to kindle into anger, expressed by menacing gestures. At the burst of a strain of martial music from the gallery, the masquers drew their swords on all sides, and advanced against each other in the measured steps of a sort of Pyrrhic or military dance, clashing their swords against their adversaries' shields, clattering them against their blades as they passed each other in the progress of the dance. It was a very pleasant spectacle to see how the various bands, preserving regularity amid motions which seemed to be totally irregular, mixed together, and then, disengaging themselves, resumed each their own original rank as the music varied.

In this symbolical dance was represented the conflicts which had taken place among the various nations which had anciently inhabited Britain.

At length, after many mazy evolutions, which afforded great pleasure to the spectators, the sound of a loud-voiced trumpet was heard, as if it blew for instant battle, or for victory won. The masquers instantly ceased their mimic strife, and collecting themselves under their original leaders, or presenters, for such was the appropriate phrase,—seemed to share the anxious expectation which the spectators experienced concerning what was next to appear.

The doors of the hall were thrown wide, and no less a person entered than the fiend-born Merlin, dressed in a strange and mystical attire, suited to his ambiguous birth and magical power. About him and behind him fluttered or gamboled many extraordinary forms, intended to represent the spirits who waited to do his powerful bidding; and so much did this part of the pageant interest the menials and others of the lower class then in the castle, that many of them forgot even the reverence due to the queen's presence, so far as to thrust themselves into the lower part of the hall.

The Earl of Leicester, seeing his officers had some difficulty to repel these intruders, without more disturbance than was fitting where the queen was in presence, arose and went himself to the bottom of the hall; Elizabeth, at the same time, with her usual feeling for the common people, requesting that they might be permitted to remain undisturbed to witness the pageant. Leicester went under this pretext; but his real motive was to gain a moment to himself, and to relieve his mind, were it but for one instant, from the dreadful task of hiding, under the guise of gaiety and gallantry, the lacerating pangs of shame, anger, remorse, and thirst for vengeance. He imposed silence by his look and sign upon the vulgar crowd, at the lower end of the apartment; but, instead of instantly returning to wait on her majesty, he wrapped his cloak around him, and mixing with the crowd, stood in some degree an undistinguished spectator of the progress of the masque.

Merlin having entered and advanced into the midst of the hall, summoned the presenters of the

contending bands around him by a wave of his magical rod, and announced to them, in a poetical speech, that the Isle of Britain was now commanded by a royal maiden, to whom it was the will of fate that they should all do homage, and request of her to pronounce on the various pretensions which each set forth to be esteemed the pre-eminent stock, from which the present natives, the happy subjects of that angelical princess, derived their lineage.

In obedience to this mandate, the bands, each moving to solemn music, passed in succession before Elizabeth; doing her, as they passed, each after the fashion of the people whom they represented, the lowest and most devotional homage, which she returned with the same gracious courtesy that had marked her whole conduct since she came to Kenilworth.

The presenters of the several masques, or quadrilles, then alleged, each in behalf of his own troop, the reasons which they had for claiming pre-eminence over the rest; and when they had been all heard in turn, she returned them this gracious answer: "That she was sorry she was not better qualified to decide upon the doubtful question which had been propounded to her by the direction of the famous Merlin; but that it seemed to her that no single one of these celebrated nations could claim pre-eminence over the others, as having most contributed to form the Englishman of her own time—who seemed to her to derive from each of them some worthy attribute of his character. Thus," she said, "the Englishman had from the ancient Briton his bold and tameless spirit of freedom,—from the Roman his disciplined courage in war, with his love of letters and civilization in time of peace,—from the Saxon his wise and equitable laws,—and from the chivalrous Norman his love of honour and courtesy, with his generous desire for glory."

Merlin answered with readiness, that it did indeed require that so many choice qualities should meet in the English, as might render them in some measure the muster of the perfections of other nations, since that alone could render them in some degree deserving of the blessings they enjoyed under the reign of England's Elizabeth.

The music then sounded, and the quadrilles, together with Merlin and his assistants, had begun to remove from the crowded hall, when Leicester, who was, as we have mentioned, stationed for the moment near the bottom of the hall, and consequently engaged in some degree in the crowd, felt himself pulled by the cloak, while a voice whispered in his ear, "I do desire some instant conference with you."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?

Macbeth.

"I DESIRE some conference with you." The words were simple in themselves, but Lord Leicester was in that alarmed and feverish state of mind, when the most ordinary occurrences seem fraught with alarming import; and he turned hastily round to survey the person by whom they had been spoken.

There was nothing remarkable in the speaker's

appearance, which consisted of a black silk doublet and short mantle, with a black vizard on his face; for it appeared he had been among the crowd of masques who had thronged into the hall in the retinue of Merlin, though he did not wear any of the extravagant disguises by which most of them were distinguished.

"Who are you, or what do you want with me?" said Leicester; not without betraying, by his accents, the hurried state of his spirits.

"No evil, my lord," answered the masque, "but much good and honour, if you will rightly understand my purpose. But I must speak with you more privately."

"I can speak with no nameless stranger," answered Leicester, dreading he knew not precisely what from the request of the stranger; "and those who are known to me, must seek another and a fitter time to ask an interview."

He would have hurried away, but the masque still detained him.

"Those who talk to your lordship of what your own honour demands have a right over your time, whatever occupations you may lay aside in order to indulge them."

"How! my honour? Who dare impeach it?" said Leicester.

"Your own conduct alone can furnish grounds for accusing it, my lord; and it is that topic on which I would speak with you."

"You are insolent," said Leicester, "and abuse the hospitable license of the time, which prevents me from having you punished. I demand your name?"

"Edmund Tressilian of Cornwall," answered the masque. "My tongue has been bound by a promise for four-and-twenty hours—the space is passed,—I now speak, and do your lordship the justice to address myself first to you."

The thrill of astonishment which had penetrated to Leicester's very heart at hearing that name pronounced by the voice of the man he most detested, and by whom he conceived himself so deeply injured, at first rendered him immovable, but instantly gave way to such a thirst for revenge as the pilgrim in the desert feels for the water-brooks. He had but sense and self-government enough left to prevent his stabbing to the heart the audacious villain, who, after the ruin he had brought upon him, dared, with such unmoved assurance, thus to practise upon him farther. Determined to suppress for the moment every symptom of agitation, in order to perceive the full scope of Tressilian's purpose, as well as to secure his own vengeance, he answered, in a tone so altered by restrained passion as scarce to be intelligible,—“And what does Master Edmund Tressilian require at my hand?”

"Justice, my lord," answered Tressilian, calmly, but firmly.

"Justice," said Leicester, "all men are entitled to—You, Master Tressilian, are peculiarly so, and be assured you shall have it."

"I expect nothing less from your nobleness," answered Tressilian: "but time presses, and I must speak with you to-night—May I wait on you in your chamber?"

"No!" answered Leicester, sternly; "not under a roof, and that roof mine own—We will meet under the free cope of heaven."

"You are discomposed or displeased, my lord," replied Tressilian; "yet there is no occasion for distemperature. The place is equal to me, so you allow me one half hour of your time uninterrupted."

"A shorter time will, I trust, suffice," answered Leicester—"Meet me in the Pleasance, when the queen has retired to her chamber."

"Enough," said Tressilian, and withdrew; while a sort of rapture seemed for the moment to occupy the mind of Leicester.

"Heaven," he said, "is at last favourable to me, and has put within my reach the wretch who has branded me with this deep ignominy—who has inflicted on me this cruel agony. I will blame fate no more, since I am afforded the means of tracing the wiles by which he means still farther to practise on me, and then of at once convicting and punishing his villany. To my task—to my task!—I will not sink under it now, since midnight, at farthest, will bring me vengeance."

While these reflections thronged through Leicester's mind, he again made his way amid the obsequious crowd, which divided to give him passage, and resumed his place, envied and admired, beside the person of his sovereign. But, could the bosom of him whom they universally envied, have been laid open before the inhabitants of that crowded hall, with all its dark thoughts of guilty ambition, blighted affection, deep vengeance, and conscious sense of meditated cruelty, crossing each other like spectres in the circle of some foul enchantress; which of them, from the most ambitious noble in the courtly circle, down to the most wretched menial who lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change characters with the favourite of Elizabeth, and the lord of Kenilworth!

New tortures awaited him as soon as he had rejoined Elizabeth.

"You come in time, my lord," she said, "to decide a dispute between us ladies. Here has Sir Richard Varney asked our permission to depart from the castle with his infirm lady, having, as he tells us, your lordship's consent to his absence so he can obtain ours. Certes, we have no will to withhold him from the affectionate charge of this poor young person—but you are to know, that Sir Richard Varney hath this day shown himself so much captivated with these ladies of ours, that here is our Duchess of Rutland says, he will carry his poor insane wife no farther than the lake, plunge her in, to tenant the crystal palaces that the enchanted nymph told us of; and return a jolly widower, to dry his tears, and to make up the loss among our train. How say you, my lord?—We have seen Varney under two or three different guises—you know what are his proper attributes—think you he is capable of playing his lady such a knave's trick?"

Leicester was confounded, but the danger was urgent, and a reply absolutely necessary. "The ladies," he said, "think too lightly of one of their own sex, in supposing she could deserve such a fate, or too ill of ours, to think it could be inflicted otherwise."

"Hear him, my ladies," said Elizabeth; "like all his sex, he would excuse their cruelty by imputing fickleness to us."

"Say not *us*, madam," replied the earl; "we say that meaner women, like the lesser lights of heaven, have revolutions and phases; but who shall impute mutability to the sun, or to Elizabeth?"

The discourse presently afterwards assumed a less perilous tendency; and Leicester continued to support his part in it with spirit, at whatever expense of mental agony. So pleasing did it seem to Elizabeth, that the castle-bell had sounded midnight ere she retired from the company; a circumstance unusual in her quiet and regular habits of disposing of time. Her departure was of course the signal for breaking up the company, who dispersed to their several places of repose, to dream over the pastimes of the day, or to anticipate those of the morrow.

The unfortunate lord of the castle, and founder of the proud festival, retired to far different thoughts. His direction to the valet who attended him, was to send Varney instantly to his apartment. The messenger returned after some delay, and informed him that an hour had elapsed since Sir Richard Varney had left the castle by the postern-gate, with three other persons, one of whom was transported in a horse-litter."

"How came he to leave the castle after the watch was set?" said Leicester; "I thought he went not till day-break."

"He gave satisfactory reasons, as I understand," said the domestic, "to the guard, and, as I hear, showed your lordship's signet"—

"True—true," said the earl; "yet he has been hasty—Do any of his attendants remain behind?"

"Michael Lambourne, my lord," said the valet, "was not to be found when Sir Richard Varney departed, and his master was much incensed at his absence. I saw him but now saddling his horse to gallop after his master."

"Bid him come hither instantly," said Leicester; "I have a message to his master."

The servant left the apartment, and Leicester traversed it for some time in deep meditation—"Varney is over zealous," he said, "over pressing—He loves me, I think—but he hath his own ends to serve, and he is inexorable in pursuit of them. If I rise he rises, and he hath shown himself already but too eager to rid me of this obstacle which seems to stand betwixt me and sovereignty. Yet I will not stoop to bear this disgrace. She shall be punished, but it shall be more advisedly. I already feel, even in anticipation, that over-haste would light the flames of hell in my bosom. No—one victim is enough at once, and that victim already waits me."

He seized upon writing materials, and hastily traced these words:—"Sir Richard Varney, we have resolved to defer the matter entrusted to your care, and strictly command you to proceed no farther in relation to our countess, until our further order. We also command your instant return to Kenilworth, as soon as you have safely bestowed that with which you are entrusted. But if the safe-placing of your present charge shall detain you longer than we think for, we command you, in that case, to send back our signet-ring by a trusty and speedy

messenger, we having present need of the same. And requiring your strict obedience in these things, and commending you to God's keeping, we rest your assured good friend and master.

"R. LEICESTER

"Given at our Castle of Kenilworth, the tenth of July, in the year of Salvation one thousand five hundred and seventy-five."

As Leicester had finished and sealed this mandate, Michael Lambourne, booted up to mid thigh, having his riding-cloak girthed around him with a broad belt, and a felt-cap on his head, like that of a courier, entered his apartment, ushered in by the valet.

"What is thy capacity of service?" said the earl.

"Equerry to your lordship's master of the horse," answered Lambourne, with his customary assurance.

"Tie up thy saucy tongue, sir," said Leicester; "the jests that may suit Sir Richard Varney's presence suit not mine. How soon wilt thou overtake thy master?"

"In one hour's riding, my lord, if man and horse hold good," said Lambourne, with an instant alteration of demeanour, from an approach to familiarity to the deepest respect. The earl measured him with his eye from top to toe.

"I have heard of thee," he said; "men say thou art a prompt fellow in thy service, but too much given to brawling and to wassail to be trusted with things of moment."

"My lord," said Lambourne, "I have been soldier, sailor, traveller, and adventurer; and these are all trades in which men enjoy to-day, because they have no surety of to-morrow. But though I may misuse mine own leisure, I have never neglected the duty I owe my master."

"See that it be so in this instance," said Leicester, "and it shall do thee good. Deliver this letter speedily and carefully into Sir Richard Varney's hands."

"Does my commission reach no farther?" said Lambourne.

"No," answered Leicester, "but it deeply concerns me that it be carefully as well as hastily executed."

"I will spare neither care nor horse-flesh," answered Lambourne, and immediately took his leave. "So, this is the end of my private audience, from which I hoped so much," he muttered to himself, as he went through the long gallery, and down the back staircase. "Cogsbones! I thought the earl had wanted a cast of mine office in some secret intrigue, and it all ends in carrying a letter! Well, his pleasure shall be done, however, and as his lordship well says, it may do me good another time. The child must creep ere he walk, and so must your infant courtier. I will have a look into this letter, however, which he hath sealed so sloven-like."—Having accomplished this, he clapped his hands together in ecstasy, exclaiming, "The countess—the countess!—I have the secret that shall make or mar me.—But come forth, Bayard," he added,

leading his horse into the court-yard, "for your flanks and my spurs must be presently acquainted."

Lambourne mounted accordingly, and left the castle by the postern-gate, where his free passage was permitted, in consequence of a message to that effect left by Sir Richard Varney.

As soon as Lambourne and the valet had left the apartment, Leicester proceeded to change his dress for a very plain one, threw his mantle around him, and taking a lamp in his hand, went by the private passage of communication to a small secret postern-door which opened into the court-yard, near to the entrance of the Pleasance. His reflections were of a more calm and determined character than they had been at any late period; and he endeavoured to claim, even in his own eyes, the character of a man more sinned against than sinning.

"I have suffered the deepest injury," such was the tenor of his meditations, "yet I have restricted the instant revenge which was in my power, and have limited it to that which is manly and noble. But shall the union which this false woman has this day disgraced, remain an abiding fetter on me, to check me in the noble career to which my destinies invite me? No—there are other means of disengaging such ties, without unloosing the cords of life. In the sight of God I am no longer bound by the union she has broken. Kingdoms shall divide us—oceans roll betwixt us; and their waves, whose abysses have swallowed whole navies, shall be the sole depositaries of the deadly mystery."

By such a train of argument did Leicester labour to reconcile his conscience to the prosecution of plans of vengeance, so hastily adopted; and of schemes of ambition, which had become so woven in with every purpose and action of his life, that he was incapable of the effort of relinquishing them; until his revenge appeared to him to wear a face of justice, and even of generous moderation.

In this mood the vindictive and ambitious earl entered the superb precincts of the Pleasance, then illumined by the full moon. The broad yellow light was reflected on all sides from the white freestone, of which the pavement, balustrades, and architectural ornaments of the place were constructed; and not a single fleecy cloud was visible in the azure sky, so that the scene was nearly as light as if the sun had but just left the horizon. The numerous statues of white marble glimmered in the pale light, like so many sheeted ghosts just arisen from their sepulchres; and the fountains threw their jets into the air, as if they sought that their waters should be silvered by the moon-beams, ere they fell down again upon their basins in showers of sparkling silver. The day had been sultry, and the gentle night-breeze, which sighed along the terrace of the Pleasance, raised not a deeper breath than the fan in the hand of youthful beauty. The bird of summer night had built many a nest in the bowers of the adjacent garden; and the tenants now indemnified themselves for silence during the day, by a full chorus of their own unrivaled warblings, now joyous, now pathetic, now united, now responsive to each other, as if to express their delight in the placid and delicious scene to which they poured their melody.

Musing on matters far different from the fall of

waters, the gleam of moon-light, or the song of the nightingale, the stately Leicester walked slowly from the one end of the terrace to the other, his cloak wrapped around him, and his sword under his arm, without seeing any thing resembling the human form.

"I have been fooled by my own generosity," he said, "if I have suffered the villain to escape me—ay, and perhaps to go to the rescue of the adultress, who is so poorly guarded."

These were his thoughts, which were instantly dispelled, when, turning to look back towards the entrance, he saw a human form advancing slowly from the portico, and darkening the various objects with its shadow, as passing them successively, in its approach towards him.

"Shall I strike, ere I again hear his detested voice?" was Leicester's thought, as he grasped the hilt of his sword. "But no! I will see which way his vile practice tends. I will watch, disgusting as it is, the coils and mazes of the loathsome snake, ere I put forth my strength and crush him."

His hand quitted the sword-hilt, and he advanced slowly towards Tressilian, collecting, for their meeting, all the self-possession he could command, until they came front to front with each other.

Tressilian made a profound reverence; to which the earl replied with a haughty inclination of the head, and the words, "You sought secret conference with me, sir—I am here, and attentive."

"My lord," said Tressilian, "I am so earnest in that which I have to say, and so desirous to find a patient, nay a favourable hearing, that I will stoop to exculpate myself from whatever might prejudice your lordship against me. You think me your enemy?"

"Have I not some apparent cause?" answered Leicester, perceiving that Tressilian paused for a reply.

"You do me wrong, my lord. I am a friend, but neither a dependent nor partisan of the Earl of Sussex, whom courtiers call your rival; and it is some considerable time since I ceased to consider either courts, or court-intrigues, as suited to my temper or genius."

"No doubt, sir," answered Leicester; "there are other occupations more worthy a scholar, and for such the world holds Master Tressilian—Love has his intrigues as well as ambition."

"I perceive, my lord," replied Tressilian, "you give much weight to my early attachment for the unfortunate young person of whom I am about to speak, and perhaps think I am prosecuting her cause out of rivalry more than a sense of justice."

"No matter for my thoughts, sir," said the earl; "proceed. You have as yet spoken of yourself only; an important and worthy subject doubtless, but which, perhaps, does not altogether so deeply concern me that I should postpone my repose to hear it. Spare me farther prelude, sir, and speak to the purpose, if indeed you have aught to say that concerns me. When you have done, I, in my turn, have something to communicate."

"I will speak, then, without farther prelude, my lord," answered Tressilian; "having to say that which, as it concerns your lordship's honour, I am

confident you will not think your time wasted in listening to. I have to request an account from your lordship of the unhappy Amy Robsart, whose history is too well known to you. I regret deeply that I did not at once take this course, and make yourself judge between me and the villain by whom she is injured. My lord, she extricated herself from an unlawful and most perilous state of confinement, trusting to the effects of her own remonstrance upon her unworthy husband; and extorted from me a promise, that I would not interfere in her behalf until she had used her own efforts to have her rights acknowledged by him."

"Ha!" said Leicester, "remember you to whom you speak?"

"I speak of her unworthy husband, my lord," repeated Tressilian, "and my respect can find no softer language. The unhappy young woman is withdrawn from my knowledge, and sequestered in some secret place of this castle,—if she be not transferred to some place of seclusion better fitted for bad designs. This must be reformed, my lord,—I speak it as authorized by her father,—and this ill-fated marriage must be avouched and proved in the queen's presence, and the lady placed without restraint, and at her own free disposal. And, permit me to say, it concerns no one's honour that these most just demands of mine should be complied with, so much as it does that of your lordship."

The earl stood as if he had been petrified, at the extreme coolness with which the man, whom he considered as having injured him so deeply, pleaded the cause of his criminal paramour, as if she had been an innocent woman, and he a disinterested advocate; nor was his wonder lessened by the warmth with which Tressilian seemed to demand for her the rank and situation which she had disgraced, and the advantages of which she was doubtless to share with the lover who advocated her cause with such effrontery. Tressilian had been silent for more than a minute ere the earl recovered from the excess of his astonishment; and, considering the prepossessions with which his mind was occupied, there is little wonder that his passion gained the mastery of every other consideration. "I have heard you, Master Tressilian," said he, "without interruption, and I bless God that my ears were never before made to tingle by the words of so frontless a villain. The task of chastising you is fitter for the hangman's scourge than the sword of a nobleman, but yet — Villain, draw and defend thyself!"

As he spoke the last words, he dropped his mantle on the ground, struck Tressilian smartly with his sheathed sword, and instantly drawing his rapier, put himself into a posture of assault. The vehement fury of his language at first filled Tressilian, in his turn, with surprise equal to what Leicester had felt when he addressed him. But astonishment gave rise to resentment, when the unmerited insults of his language were followed by a blow, which immediately put to flight every thought save that of instant combat. Tressilian's sword was instantly drawn, and though perhaps somewhat inferior to Leicester in the use of the weapon, he understood it well enough to maintain the contest with great spirit, the rather that of the two he was for the time the more

cool; since he could not help imputing Leicester's conduct either to actual frenzy, or to the influence of some strong delusion.

The rencontre had continued for several minutes, without either party receiving a wound, when of a sudden, voices were heard beneath the portico which formed the entrance of the terrace, mingled with the steps of men advancing hastily. "We are interrupted," said Leicester to his antagonist; "follow me."

At the same time a voice from the portico said, "The jackanape is right—they are tilting here."

Leicester, meanwhile, drew off Tressilian into a sort of recess behind one of the fountains, which served to conceal them, while six of the yeomen of the queen's guard passed along the middle walk of the Pleasance, and they could hear one say to the rest, "We will never find them to-night amongst all these squirting funnels, squirrel-cages, and rabbit-holes; but if we light not on them before we reach the farther end, we will return, and mount a guard at the entrance, and so secure them till morning."

"A proper matter," said another, "the drawing of swords so near the queen's presence, ay, and in her very palace as 'twere!—Hang it, they must be some poor drunken game-cocks fallen to sparring—'twere pity almost we should find them—the penalty is chopping off a hand, is it not!—'twere hard to lose hand for handling a bit of steel, that comes so natural to one's gripe."

"Thou art a brawler thyself, George," said another; "but take heed, for the law stands as thou say'st."

"Ay," said the first, "an the act be not mildly construed; for thou know'st 'tis not the queen's palace, but my Lord of Leicester's."

"Why, for that matter, the penalty may be as severe," said another; "for an our gracious mistress be queen, as she is, God save her, my Lord of Leicester is as good as king."

"Hush! thou knave!" said a third; "how know'st thou who may be within hearing?"

They passed on, making a kind of careless search, but seemingly more intent on their own conversation than bent on discovering the persons who had created the nocturnal disturbance.

They had no sooner passed forward along the terrace, than Leicester, making a sign to Tressilian to follow him, glided away in an opposite direction, and escaped through the portico undiscovered. He conducted Tressilian to Mervyn's Tower, in which he was now again lodged; and then, ere parting with him, said these words: "If thou hast courage to continue and bring to an end what is thus broken off, be near me when the court goes forth to-morrow—we shall find a time, and I will give you a signal when it is fitting."

"My lord," said Tressilian, "at another time I might have inquired the meaning of this strange and furious inveteracy against me. But you have laid that on my shoulder, which only blood can wash away; and were you as high as your proudest wishes ever carried you, I would have from you satisfaction for my wounded honour."

On these terms they parted; but the adventures

of the night were not yet ended with Leicester. He was compelled to pass by Saintlowe's Tower, in order to gain the private passage which led to his own chamber, and in the entrance thereof he met Lord Hunsdon half-clothed, and with a naked sword under his arm.

"Are you awakened too, with this larum, my Lord of Leicester?" said the old soldier. "'Tis well—By gog's nails, the nights are as noisy as the day in this castle of yours. Some two hours since, I was waked by the screams of that poor brain-sick Lady Varney, whom her husband was forcing away. I promise you, it required both your warrant and the queen's, to keep me from entering into the game, and cutting that Varney of yours over the head; and now there is a brawl down in the Pleasance, or what call you the stone terrace walk, where all yonder gimcracks stand?"

The first part of the old man's speech went through the earl's heart like a knife; to the last he answered that he himself had heard the clash of swords, and had come down to take order with those who had been so insolent so near the queen's presence.

"Nay then," said Hunsdon, "I will be glad of your lordship's company."

Leicester was thus compelled to turn back with the rough old lord to the Pleasance, where Hunsdon heard from the yeomen of the guard, who were under his immediate command, the unsuccessful search they had made for the authors of the disturbance; and bestowed for their pains some round dozen of curses on them, as lazy knaves and blind whoresons. Leicester also thought it necessary to seem angry that no discovery had been effected; but at length suggested to Lord Hunsdon, that after all it could only be some foolish young men, who had been drinking healths pottle-deep, and who would be sufficiently scared by the search which had taken place after them. Hunsdon, who was himself attached to his cup, allowed that a pint-flagon might cover many of the follies which it had caused. "But," added he, "unless your lordship will be less liberal in your housekeeping, and restrain the overflow of ale, and wine, and wassail, I foresee it will end in my having some of these good fellows into the guard-house, and treating them to a dose of the strappadoe—And with this warning, good night to you."

Joyful at being rid of his company, Leicester took leave of him at the entrance of his lodging, where they had first met, and entering the private passage, took up the lamp which he had left there, and by its expiring light found the way to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Room! room! for my horse will wince
If he come within so many yards of a prince;
For to tell you true, and in rhyme,
He was foal'd in Queen Elizabeth's time;
When the great Earl of Le'ster
In his castle did feast her.

BEN JONSON: *Masque of Owls*.

THE amusement with which Elizabeth and her court were next day to be regaled, was an exhibi-

tion by the true-hearted men of Coventry, who were to represent the strife between the English and the Danes, agreeably to a custom long preserved in their ancient borough, and warranted for truth by old histories and chronicles. In this pageant, one party of the town's folks represented the Saxons and the other the Danes, and set forth, both in rude rhymes and with hard blows, the contentions of these two fierce nations, and the Amazonian courage of the English women, who, according to the story, were the principal agents in the general massacre of the Danes, which took place at Hock-tide, in the year of God 1012. This sport, which had been long a favourite pastime with the men of Coventry, had, it seems, been put down by the influence of some zealous clergymen, of the more precise cast, who chanced to have considerable influence with the magistrates. But the generality of the inhabitants had petitioned the queen that they might have their play again, and be honoured with permission to represent it before her highness. And when the matter was canvassed in the little council, which usually attended the queen for dispatch of business, the proposal, although opposed by some of the stricter sort, found favour in the eyes of Elizabeth, who said that such toys occupied, without offence, the minds of many who, lacking them, might find worse subjects of pastime; and that their pastors, however commendable for learning and godliness, were somewhat too sour in preaching against the pastimes of their flocks; and so the pageant was permitted to proceed.

Accordingly, after a morning repast, which Master Laneham calls an ambrosial breakfast, the principal persons of the court, in attendance upon her majesty, pressed to the gallery-tower, to witness the approach of the two contending parties of English and Danes; and after a signal had been given, the gate which opened in the circuit of the chase was thrown wide, to admit them. On they came, foot and horse; for some of the more ambitious burghers and yeomen had put themselves into fantastic dresses, resembling knights, in order to resemble the chivalry of the two different nations. However, to prevent fatal accidents, they were not permitted to appear on real horses, but had only license to accoutre themselves with those hobby-horses, as they are called, which anciently formed the chief delight of a morrice-dance; and which still are exhibited on the stage, in the grand battle fought at the conclusion of Mr Bayes's tragedy. The infantry followed in similar disguises. The whole exhibition was to be considered as a sort of anti-masque, or burlesque of the more stately pageants, in which the nobility and gentry bore part in the show, and, to the best of their knowledge, imitated with accuracy the personages whom they represented. The Hock-tide play was of a different character, the actors being persons of inferior degree, and their habits the better fitted for the occasion the more incongruous and ridiculous that they were in themselves. Accordingly their array, which the progress of our tale allows us no time to describe, was ludicrous enough; and their weapons, though formidable enough to deal sound blows, were long alder-poles instead of lances, and sound

cudgels for swords; and for fence, both cavalry and infantry were well equipped with stout head-pieces, and targets of thick leather.

Captain Coxe, that celebrated humourist of Coventry, whose library of ballads, almanacks, and penny histories, fairly wrapped up in parchment, and tied round for security with a piece of whipcord, remains still the envy of antiquaries, being himself the ingenious person under whose direction the pageant had been set forth, rode valiantly on his hobby-horse before the bands of English, high-trussed, saith Laneham, and brandishing his long sword, as became an experienced man of war, who had fought under the queen's father, bluff King Henry, at the siege of Boulogne. This chieftain was, as right and reason craved, the first to enter the lists, and, passing the gallery at the head of his myrmidons, kissed the hilt of his sword to the queen, and executed at the same time a gambade, the like whereof had never been practised by two-legged hobby-horse. Then passing on with all his followers of cavaliers and infantry, he drew them up with martial skill at the opposite extremity of the bridge, or tilt-yard, until his antagonists should be fairly prepared for the onset.

This was no long interval; for the Danish cavalry and infantry, no way inferior to the English in number, valour, and equipment, instantly arrived with the northern bagpipe blowing before them in token of their country, and headed by a cunning master of defence, only inferior to the renowned Captain Coxe, if to him, in the discipline of war. The Danes, as invaders, took their station under the gallery-tower, and opposite to that of Mortimer; and, when their arrangements were completely made, a signal was given for the encounter.

Their first charge upon each other was rather moderate, for either party had some dread of being forced into the lake. But as reinforcements came up on either side, the encounter grew from a skirmish into a blazing battle. They rushed upon one another, as Master Laneham testifies, like rams inflamed by jealousy, with such furious encounter, that both parties were often overthrown, and the clubs and targets made a most horrible clatter. In many instances, that happened which had been dreaded by the more experienced warriors, who began the day of strife. The rails which defended the ledges of the bridge, had been, perhaps of purpose, left but slightly fastened, and gave way under the pressure of those who thronged to the combat, so that the hot courage of many of the combatants received a sufficient cooling. These incidents might have occasioned more serious damage than became such an affray, for many of the champions who met with this mischance could not swim, and those who could, were encumbered with their suits of leathern and of paper armour; but the case had been provided for, and there were several boats in readiness to pick up the unfortunate warriors, and convey them to the dry land; where, dripping and dejected, they comforted themselves with the hot ale and strong waters which were liberally allowed to them, without showing any desire to re-enter so desperate a conflict.

Captain Coxe alone, that paragon of black-letter

antiquaries, after twice experiencing, horse and man, the perilous leap from the bridge into the lake, equal to any extremity to which the favourite heroes of chivalry, whose exploits he studied in an abridged form, whether Amadis, Belianis, Bevis, or his own Guy of Warwick, had ever been subjected to—Captain Coxe, we repeat, did alone, after two such mischances, rush again into the heat of conflict, his bases and the footcloth of his hobby-horse dropping water, and twice reanimated by voice and example the drooping spirits of the English; so that at length their victory over the Danish invaders became, as was just and reasonable, complete and decisive. Worthy he was to be rendered immortal by the pen of Ben Jonson, who, fifty years afterwards, deemed that a masque, exhibited at Kenilworth, could be ushered in by none with so much propriety as by the ghost of Captain Coxe, mounted upon his redoubted hobby-horse.

These rough rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy; and whose court, governed by a female whose sense of propriety was equal to her strength of mind,—was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement, than her counsels for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough masculine spirit, which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain the queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque of chivalry, which was presented in the Coventry play. She called near her person the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, partly, perhaps, to make amends to the former for the long and private audiences with which she had indulged the Earl of Leicester, by engaging him in conversation upon a pastime, which better suited his taste than those pageants that were furnished forth from the stores of antiquity. The disposition which the queen showed to laugh and jest with her military leaders, gave the Earl of Leicester the opportunity he had been watching, for withdrawing from the royal presence; which to the court around, so well had he chosen his time, had the graceful appearance of leaving his rival free access to the queen's person, instead of availing himself of his right as her landlord, to stand perpetually betwixt others and the light of her countenance.

Leicester's thoughts, however, had a far different object from mere courtesy; for no sooner did he see the queen fairly engaged in conversation with Sussex and Hunsdon, behind whose back stood Sir Nicholas Blount, grinning from ear to ear at each word which was spoken, than, making a sign to Tressilian, who, according to appointment, watched his motions at a little distance, he extricated himself from the press, and walking towards the chase, made his way through the crowds of ordinary spectators, who, with open mouth, stood gazing on the battle of the English and the Danes. When he had accomplished this, which was a work of some difficulty, he shot another glance behind him to see that Tressilian had been equally successful; and as soon as he saw him also free from the crowd, he led the way to a small

thicket, behind which stood a lacquey, with two horses ready saddled. He flung himself on the one, and made signs to Tressilian to mount the other, who obeyed without speaking a single word.

Leicester then spurred his horse, and galloped without stopping until he reached a sequestered spot, environed by lofty oaks, about a mile's distance from the castle, and in an opposite direction from the scene to which curiosity was drawing every spectator. He there dismounted, bound his horse to a tree, and only pronouncing the words, "Here there is no risk of interruption," laid his cloak across his saddle, and drew his sword.

Tressilian imitated his example punctually, yet could not forbear saying, as he drew his weapon, "My lord, as I have been known to many as one who does not fear death, when placed in balance with honour, methinks I may, without derogation, ask, wherefore, in the name of all that is honourable, your lordship has dared to offer me such a mark of disgrace, as places us on these terms with respect to each other?"

"If you like not such marks of my scorn," replied the earl, "betake yourself instantly to your weapon, lest I repeat the usage you complain of."

"It shall not need, my lord," said Tressilian. "God judge betwixt us! and your blood, if you fall, be on your own head."

He had scarce completed the sentence, when they instantly closed in combat.

But Leicester, who was a perfect master of defence, among all other exterior accomplishments of the time, had seen, on the preceding night, enough of Tressilian's strength and skill, to make him fight with more caution than heretofore, and prefer a secure revenge to a hasty one. For some minutes they fought with equal skill and fortune, till, in a desperate lounge which Leicester successfully put aside, Tressilian exposed himself at disadvantage; and, in a subsequent attempt to close, the earl forced his sword from his hand, and stretched him on the ground. With a grim smile he held the point of his rapier within two inches of the throat of his fallen adversary, and placing his foot at the same time upon his breast, bid him confess his villainous wrongs towards him, and prepare for death.

"I have no villany nor wrong towards thee to confess," answered Tressilian, "and am better prepared for death than thou. Use thine advantage as thou wilt, and may God forgive you. I have given you no cause for this."

"No cause!" exclaimed the earl, "no cause!—but why parley with such a slave?—Die a liar, as thou hast lived!"

He had withdrawn his arm for the purpose of striking the fatal blow, when it was suddenly seized from behind.

The earl turned in wrath to shake off the unexpected obstacle, but was surprised to find that a strange-looking boy had hold of his sword arm, and clung to it with such tenacity of grasp, that he could not shake him off without a considerable struggle; in the course of which Tressilian had opportunity to rise and possess himself once more of his weapon. Leicester again turned towards him with looks of unabated ferocity, and the combat would have re-

commenced with still more desperation on both parts, had not the boy clung to Lord Leicester's knees, and in a shrill tone implored him to listen one moment ere he prosecuted this quarrel.

"Stand up, and let me go," said Leicester, "or, by Heaven, I will pierce thee with my rapier!—What hast thou to do to bar my way to revenge?"

"Much—much!" exclaimed the undaunted boy; "since my folly has been the cause of these bloody quarrels between you, and perchance of worse evils. Oh, if you would ever again enjoy the peace of an innocent mind, if you hope again to sleep in peace and unhaunted by remorse, take so much leisure as to peruse this letter, and then do as you list!"

While he spoke in this eager and earnest manner, to which his singular features and voice gave a goblin-like effect, he held up to Leicester a packet, secured with a long tress of woman's hair, of a beautiful light-brown colour. Enraged as he was, nay, almost blinded with fury, to see his destined revenge so strangely frustrated, the Earl of Leicester could not resist this extraordinary suppliant. He snatched the letter from his hand—changed colour as he looked on the superscription—undid, with faltering hand, the knot which secured it—glanced over the contents, and staggering back, would have fallen, had he not rested against the trunk of a tree, where he stood for an instant, his eyes bent on the letter, and his sword-point turned to the ground, without seeming to be conscious of the presence of an antagonist, towards whom he had shown little mercy, and who might in turn have taken him at advantage. But for such revenge Tressilian was too noble-minded—he also stood still in surprise, waiting the issue of this strange fit of passion, but holding his weapon ready to defend himself in case of need, against some new and sudden attack on the part of Leicester, whom he again suspected to be under the influence of actual frenzy. The boy, indeed, he easily recognized as his old acquaintance Dickon, whose face, once seen, was scarcely to be forgotten; but how he came hither at so critical a moment, why his interference was so energetic, and, above all, how it came to produce so powerful an effect upon Leicester, were questions which he could not solve.

But the letter was of itself powerful enough to work effects yet more wonderful. It was that which the unfortunate Amy had written to her husband, in which she alleged the reasons and manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, informed him of her having taken refuge at Kenilworth to enjoy his protection, and mentioned the circumstances which had compelled her to take refuge in Tressilian's apartment, earnestly requesting he would, without delay, assign her a more suitable asylum. The letter concluded with the most earnest expressions of devoted attachment, and submission to his will in all things; and particularly respecting her situation and place of residence, conjuring him only that she might not be placed under the guardianship or restraint of Varney.

The letter dropped from Leicester's hand when he had perused it. "Take my sword," he said, "Tressilian, and pierce my heart, as I would but now have pierced yours!"

"My lord," said Tressilian, "you have done me great wrong; but something within my breast ever whispered that it was by egregious error."

"Error, indeed!" said Leicester, and handed him the letter; "I have been made to believe a man of honour a villain, and the best and purest of creatures a false profligate.—Wretched boy, why comes this letter now, and where has the bearer lingered?"

"I dare not tell you, my lord," said the boy, withdrawing, as if to keep beyond his reach;—"but here comes one who was the messenger."

Wayland at the same moment came up; and, interrogated by Leicester, hastily detailed all the circumstances of his escape with Amy,—the fatal practices which had driven her to flight—and her anxious desire to throw herself under the instant protection of her husband,—pointing out the evidence of the domestics of Kenilworth, "who could not," he observed, "but remember her eager inquiries after the Earl of Leicester on her first arrival."

"The villains!" exclaimed Leicester; "but O, that worst of villains, Varney!—and she is even now in his power!"

"But not, I trust in God," said Tressilian, "with any commands of fatal import?"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the earl, hastily.—"I said something in madness—but it was recalled, fully recalled, by a hasty messenger; and she is now—she must now be safe."

"Yes," said Tressilian, "she *must* be safe, and I *must* be assured of her safety. My own quarrel with you is ended, my lord; but there is another to begin with the seducer of Amy Robsart, who has screened his guilt under the cloak of the infamous Varney."

"The *seducer* of Amy!" replied Leicester, with a voice like thunder; "say her husband;—her misguided, blinded, most unworthy husband;—She is as surely Countess of Leicester, as I am belted earl. Nor can you, sir, point out that manner of justice which I will not render her at my own free will. I need scarce say, I fear not your compulsion."

The generous nature of Tressilian was instantly turned from consideration of any thing personal to himself, and centred at once upon Amy's welfare. He had by no means undoubting confidence in the fluctuating resolutions of Leicester, whose mind seemed to him agitated beyond the government of calm reason; neither did he, notwithstanding the assurances he had received, think Amy safe in the hands of his dependents. "My lord," he said, calmly, "I mean you no offence, and am far from seeking a quarrel. But my duty to Sir Hugh Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the queen, that the countess's rank may be acknowledged in her person."

"You shall not need, sir," replied the earl, haughtily; "do not dare to interfere. No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy—To Elizabeth herself will I tell it, and then for Cummor Place with the speed of life and death!"

So saying, he unbound his horse from the tree, threw himself into the saddle, and rode at full gallop towards the castle.

"Take me before you, Master Tressilian," said the boy, seeing Tressilian mount in the same haste

—"my tale is not all told out, and I need your protection."

Tressilian complied, and followed the earl, though at a less furious rate. By the way the boy confessed, with much contrition, that in resentment at Wayland's evading all his inquiries concerning the lady, after Dickon conceived he had in various ways merited his confidence, he had purloined from him, in revenge, the letter with which Amy had entrusted him for the Earl of Leicester. His purpose was to have restored it to him that evening, as he reckoned himself sure of meeting with him, in consequence of Wayland's having to perform the part of Arion in the pageant. He was indeed something alarmed when he saw to whom the letter was addressed; but he argued that, as Leicester did not return to Kenilworth until that evening, it would be again in the possession of the proper messenger as soon as, in the nature of things, it could possibly be delivered. But Wayland came not to the pageant, having been in the interim expelled by Lambourne from the castle; and the boy, not being able to find him, or to get speech of Tressilian, and finding himself in possession of a letter addressed to no less a person than the Earl of Leicester, became much afraid of the consequences of his frolic. The caution, and indeed the alarm, which Wayland had expressed respecting Varney and Lambourne, led him to judge, that the letter must be designed for the earl's own hand, and that he might prejudice the lady by giving it to any of the domestics. He made an attempt or two to obtain an audience of Leicester, but the singularity of his features, and the meanness of his appearance, occasioned his being always repulsed by the insolent menials whom he applied to for that purpose. Once, indeed, he had nearly succeeded, when, in prowling about, he found in the grotto the casket, which he knew to belong to the unlucky countess, having seen it on her journey; for nothing escaped his prying eye. Having strove in vain to restore it either to Tressilian or the countess, he put it into the hands, as we have seen, of Leicester himself, but unfortunately did not recognize him in his disguise.

At length, the boy thought he was on the point of succeeding, when the earl came down to the lower part of the hall; but just as he was about to accost him, he was prevented by Tressilian. As sharp in ear as in wit, the boy heard the appointment settled betwixt them, to take place in the Pleasance, and resolved to add a third to the party, in hopes that, either in coming or in returning, he might find an opportunity of delivering the letter to Leicester; for strange stories began to flit among the domestics, which alarmed him for the lady's safety. Accident, however, detained Dickon a little behind the earl, and, as he reached the arcade, he saw them engaged in combat; in consequence of which he hastened to alarm the guard, having little doubt, that what bloodshed took place betwixt them might arise out of his own frolic. Continuing to lurk in the portico, he heard the second appointment, which Leicester, at parting, assigned to Tressilian, and was keeping them in view during the encounter of the Coventry men, when, to his surprise, he recognized Wayland in the crowd, much disguised, indeed, but not suffi-

ciently so to escape the prying glance of his old comrade. They drew aside out of the crowd to explain their situation to each other. The boy confessed to Wayland what we have above told; and the artist, in return, informed him, that his deep anxiety for the fate of the unfortunate lady had brought him back to the neighbourhood of the castle, upon his learning that morning at a village about ten miles distant, that Varney and Lambourne, whose violence he dreaded, had both left Kenilworth over-night.

While they spoke, they saw Leicester and Tressilian separate themselves from the crowd, dogged them until they mounted their horses, when the boy, whose speed of foot has been before mentioned, though he could not possibly keep up with them, yet arrived, as we have seen, soon enough to save Tressilian's life. The boy had just finished his tale when they arrived at the gallery-tower.

CHAPTER XL.

High o'er the eastern steep the sun is beaming,
And darkness flies with her deceitful shadows;—
So truth prevails o'er falsehood.

Old Play.

As Tressilian rode over the bridge lately the scene of so much riotous sport, he could not but observe that men's countenances had singularly changed during the space of his brief absence. The mock fight was over, but the men, still habited in their masquing suits, stood together in groups, like the inhabitants of a city who have been just startled by some strange and alarming news.

When he reached the base-court, appearances were the same—domestics, retainers, and under officers, stood together and whispered, bending their eyes towards the windows of the great hall, with looks which seemed at once alarmed and mysterious.

Sir Nicholas Blount was the first person of his own particular acquaintance Tressilian saw, who left him no time to make inquiries, but greeted him with, "God help thy heart, Tressilian, thou art fitter for a clown than a courtier—thou canst not attend, as becomes one who follows her majesty.—Here you are called for, wished for, waited for—no man but you will serve the turn; and hither you come with a misbegotten brat on thy horse's neck, as if thou wert dry-nurse to some sucking devil, and wert just returned from airing."

"Why, what is the matter?" said Tressilian, letting go the boy, who sprung to ground like a feather; and himself dismounting at the same time.

"Why no one knows the matter," replied Blount; "I cannot smell it out myself, though I have a nose like other courtiers. Only, my Lord of Leicester has galloped along the bridge, as if he would have rode over all in his passage, demanded an audience of the queen, and is closeted even now with her, and Burleigh and Walsingham—and you are called for—but whether the matter be treason or worse, no one knows."

"He speaks true, by heaven," said Raleigh, who that instant appeared; "you must immediately to the queen's presence."

"Be not rash, Raleigh," said Blount; "remember

his boots—For heaven's sake, go to my chamber, dear Tressilian, and don my new bloom-coloured silken hose—I have worn them but twice."

"Pshaw!" answered Tressilian; "do thou take care of this boy, Blount; be kind to him, and look he escapes you not—much depends on him."

So saying, he followed Raleigh hastily, leaving honest Blount with the bridle of his horse in one hand, and the boy in the other. Blount gave a long look after him.

"Nobody," he said, "calls me to these mysteries,—and he leaves me here to play horse-keeper and child-keeper at once. I could excuse the one, for I love a good horse naturally; but to be plagued with a bratchet whelp.—Whence come ye, my fair-favoured little gossip?"

"From the fens," answered the boy.

"And what didst thou learn there, forward imp?"

"To catch gulls, with their webbed feet and yellow stockings," said the boy.

"Umph!" said Blount, looking down on his own immense roses,—“Nay, then the devil take him who asks thee more questions.”

Meantime Tressilian traversed the full length of the great hall, in which the astonished courtiers formed various groups, and were whispering mysteriously together, while all kept their eyes fixed on the door, which led from the upper end of the hall into the queen's withdrawing apartment. Raleigh pointed to the door—Tressilian knocked, and was instantly admitted. Many a neck was stretched to gain a view into the interior of the apartment; but the tapestry which covered the door on the inside was dropped too suddenly to admit the slightest gratification of curiosity.

Upon entrance, Tressilian found himself, not without a strong palpitation of heart, in the presence of Elizabeth; who was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal, while two or three of her most sage and confidential counsellors exchanged anxious looks with each other, but seemed to delay speaking till her wrath had abated. Before the empty chair of state in which she had been seated, and which was half pushed aside by the violence with which she had started from it, knelt Leicester, his arms crossed, and his brows bent on the ground, still and motionless as the effigies upon a sepulchre. Beside him stood the Lord Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, holding his baton of office—the earl's sword was unbuckled, and lay before him on the floor.

"Ho, sir!" said the queen, coming close up to Tressilian, and stamping on the floor with the action and manner of Henry himself; "you knew of this fair work—you are an accomplice in this deception which has been practised on us—you have been a main cause of our doing injustice!" Tressilian dropped on his knee before the queen, his good sense showing him the risk of attempting any defence at that moment of irritation. "Art dumb, sirrah!" she continued; "thou know'st of this affair—doest thou not?"

"Not, gracious madam, that this poor lady was Countess of Leicester."

"Nor shall any one know her for such," said Eli-

zabeth. "Death of my life! Countess of Leicester!—I say Dame Amy Dudley—and well if she have not cause to write herself widow of the traitor Robert Dudley."

"Madam," said Leicester, "do with me what it may be your will to do—but work no injury on this gentleman—he hath in no way deserved it."

"And will he be the better for thy intercession?" said the queen, leaving Tressilian, who slowly arose, and rushing to Leicester, who continued kneeling,—"the better for thy intercession, thou doubly false—thou doubly forsworn?—of thy intercession, whose villany hath made me ridiculous to my subjects, and odious to myself?—I could tear out mine own eyes for their blindness!"

Burleigh here ventured to interpose.

"Madam," he said, "remember that you are a queen—Queen of England—mother of your people. Give not way to this wild storm of passion."

Elizabeth turned round to him, while a tear actually twinkled in her proud and angry eye. "Burleigh," she said, "thou art a statesman—thou doest not, thou canst not, comprehend half the scorn—half the misery, that man has poured on me."

With the utmost caution—with the deepest reverence, Burleigh took her hand at the moment he saw her heart was at the fullest, and led her aside to an oriel window, apart from the others.

"Madam," he said, "I am a statesman, but I am also a man—a man already grown old in your councils, who have not and cannot have a wish on earth but your glory and happiness—I pray you to be composed."

"Ah, Burleigh," said Elizabeth, "thou little knowest"—here her tears fell over her cheeks in despite of her.

"I do—I do know, my honoured sovereign. O beware that you lead not others to guess that which they know not!"

"Ha!" said Elizabeth, pausing as if a new train of thought had suddenly shot across her brain: "Burleigh, thou art right—thou art right—any thing but disgrace—any thing but a confession of weakness—any thing rather than seem the cheated—slighted—'Sdeath! to think on it is distraction!"

"Be but yourself, my queen," said Burleigh; "and soar far above a weakness which no Englishman will ever believe his Elizabeth could have entertained, unless the violence of her disappointment carries a sad conviction to his bosom."

"What weakness, my lord?" said Elizabeth, haughtily; "would you too insinuate that the favour in which I held yonder proud traitor, derived its source from aught?"—But here she could no longer sustain the proud tone which she had assumed, and again softened as she said, "But why should I strive to deceive even thee, my good and wise servant?"

Burleigh stooped to kiss her hand with affection, and—rare in the annals of courts—a tear of true sympathy dropped from the eye of the minister on the hand of his sovereign.

It is probable that the consciousness of possessing this sympathy, aided Elizabeth in supporting her mortification, and suppressing her extreme resentment; but she was still more moved by fear that her passion would betray to the public the affront and

the disappointment which, alike as a woman and a queen, she was so anxious to conceal. She turned from Burleigh, and sternly paced the hall till her features had recovered their usual dignity, and her mien its wonted stateliness of regular motion.

"Our sovereign is her noble self once more," whispered Burleigh to Walsingham; "mark what she does, and take heed you thwart her not."

She then approached Leicester, and said, with calmness, "My Lord Shrewsbury, we discharge you of your prisoner.—My Lord of Leicester, rise and take up your sword—A quarter of an hour's restraint, under the custody of our marshal, my lord, is, we think, no high penance for months of falsehood practised upon us. We will now hear the progress of this affair."—She then seated herself in her chair, and said, "You, Tressilian, step forward, and say what you know."

Tressilian told his story, generously suppressing as much as he could what affected Leicester, and saying nothing of their having twice actually fought together. It is very probable that in doing so, he did the earl good service; for had the queen at that instant found any thing on account of which she could vent her wrath upon him, without laying open sentiments of which she was ashamed, it might have fared hard with him. She paused when Tressilian had finished his tale.

"We will take that Wayland," she said, "into our own service, and place the boy in our secretary-office for instruction, that he may in future use discretion towards letters. For you, Tressilian, you did wrong in not communicating the whole truth to us, and your promise not to do so was both imprudent and undutiful. Yet, having given your word to this unhappy lady, it was the part of a man and a gentleman to keep it; and, on the whole, we esteem you for the character you have sustained in this matter.—My Lord of Leicester, it is now your turn to tell us the truth, an exercise to which you seem of late to have been too much a stranger."

Accordingly, she extorted by successive questions, the whole history of his first acquaintance with Amy Robsart—their marriage—his jealousy—the causes on which it was founded, and many particulars besides. Leicester's confession, for such it might be called, was extorted from him piecemeal, yet was upon the whole accurate, excepting that he totally omitted to mention that he had, by implication, or otherwise, assented to Varney's designs upon the life of his countess. Yet the consciousness of this was what at that moment lay nearest to his heart; and although he trusted in great measure to the very positive counter-orders which he had sent by Lambourne, it was his purpose to set out for Cumnor Place in person, as soon as he should be dismissed from the presence of the queen: who, he concluded, would presently leave Kenilworth.

But the earl reckoned without his host. It is true, his presence and his communications were gall and wormwood to his once partial mistress. But, barred from every other and more direct mode of revenge, the queen perceived that she gave her false suitor torture by these inquiries, and dwelt on them for that reason; no more regarding the pain which she herself experienced, than the savage cares for the

searing of his own hands with the hot pincers with which he tears the flesh of his captive enemy.

At length, however, the haughty lord, like a deer that turns to bay, gave intimation that his patience was failing. "Madam," he said, "I have been much to blame—more than even your just resentment has expressed. Yet, madam, let me say, that my guilt, if it be unpardonable, was not unprovoked; and that if beauty and condescending dignity could seduce the frail heart of a human being, I might plead both, as the causes of my concealing this secret from your majesty."

The queen was so much struck by this reply, which Leicester took care should be heard by no one but herself, that she was for the moment silenced, and the earl had the temerity to pursue his advantage. "Your grace, who has pardoned so much, will excuse my throwing myself on your royal mercy for those expressions, which were yesterday morning accounted but a light offence."

The queen fixed her eyes on him while she replied, "Now, by Heaven, my lord, thy effrontery passes the bounds of belief, as well as patience! But it shall avail thee nothing.—What ho! my lords, come all and hear the news!—My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband, and England a king. His lordship is patriarchal in his tastes—one wife at a time was insufficient, and he designed us the honour of his left hand. Now, is not this too insolent,—that I could not grace him with a few marks of court-favour, but he must presume to think my hand and crown at his disposal?—You, however, think better of me; and I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child, whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands. We go to the presence-chamber—My Lord of Leicester, we command your close attendance on us."

All was eager expectation in the hall; and what was the universal astonishment, when the queen said to those next her, "The revels of Kenilworth are not yet exhausted, my lords and ladies—we are to solemnize the noble owner's marriage."

There was a universal expression of surprise.

"It is true, on our royal word," said the queen; "he hath kept this a secret even from us, that he might surprise us with it at this very place and time. I see you are dying of curiosity to know the happy bride—It is Amy Robsart, the same who, to make up the May-game yesterday, figured in the pageant as the wife of his servant Varney."

"For God's sake, madam," said the earl, approaching her with a mixture of humility, vexation, and shame in his countenance, and speaking so low as to be heard by no one else, "take my head, as you threatened in your anger, and spare me these taunts! Urge not a falling man—tread not on a crushed worm."

"A worm, my lord!" said the queen, in the same tone; "nay, a snake is the nobler reptile, and the more exact similitude—the frozen snake you wot of, which was warmed in a certain bosom" —

"For your own sake—for mine, madam," said the earl—"while there is yet some reason left in me" —

"Speak aloud, my lord," said Elizabeth, "and at farther distance, so please you—your breath thaws our ruff. What have you to ask of us?"

"Permission," said the unfortunate earl, humbly, "to travel to Cumnor Place."

"To fetch home your bride belike?—Why, ay—that is but right—for, as we have heard, she is indifferently cared for there. But, my lord, you go not in person—we have counted upon passing certain days in this Castle of Kenilworth, and it were slight courtesy to leave us without a landlord during our residence here. Under your favour, we cannot think to incur such disgrace in the eyes of our subjects. Tressilian shall go to Cumnor Place instead of you, and with him some gentleman who hath been sworn of our chamber, lest my lord of Leicester should be again jealous of his old rival.—Whom wouldst thou have to be in commission with thee, Tressilian?"

Tressilian, with humble deference, suggested the name of Raleigh.

"Why, ay," said the queen; "so God ha' me, thou hast made a good choice. He is a young knight besides, and to deliver a lady from prison is an appropriate first adventure.—Cumnor Place is little better than a prison, you are to know, my lords and ladies. Besides, there are certain faitours there whom we would willingly have in fast keeping. You will furnish them, Master Secretary, with the warrant necessary to secure the bodies of Richard Varney and the foreign Alasco, dead or alive. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen—bring the lady here in all honour—lose no time, and God be with you."

They bowed, and left the presence.

Who shall describe how the rest of that day was spent at Kenilworth? The queen, who seemed to have remained there for the sole purpose of mortifying and taunting the Earl of Leicester, showed herself as skilful in that female art of vengeance, as she was in the science of wisely governing her people. The train of state soon caught the signal, and, as he walked among his own splendid preparations, the Lord of Kenilworth, in his own castle, already experienced the lot of a disgraced courtier, in the slight regard and cold manners of alienated friends, and the ill-concealed triumph of avowed and open enemies. Sussex, from his natural military frankness of disposition, Burleigh and Walsingham, from their penetrating and prospective sagacity, and some of the ladies, from the compassion of their sex, were the only persons in the crowded court who retained towards him the countenance they had borne in the morning.

So much had Leicester been accustomed to consider court-favour as the principal object of his life, that all other sensations were, for the time, lost in the agony which his haughty spirit felt at the succession of petty insults and studied neglects to which he had been subjected; but when he was retired to his own chamber for the night, that long fair tress of hair which had once secured Amy's letter, fell under his observation, and with the influence of a counter-charm, awakened his heart to nobler and more natural feelings. He kissed it a thousand times; and while he recollected that he had it always in his power to shun the mortifications which he had that day undergone, by retiring into a dignified and even prince-like seclusion, with

the beautiful and beloved partner of his future life, he felt that he could rise above the revenge which Elizabeth had condescended to take.

Accordingly, on the next day, the whole conduct of the earl displayed so much dignified equanimity; he seemed so solicitous about the accommodations and amusements of his guests, yet so indifferent to their personal demeanour towards him; so respectfully distant to the queen, yet so patient of her harassing displeasure, that Elizabeth changed her manner to him, and, though cold and distant, ceased to offer him any direct affront. She intimated also with some sharpness to others around her, who thought they were consulting her pleasure in showing a neglectful conduct to the earl, that while they remained at Kenilworth, they ought to show the civility due from guests to the lord of the castle. In short, matters were so far changed in twenty-four hours, that some of the more experienced and sagacious courtiers foresaw a strong possibility of Leicester's restoration to favour, and regulated their demeanour towards him, as those who might one day claim merit for not having deserted him in adversity. It is time, however, to leave these intrigues, and to follow Tressilian and Raleigh on their journey.

The troop consisted of six persons; for, besides Wayland, they had in company a royal pursuivant and two stout serving-men. All were well armed, and travelled as fast as it was possible with justice to their horses, which had a long journey before them. They endeavoured to procure some tidings as they rode along of Varney and his party, but could hear none, as they had travelled in the dark. At a small village, about twelve miles from Kenilworth, where they gave some refreshment to their horses, a poor clergyman, the curate of the place, came out of a small cottage, and entreated any of the company who might know aught of surgery, to look in for an instant on a dying man.

The empiric Wayland undertook to do his best, and as the curate conducted him to the spot, he learned that the man had been found on the high-road about a mile from the village, by labourers, as they were going to their work on the preceding morning, and the curate had given him shelter in his house. He had received a gun-shot wound, which seemed to be obviously mortal; but whether in a brawl or from robbers they could not learn, as he was in a fever, and spoke nothing connectedly. Wayland entered the dark and lowly apartment, and no sooner had the curate drawn aside the curtain, than he knew in the distorted features of the dying man the countenance of Michael Lambourne. Under pretence of seeking something which he wanted, Wayland hastily apprised his fellow-travellers of this extraordinary circumstance; and both Tressilian and Raleigh, full of boding apprehensions, hastened to the curate's house to see the dying man.

The wretch was by this time in the agonies of death, from which a much better surgeon than Wayland could not have rescued him, for the bullet had passed clear through his body. He was sensible, however, at least in part, for he knew Tressilian, and made signs that he wished him to

stoop over his bed. Tressilian did so, and after some inarticulate murmurs, in which the names of Varney and Lady Leicester were alone distinguishable, Lambourne bade him "make haste, or he would come too late." It was in vain Tressilian urged the patient for farther information; he seemed to become in some degree delirious; and when he again made a signal to attract Tressilian's attention, it was only for the purpose of desiring him to inform his uncle, Giles Gosling of the Black Bear, that "he had died without his shoes after all." A convulsion verified his words a few minutes after; and the travellers derived nothing from having met with him, saving the obscure fears concerning the fate of the countess, which his dying words were calculated to convey, and which induced them to urge their journey with the utmost speed, pressing horses in the queen's name, when those which they rode became unfit for service.

CHAPTER XLI.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An ærial voice was heard to call;
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor-hall.

MICKLE.

WE are now to return to that part of our story where we intimated that Varney, possessed of the authority of the Earl of Leicester, and of the queen's permission to the same effect, hastened to secure himself against discovery of his perfidy, by removing the countess from Kenilworth Castle. He had proposed to set forth early in the morning; but reflecting that the earl might relent in the interim, and seek another interview with the countess, he resolved to prevent, by immediate departure, all chance of what would probably have ended in his detection and ruin. For this purpose he called for Lambourne, and was exceedingly incensed to find that his trusty attendant was abroad on some ramble in the neighbouring village, or elsewhere. As his return was expected, Sir Richard commanded that he should prepare himself for attending him on an immediate journey, and follow him in case he returned after his departure.

In the meanwhile, Varney used the ministry of a servant called Robin Tider, one to whom the mysteries of Cumnor Place were already in some degree known, as he had been there more than once in attendance on the earl. To this man, whose character resembled that of Lambourne, though he was neither quite so prompt nor altogether so profligate, Varney gave command to have three horses saddled, and to prepare a horse-litter, and have them in readiness at the postern-gate. The natural enough excuse of his lady's insanity, which was now universally believed, accounted for the secrecy with which she was to be removed from the castle; and he reckoned on the same apology in case the unfortunate Amy's resistance or screams should render such necessary. The agency of Anthony Foster was indispensable, and that Varney now went to secure.

This person, naturally of a sour unsocial disposition, and somewhat tired besides with his journey

from Cumnor to Warwickshire, in order to bring the news of the countess's escape, had early extricated himself from the crowd of wassailers, and betaken himself to his chamber; where he lay asleep when Varney, completely equipped for travelling, and with a dark lantern in his hand, entered his apartment. He paused an instant to listen to what his associate was murmuring in his sleep, and could plainly distinguish the words *Ave Maria—ora pro nobis*—No—it runs not so—deliver us from evil—Ay, so it goes.”

“Praying in his sleep,” said Varney; “and confounding his old and new devotions—He must have more need of prayer ere I am done with him.—What ho! holy man—most blessed penitent!—Awake—awake!—The devil has not discharged you from service yet.”

As Varney at the same time shook the sleeper by the arm, it changed the current of his ideas, and he roared out, “Thieves!—thieves! I will die in defence of my gold—my hard won gold, that has cost me so dear.—Where is Janet?—Is Janet safe?”

“Safe enough, thou bellowing fool,” said Varney; “art thou not ashamed of thy clamour?”

Foster by this time was broad awake, and, sitting up in his bed, asked Varney the meaning of so untimely a visit. “It augurs nothing good,” he added.

“A false prophecy, most sainted Anthony,” returned Varney; “it augurs that the hour is come for converting thy leasehold into copyhold—What say'st thou to that?”

“Hadst thou told me in broad day,” said Foster, “I had rejoiced—but at this dead hour, and by this dim light, and looking on thy pale face, which is a ghastly contradiction to thy light words, I cannot but rather think of the work that is to be done, than the guerdon to be gained by it.”

“Why, thou fool, it is but to escort thy charge back to Cumnor Place.”

“Is that indeed all?” said Foster; “thou look'st deadly pale, and thou art not moved by trifles—is that indeed all?”

“Ay, that—and may be a trifle more,” said Varney.

“Ah, that trifle more!” said Foster; “still thou look'st paler and paler.”

“Heed not my countenance,” said Varney; “you see it by this wretched light. Up and be doing, man—Think of Cumnor Place—thine own proper copyhold—Why, thou may'st found a weekly lecture-shop, besides endowing Janet like a baron's daughter.—Seventy pounds and odds.”

“Seventy-nine pounds, five shillings and five pence half-penny, besides the value of the wood,” said Foster; “and I am to have it all as copyhold?”

“All, man—squirrels and all—no gipsy shall cut the value of a broom—no boy so much as take a bird's nest, without paying thee a quittance—Ay, that is right—don't thy matters as fast as possible—horses and every thing is ready; all save that accursed villain Lambourne, who is out on some infernal gambol.”

“Ay, Sir Richard,” said Foster, “you would take no advice. I ever told you that drunken pro-

fligate would fail you at need. Now I could have helped you to a sober young man.”

“What, some slow-spoken, long-breathed brother of the congregation?—Why, we shall have use for such also, man—Heaven be praised, we shall lack labourers of every kind.—Ay, that is right—forget not your pistols—Come now, and let us away.”

“Whither?” said Anthony.

“To my lady's chamber—and, mind—she *must* along with us. Thou art not a fellow to be startled by a shriek?”

“Not if Scripture reason can be rendered for it; and it is written, ‘wives obey your husbands.’ But will my lord's commands bear us out if we use violence?”

“Tush, man! here is his signet,” answered Varney; and, having thus silenced the objections of his associate, they went together to Lord Hunsdon's apartment, and, acquainting the sentinel with their purpose, as a matter sanctioned by the queen and the Earl of Leicester, they entered the apartment of the unfortunate countess.

The horror of Amy may be conceived, when, starting from a broken slumber, she saw at her bedside Varney, the man on earth she most feared and hated. It was even a consolation to see that he was not alone, though she had so much reason to dread his sullen companion.

“Madam,” said Varney, “there is no time for ceremony. My Lord of Leicester, having fully considered the exigencies of the time, sends you his orders immediately to accompany us on our return to Cumnor Place. See, here is his signet, in token of his instant and pressing commands.”

“It is false!” said the countess; “thou hast stolen the warrant,—thou, who art capable of every villany, from the blackest to the basest!”

“It is TRUE, madam,” replied Varney; “so true, that if you do not instantly arise, and prepare to attend us, we must compel you to obey our orders.”

“Compel!—thou darest not put it to that issue, base as thou art!” exclaimed the unhappy countess.

“That remains to be proved, madam,” said Varney, who had determined on intimidation as the only means of subduing her high spirit; “if you put me to it, you will find me a rough groom of the chambers.”

It was at this threat that Amy screamed so fearfully, that had it not been for the received opinion of her insanity, she would quickly have had Lord Hunsdon and others to her aid. Perceiving, however, that her cries were vain, she appealed to Foster in the most affecting terms, conjuring him, as his daughter Janet's honour and purity was dear to him, not to permit her to be treated with unwomanly violence.

“Why, madam, wives must obey their husbands,—there's Scripture warrant for it,” said Foster, “and if you will dress yourself, and come with us patiently, there's no one shall lay finger on you while I can draw a pistol-trigger.”

Seeing no help arrive, and comforted even by the dogged language of Foster, the countess promised to arise and dress herself, if they would agree to retire from the room. Varney at the same time assured her of all safety and honour while in their hands; and

promised, that he himself would not approach her, since his presence was so displeasing. Her husband, he added, would be at Cumnor Place within twenty-four hours after they had reached it.

Somewhat comforted by this assurance, upon which, however, she saw little reason to rely, the unhappy Amy made her toilette by the assistance of the lantern, which they left with her when they quitted the apartment.

Weeping, trembling, and praying, the unfortunate lady dressed herself,—with sensations how different from the days in which she was wont to decorate herself in all the pride of conscious beauty! She endeavoured to delay the completing her dress as long as she could, until, terrified by the impatience of Varney, she was obliged to declare herself ready to attend them.

When they were about to move, the countess clung to Foster with such an appearance of terror at Varney's approach, that the latter protested to her, with a deep oath, that he had no intention whatsoever of even coming near her. "If you do but consent to execute your husband's will in quietness, you shall," he said, "see but little of me. I will leave you undisturbed to the care of the usher whom your good taste prefers."

"My husband's will!" she exclaimed. "But it is the will of God, and let that be sufficient to me.—I will go with Master Foster as unresistingly as ever did a literal sacrifice. He is a father at least; and will have decency, if not humanity. For thee, Varney, were it my latest word, thou art an equal stranger to both."

Varney replied only, she was at liberty to chuse, and walked some paces before them to show the way; while, half leaning on Foster, and half carried by him, the countess was transported from Saintlowe's Tower to the postern gate, where Tider waited with the litter and horses.

The countess was placed in the former without resistance. She saw with some satisfaction, that while Foster and Tider rode close by the litter, which the latter conducted, the dreaded Varney lingered behind, and was soon lost in darkness. A little while she strove, as the road winded round the verge of the lake, to keep sight of those stately towers which called her husband lord, and which still, in some places, sparkled with lights, where wassailers were yet reveling. But when the direction of the road rendered this no longer possible, she drew back her head, and, sinking down in the litter, recommended herself to the care of Providence.

Besides the desire of inducing the countess to proceed quietly on her journey, Varney had it also in view to have an interview with Lambourne, by whom he every moment expected to be joined, without the presence of any witnesses. He knew the character of this man, prompt, bloody, resolute, and greedy, and judged him the most fit agent he could employ in his farther designs. But ten miles of their journey had been measured ere he heard the hasty clatter of horses' hoofs behind him, and was overtaken by Michael Lambourne.

Fretted as he was with his absence, Varney received his profligate servant with a rebuke of un-

usual bitterness. "Drunken villain," he said, "thy idleness and debauched folly will stretch a halter ere it be long; and, for me, I care not how soon."

This style of objurgation, Lambourne, who was elated to an unusual degree, not only by an extraordinary cup of wine, but by the sort of confidential interview he had just had with the earl, and the secret of which he had made himself master, did not receive with his wonted humility. "He would take no insolence of language," he said, "from the best knight that ever wore spurs. Lord Leicester had detained him on some business of import, and that was enough for Varney, who was but a servant like himself."

Varney was not a little surprised at his unusual tone of insolence; but, ascribing it to liquor, suffered it to pass as if unnoticed, and then began to tamper with Lambourne, touching his willingness to aid in removing out of the Earl of Leicester's way an obstacle to a rise, which would put it in his power to reward his trusty followers to their utmost wish. And upon Michael Lambourne's seeming ignorant what was meant, he plainly indicated "the litter-load, yonder," as the impediment which he desired should be removed.

"Look you, Sir Richard, and so forth," said Michael, "some are wiser than some, that is one thing, and some are worse than some, that's another. I know my lord's mind on this matter better than thou, for he hath trusted me fully in the matter. Here are his mandates; and his last words were, Michael Lambourne,—for his lordship speaks to me as a gentleman of the sword, and useth not the works drunken villain, or such like phrases of those who know not how to bear new dignities,—Varney, says he, must pay the utmost respect to my countess—I trust to you for looking to it, Lambourne, says his lordship, and you must bring back my signet from him peremptorily."

"Ay," replied Varney, "said he so, indeed? You know all, then?"

"All—all—and you were as wise as make a friend of me while the weather is fair betwixt us."

"And was there no one present," said Varney, "when my lord so spoke?"

"Not a breathing creature," replied Lambourne; "Think you my lord would trust any one with such matters, save an approved man of action like myself?"

"Most true," said Varney; and, making a pause, he looked forward on the moon-light road. They were traversing a wide and open heath. The litter, being at least a mile before them, was both out of sight and hearing. He looked behind, and there was an expanse, lighted by the moon-beams, without one human being in sight. He resumed his speech to Lambourne: "And will you turn upon your master, who has introduced you to this career of court-like favour—whose apprentice you have been, Michael—who has taught you the depths and shallows of court intrigue?"

"Michael not me," said Lambourne, "I have a name will brook a *master* before it as well as another; and as to the rest, if I have been an apprentice, my indenture is out, and I am resolute to set up for myself."

"Take thy quittance first, thou fool!" said Varney; and with a pistol, which he had for some time held in his hand, shot Lambourne through the body.

The wretch fell from his horse, without a single groan; and Varney, dismounting, rifled his pockets, turning out the lining, that it might appear he had fallen by robbers. He secured the earl's packet, which was his chief object, but he also took Lambourne's purse, containing some gold pieces, the reliques of what his debauchery had left him, and, from a singular combination of feelings, carried it in his hand only the length of a small river which crossed the road, into which he threw it as far as he could fling. Such are the strange remnants of conscience which remain after she seems totally subdued, that this cruel and remorseless man would have felt himself degraded had he pocketed the few pieces belonging to the wretch whom he had thus ruthlessly slain.

The murderer reloaded his pistol, after cleansing the lock and barrel from the appearances of late explosion, and rode calmly after the litter; satisfying himself that he had so adroitly removed a troublesome witness to many of his intrigues, and the bearer of mandates which he had no intentions to obey, and which, therefore, he was desirous it should be thought had never reached his hand.

The remainder of the journey was made with a degree of speed, which showed the little care they had for the health of the unhappy countess. They paused only at places where all was under their command, and where the tale of the insane Lady Varney would have obtained ready credit, had she made any attempt to appeal to the compassion of the few persons admitted to see her. But Amy saw no chance of obtaining a hearing from any to whom she had an opportunity of addressing herself; and, besides, was too terrified for the presence of Varney to violate the implied condition, under which she was to travel free from his company. The authority of Varney, often so used, during the earl's private journeys to Cumnor, readily procured relays of horses where wanted, so that they approached Cumnor Place upon the night after they left Kenilworth.

At this period of the journey, Varney came up to the rear of the litter, as he had done before repeatedly during the journey, and asked, "What does she?"

"She sleeps," said Foster; "I would we were home—her strength is exhausted."

"Rest will restore her," answered Varney. "She shall soon sleep sound and long—we must consider how to lodge her in safety."

"In her own apartments to be sure," said Foster. "I have sent Janet to her aunt's, with a proper rebuke, and the old women are truth itself—for they hate this lady cordially."

"We will not trust them, however, friend Anthony," said Varney; "we must secure her in that strong-hold where you keep your gold."

"My gold!" said Anthony, much alarmed; "why, what gold have I?—God help me, I have no gold—I would I had."

"Now, marry hang thee, thou stupid brute—who

thinks of or cares for thy gold?—If I did, could I not find an hundred better ways to come at it?—In one word, thy bed-chamber, which thou hast fenced so curiously, must be her place of seclusion; and thou, thou hind, shalt press her pillows of down.—I dare to say the earl will never ask after the rich furniture of these four rooms."

This last consideration rendered Foster tractable; he only asked permission to ride before, to make matters ready; and, spurring his horse, he posted before the litter, while Varney falling about three-score paces behind it, it remained only attended by Tider.

When they had arrived at Cumnor Place, the countess asked eagerly for Janet, and showed much alarm when informed that she was no longer to have the attendance of that amiable girl.

"My daughter is dear to me, madam," said Foster, gruffly; "and I desire not that she should get the court-tricks of lying and scaping—somewhat too much of that has she learned already, an it please your ladyship."

The countess, much fatigued and greatly terrified by the circumstances of her journey, made no answer to this insolence, but mildly expressed a wish to retire to her chamber.

"Ay, ay," muttered Foster, "'tis but reasonable; but, under favour, you go not to your gew-gaw toy-house yonder—you will sleep to-night in better security."

"I would it were in my grave," said the countess; "but that mortal feelings shiver at the idea of soul and body parting."

"You, I guess, have no chance to shiver at that," replied Foster. "My lord comes hither to-morrow, and doubtless you will make your own ways good with him."

"But does he come hither?—does he indeed, good Foster?"

"O ay, good Foster!" replied the other: "But what Foster shall I be to-morrow, when you speak of me to my lord—though all I have done was to obey his own orders."

"You shall be my protector—a rough one indeed—but still a protector," answered the countess. "O, that Janet were but here!"

"She is better where she is," answered Foster—"one of you is enough to perplex a plain head—but will you taste any refreshment?"

"O no, no—my chamber—my chamber. I trust," she said, "I may secure it on the inside."

"With all my heart," answered Foster, "so I may secure it on the outside;" and taking a light, he led the way to a part of the building where Amy had never been, and conducted her up a stair of great height, preceded by one of the old women with a lamp. At the head of the stair, which seemed of almost immeasurable height, they crossed a short wooden gallery, formed of black oak, and very narrow, at the farther end of which was a strong oaken door, which opened and admitted them into the miser's apartment, homely in its accommodations in the very last degree, and, except in name, little different from a prison vault.

Foster stopped at the door, and gave the lamp to the countess, without either offering or permitting

the attendance of the old woman who had carried it. The lady stood not on ceremony, but taking it hastily, barred the door, and secured it with the ample means provided on the inside for that purpose.

Varney, meanwhile, had lurked behind on the stairs, but hearing the door barred, he now came up on tiptoe, and Foster, winking to him, pointed with self-complacence to a piece of concealed machinery in the wall, which, playing with much ease and little noise, dropped a part of the wooden gallery, after the manner of a draw-bridge, so as to cut off all communication between the door of the bed-room, which he usually inhabited, and the landing-place of the high winding-stair which ascended to it. The rope by which this machinery was wrought was generally carried within the bed-chamber, it being Foster's object to provide against invasion from without; but now that it was intended to secure the prisoner within, the cord had been brought over to the landing-place, and was there made fast, when Foster, with much complacency, had dropped the unsuspected trap-door.

Varney looked with great attention at the machinery, and peeped more than once down the deep abyss which was opened by the fall of the trap door. It was dark as pitch, and seemed profoundly deep, going, as Foster informed his confederate in a whisper, nigh to the lowest vault of the castle. Varney cast once more a fixed and long look down into this sable gulph, and then followed Foster to the part of the manor-house most usually inhabited.

When they arrived in the parlour which we have mentioned, Varney requested Foster to get them supper, and some of the choicest wine. "I will seek Alasco," he added; "we have work for him to do, and we must put him into good heart."

Foster groaned at this intimation, but made no remonstrance. The old woman assured Varney that Alasco had scarce eaten or drunken since her master's departure, living perpetually shut up in the laboratory, and talking as if the world's continuance depended on what he was doing there.

"I will teach him that the world hath other claims on him," said Varney, seizing a light, and going in quest of the alchemist. He returned, after a considerable absence, very pale, but yet with his habitual sneer on his cheek and nostril—"Our friend," he said, "has exhaled."

"How! what mean you?" said Foster—"Run away—fled with my forty pounds, that should have been multiplied a thousand fold? I will have hue and cry."

"I will tell thee a surer way," said Varney.

"How! which way?" exclaimed Foster; "I will have back my forty pounds—I deemed them as surely a thousand times multiplied—I will have back my in-put, at the least."

"Go hang thyself then, and sue Alasco in the devil's court of chancery, for thither he has carried the cause."

"How!—what doest thou mean—is he dead?"

"Ay, truly is he," said Varney; "and properly swoln already in the face and body—He had been mixing some of his devil's medicines, and the glass masque which he used constantly had fallen from his

face, so that the subtle poison entered the brain, and did its work."

"*Sancta Maria!*" said Foster;—"I mean, God in his mercy preserve us from covetousness and deadly sin!—Had he not had projection, think you? Saw you no ingots in the crucibles?"

"Nay, I looked not but at the dead carrion," answered Varney; "an ugly spectacle—he was swoln like a corpse three days exposed on the wheel—Pah! give me a cup of wine."

"I will go," said Foster, "I will examine myself"—He took the lamp, and hastened to the door, but there hesitated, and paused. "Will you not go with me?" said he to Varney.

"To what purpose?" said Varney; "I have seen and smelled enough to spoil my appetite. I broke the window, however, and let in the air—it reeked of sulphur, and such like suffocating steams, as if the very devil had been there."

"And might it not be the act of the demon himself?" said Foster, still hesitating; "I have heard he is powerful at such times, and with such people."

"Still, if it *were* that Satan of thine," answered Varney, "who thus jades thy imagination, thou art in perfect safety, unless he is a most unconscionable devil indeed. He hath had two good sops of late."

"How, *two* sops—what mean you?" said Foster—"what mean you?"

"You will know in time," said Varney;—"and then this other banquet—but thou wilt esteem her too choice a morsel for the fiend's tooth—she must have her psalms, and harps, and seraphs."

Anthony Foster heard, and came slowly back to the table: "God! Sir Richard, and must that then be done?"

"Ay, in very truth, Anthony, or there comes no copyhold thy way."

"I always foresaw it would land there," said Foster; "but how, Sir Richard, how?—for not to win the world would I put hands on her."

"I cannot blame thee," said Varney; "I should be reluctant to do that myself—we miss Alasco and his manna sorely; ay, and the dog Lambourne."

"Why, where tarries Lambourne?" said Anthony.

"Ask no questions," said Varney, "thou wilt see him one day, if thy creed is true.—But to our graver matter.—I will teach thee a springe, Tony, to catch a pewit—yonder trap-door—yonder gimcrack of thine, will remain secure in appearance, will it not, though the supports are withdrawn beneath?"

"Ay, marry, will it," said Foster; "so long as it is not trodden on."

"But were the lady to attempt an escape over it," replied Varney, "her weight would carry it down?"

"A mouse's weight would do it," said Foster.

"Why, then, she dies in attempting her escape; and what could you or I help it, honest Tony? Let us to bed, we will adjust our project to-morrow."

On the next day, when evening approached, Varney summoned Foster to the execution of their plan. Tider and Foster's old man-servant were sent on a feigned errand down to the village, and

Anthony himself, as if anxious to see that the countess suffered no want of accommodation, visited her place of confinement. He was so much staggered at the mildness and patience with which she seemed to endure her confinement, that he could not help earnestly recommending to her not to cross the threshold of her room on any account whatsoever, until Lord Leicester should come; "Which," he added, "I trust in God, will be very soon." Amy patiently promised that she would resign herself to her fate; and Foster returned to his hardened companion with his conscience half-eased of the perilous load that weighed on it. "I have warned her," he said; "surely in vain is the snare set in the sight of any bird."

He left, therefore, the countess's door unsecured on the outside, and, under the eye of Varney, withdrew the supports which sustained the falling trap, which, therefore, kept its level position merely by a slight adhesion. They withdrew to wait the issue on the ground-floor adjoining, but they waited long in vain. At length Varney, after walking long to and fro, with his face muffled in his cloak, threw it suddenly back, and said, "Surely never was a woman fool enough to neglect so fair an opportunity of escape!"

"Perhaps she is resolved," said Foster, "to await her husband's return."

"True!—most true," said Varney, rushing out, "I had not thought of that before."

In less than two minutes, Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the court-yard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the earl's usual signal;—the instant after the door of the countess's chamber opened, and in the same moment the trap-door gave way. There was a rushing sound—a heavy fall—a faint groan—and all was over.

At the same instant, Varney called in at the window, in an accent and tone which was an indescribable mixture betwixt horror and raillery, "Is the bird caught?—Is the deed done?"

"O God, forgive us!" replied Anthony Foster.

"Why, thou fool," said Varney, "thy toil is ended, and thy reward secure. Look down into the vault—what seest thou?"

"I see only a heap of white clothes, like a snow-drift," said Foster. "O God, she moves her arm!"

"Hurl something down on her.—Thy gold chest, Tony—it is an heavy one."

"Varney, thou art an incarnate fiend!" replied Foster;—"There needs nothing more—she is gone!"

"So pass our troubles," said Varney, entering the room; "I dreamed not I could have mimicked the earl's call so well."

"Oh, if there be judgment in heaven, thou hast deserved it!" said Foster, "and wilt meet it—Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections—It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk."

"Thou art a fanatical ass," replied Varney; "let us now think how the alarm should be given,—the body is to remain where it is."

But their wickedness was to be permitted no longer;—for, even while they were at this consul-

tation, Tressilian and Raleigh broke in upon them, having obtained admittance by means of Tider and Foster's servants, whom they had secured at the village.

Anthony Foster fled on their entrance; and, knowing each corner and pass of the intricate old house, escaped all search. But Varney was taken on the spot; and, instead of expressing compunction for what he had done, seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in pointing out to them the remains of the murdered countess, while at the same time he defied them to show that he had any share in her death. The despairing grief of Tressilian, on viewing the mangled and yet warm remains of what had lately been so lovely and so beloved, was such, that Raleigh was compelled to have him removed from the place by force, while he himself assumed the direction of what was to be done.

Varney, upon a second examination, made very little mystery either of the crime or of its motives; alleging, as a reason for his frankness, that though much of what he confessed could only have attached to him by suspicion, yet such suspicion would have been sufficient to deprive him of Leicester's confidence, and to destroy all his towering plans of ambition. "I was not born," he said, "to drag on the remainder of life a degraded outcast,—nor will I so die, that my fate shall make a holiday to the vulgar herd."

From these words it was apprehended he had some design upon himself, and he was carefully deprived of all means by which such could be carried into execution. But, like some of the heroes of antiquity, he carried about his person a small quantity of strong poison, prepared probably by the celebrated Demetrius Alasco. Having swallowed this potion over-night, he was found next morning dead in his cell; nor did he appear to have suffered much agony, his countenance presenting, even in death, the habitual expression of sneering sarcasm, which was predominant while he lived. The wicked man, saith Scripture, hath no bonds in his death.

The fate of his colleague in wickedness was long unknown. Cumnor Place was deserted immediately after the murder; for, in the vicinity of what was called the Lady Dudley's Chamber, the domestics pretended to hear groans and screams, and other supernatural noises. After a certain length of time, Janet, hearing no tidings of her father, became the uncontrolled mistress of his property, and conferred it with her hand upon Wayland, now a man of settled character, and holding a place in Elizabeth's household. But it was after they had been both dead for some years, that their eldest son and heir, in making some researches about Cumnor-hall, discovered a secret passage, closed by an iron door, which, opening from behind the bed in the Lady Dudley's chamber, descended to a sort of cell, in which they found an iron chest containing a quantity of gold, and a human skeleton stretched above it. The fate of Anthony Foster was now manifest. He had fled to this place of concealment, forgetting the key of the spring-lock; and being barred from escape, by the means he had used for preservation of that gold for which he had sold his salvation, he had there perished miserably. Unquestionably the

groans and screams heard by the domestics were not entirely imaginary, but were those of this wretch, who, in his agony, was crying for relief and succour.

The news of the countess's dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse. But as Varney in his last declaration had been studious to spare the character of his patron, the earl was the object rather of compassion than resentment. The queen at length recalled him to court; he was once more distinguished as a statesman and favourite, and the rest of his career is well known to history. But there was something retributive in his death, if, according to an account very generally received, it took place from his swallowing a draught of poison, which was designed for another person.

Sir Hugh Robsart died very soon after his daughter, having settled his estate on Tressilian. But neither the prospect of rural independence, nor the promises of favour which Elizabeth held out to induce him to follow the court, could remove his profound melancholy. Wherever he went, he seemed to see before him the disfigured corpse of the early and only object of his affection. At length, having made provision for the maintenance of the old friends and old servants who formed Sir Hugh's family at Lidcote Hall, he himself embarked with his friend

Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and, young in years but old in griefs, died before his day in that foreign land.

Of inferior persons it is only necessary to say, that Blount's wit grew brighter as his yellow roses faded; and that, doing his part as a brave commander in the wars, he was much more in his element than during the short period of his following the court; and that Flibbertigibbet's acute genius raised him to favour and distinction in the employment both of Burleigh and Cecil.

The outlines of this melancholy tale may be found at length in "Ashmole's Antiquities of Berkshire," and it is alluded to in many other works which treat of Leicester's history. The ingenious translator of Camoens, William Julius Mickle, has made the countess's tragedy the subject of a beautiful elegy, called Cumnor-hall, which concludes with these lines:—

The village maids, with fearful glance,
Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall,
Nor ever lead the merry dance
Among the groves of Cumnor-hall.

And many a traveller has sigh'd,
And pensive mourn'd that lady's fall,
As wandering onward he has spied
The haunted towers of Cumnor-hall.

The Pirate.

Nothing in him —
But doth suffer a sea-change.

Tempest.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE purpose of the following Narrative is to give a detailed and accurate account of certain remarkable incidents which took place in the Orkney Islands, concerning which the more imperfect traditions and mutilated records of the country only tell us the following erroneous particulars:—

In the month of January 1724-5, a vessel, called the *Revenge*, bearing twenty large guns, and six smaller, commanded by JOHN GOW, or GOFFE, or SMITH, came to the Orkney Islands, and was discovered to be a pirate, by various acts of insolence and villany committed by the crew. These were for some time submitted to, the inhabitants of these remote islands not possessing arms or means of resistance; and so bold was the captain of these banditti, that he not only came ashore, and gave dancing parties in the village of Stromness, but, before his real character was discovered, engaged the affections, and received the troth-plight, of a young lady possessed of some property. A patriotic individual, JAMES FEA, younger of Clestron, formed the plan of securing the buccaneer, which he effected by a mixture of courage and address, in consequence chiefly of Gow's vessel having gone on shore near the harbour of Calfsound, on the Island of Eda, not far distant from a house then inhabited by Mr FEA. In the various stratagems by which Mr FEA contrived finally, at the peril of his life (they being well armed and desperate), to make the whole pirates his prisoners, he was much aided by Mr JAMES LAING, the grandfather of the late MALCOLM LAING, Esq., the acute and ingenious historian of Scotland during the seventeenth century.

Gow, and others of his crew, suffered, by sentence of the High Court of Admiralty, the punishment their crimes had long deserved. He conducted himself with great audacity when before the court; and, from an account of the matter, by an eye-witness, seems to have been subjected to some unusual severities, in order to compel him to plead. The words are these: "JOHN GOW would not plead, for which he was brought to the bar, and the judge ordered that his thumbs should be squeezed by two men, with a whip-cord, till it did break; and then it should be doubled till it did again break, and then laid threefold, and that the executioners should pull with their whole strength; which sentence Gow endured with a great deal of boldness." The next morning (27th May, 1725), when he had seen the preparations for pressing him to death, his courage gave way, and he told the Marshal of Court, that he would not have given so much trouble, had he been assured of not being hanged in chains. He was then tried, condemned, and executed, with others of his crew.

It is said, that the lady whose affections Gow had

engaged, went up to London to see him before his death, and that, arriving too late, she had the courage to request a sight of his body; and then touching the hand of the corpse, she formally resumed the troth-plight which she had bestowed. Without going through this ceremony, she could not, according to the superstition of the country, have escaped a visit from the ghost of her departed lover, in the event of her bestowing upon any living suitor the faith which she had plighted to the dead. This part of the legend may serve as a curious commentary on the beautiful tale of the fine Scottish ballad, which begins,

There came a ghost to Margaret's door, &c

The common account of this incident farther bears, that Mr FEA, the spirited individual by whose exertions Gow's career of iniquity was cut short, was so far from receiving any reward from Government, that he could not obtain even countenance enough to protect him against a variety of sham suits, raised against him by Newgate solicitors, who acted in the name of Gow, and others of the pirate crew; and the various expenses, vexatious prosecutions, and other legal consequences, in which his gallantry involved him, utterly ruined his fortune, and his family; making his memory a notable example to all who shall in future take pirates on their own authority.

It is to be supposed, for the honour of GEORGE the First's government, that the last circumstance, as well as the dates, and other particulars of the commonly received story, are inaccurate, since they will be found totally irreconcilable with the following veracious narrative, compiled from materials to which he himself alone has had access, by

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

1st November, 1821.

CHAPTER I.

The storm had ceased its wintry roar,
Hoarse dash the billows of the sea;
But who, on Thule's desert shore,
Cries, Have I burn'd my harp for thee?

MACNIEL.

THAT long, narrow, and irregular island, usually called the Main-land of Zetland, because it is by far the largest of the Archipelago, terminates, as is well known to the mariners who navigate the stormy seas which surround the Thule of the ancients, in a cliff of tremendous height, entitled Sumburgh-head, which presents its bare scalp and naked sides to the weight of a tremendous surge, and forms the extreme point of the isle to the south-east. This lofty pro-

montory is constantly exposed to the current of a strong and furious tide, which, setting in betwixt the Orkney and Zetland Islands, and running with force only inferior to that of the Pentland Frith, takes its name from the headland we have mentioned, and is called the Roost of Sumburgh; *roost* being the phrase assigned in these isles to currents of this description.

On the land side, the promontory is covered with short grass, and slopes steeply down to a little isthmus, upon which the sea has encroached in creeks, which, advancing from either side of the island, gradually work their way forward, and seem as if, in a short time, they would form a junction, and altogether insulate Sumburgh-head, when what is now a cape, will become a lonely mountain islet, severed from the main-land, of which it is at present the terminating extremity.

Man, however, had in former days considered this as a remote or unlikely event; for a Norwegian chief of other times, or, as other accounts said, and as the name of Jarlshof seemed to imply, an ancient Earl of the Orkneys, had selected this neck of land as the place for establishing a mansion-house. It has been long entirely deserted, and the vestiges can only be discerned with difficulty; for the loose sand, borne on the tempestuous gales of these stormy regions, has overblown, and almost buried, the ruins of the buildings; but in the end of the seventeenth century, a part of the earl's mansion was still entire and inhabitable. It was a rude building of rough stone, with nothing about it to gratify the eye, or to excite the imagination: a large old-fashioned house, with a very steep roof, covered with flags composed of grey sandstone, would perhaps convey the best idea of the place to a modern reader. The windows were few, were very small in size, and were distributed up and down the building with utter contempt of regularity. Against the main structure had rested, in former times, certain smaller copartments of the mansion-house, containing offices, or subordinate apartments, necessary for the accommodation of the earl's retainers and menials. But these had become ruinous; and the rafters had been taken down for fire-wood, or for other purposes; the walls had given way in many places; and, to complete the devastation, the sand had already drifted amongst the ruins, and filled up what had been once the chambers they contained, to the depth of two or three feet.

Amid this desolation, the inhabitants of Jarlshof had contrived, by constant labour and attention, to keep in order a few roods of land, which had been enclosed as a garden, and which, sheltered by the walls of the house itself, from the relentless sea-blast, produced such vegetables as the climate could bring forth, or rather as the sea-gale would permit to grow; for these islands experience even less of the rigour of cold than is encountered on the main-land of Scotland; but, unsheltered by a wall of some sort or other, it is scarce possible to raise even the most ordinary culinary vegetables; and as for shrubs or trees, they are entirely out of the question, such is the force of the sweeping sea-blast.

At a short distance from the mansion, and near to the sea-beach, just where the creek forms a sort

of imperfect harbour, in which lay three or four fishing-boats, there were a few most wretched cottages for the inhabitants and tenants of the township of Jarlshof, who held the whole district of the land-lord upon such terms as were in those days usually granted to persons of this description, and which, of course, were hard enough. The landlord himself resided upon an estate which he possessed in a more eligible situation, in a different part of the island, and seldom visited his possessions at Sumburgh-head. He was an honest, plain Zetland gentleman, somewhat passionate, the necessary result of being surrounded by dependents; and somewhat over-convivial in his habits, the consequence, perhaps, of having too much time at his disposal; but frank-tempered, and generous to his people, and kind and hospitable to strangers. He was descended also of an old and noble Norwegian family; a circumstance which rendered him dearer to the lower orders, most of whom are of the same race; while the lairds, or proprietors, are generally of Scottish extraction, who, at that early period, were even still considered as strangers and intruders. Magnus Troil, who deduced his descent from the very earl who was supposed to have founded Jarlshof, was peculiarly of this opinion.

The present inhabitants of Jarlshof had experienced, on several occasions, the kindness and good will of the proprietor of the territory. When Mr Mertoun, such was the name of the present inhabitant of the old mansion, first arrived in Zetland, some years before the story commences, he had received at the house of Mr Troil that warm and cordial hospitality for which the islands are distinguished. No one asked him whence he came, where he was going, what was his purpose in visiting so remote a corner of the empire, or what was likely to be the term of his stay. He arrived a perfect stranger, yet was instantly overpowered by a succession of invitations; and in each house which he visited, he found a home as long as he chose to accept it, and lived as one of the family, unnoticed and unnoticed, until he thought proper to remove to some other dwelling. This apparent indifference to the rank, character, and qualities of their guest, did not arise from apathy on the part of his kind hosts, for the islanders had their full share of natural curiosity; but their delicacy deemed it would be an infringement upon the laws of hospitality, to ask questions which their guest might have found it difficult or unpleasing to answer; and instead of endeavouring, as is usual in other countries, to wring out of Mr Mertoun such communications as he might find it agreeable to withhold, the considerate Zetlanders contented themselves with eagerly gathering up such scraps of information as could be collected in the course of conversation.

But the rock in an Arabian desert is not more reluctant to afford water, than Mr Basil Mertoun was niggard in imparting his confidence, even incidentally; and certainly the politeness of the gentry of Thule was never put to a more severe task than when they felt that good-breeding enjoined them to abstain from inquiring into the situation of so mysterious a personage.

All that was actually known of him was easily

summed up. Mr Mertoun had come to Lerwick, then rising into some importance, but not yet acknowledged as the principal town in the island, in a Dutch vessel, accompanied only by his son, a handsome boy of about fourteen years old. His own age might exceed forty. The Dutch skipper introduced him to some of the very good friends with whom he used to barter gin and gingerbread for little Zetland bullocks, smoked geese, and stockings of lambs' wool; and although Meinheer could only say, that "Meinheer Mertoun hab bay his bassage like one gentlemans, and hab given a kreitz-dollar beside to the crew," this introduction served to establish the Dutchman's passenger in a respectable circle of acquaintances, which gradually enlarged, as it appeared that the stranger was a man of considerable acquirements.

This discovery was made almost per force; for Mertoun was as unwilling to speak upon general subjects, as upon his own affairs. But he was sometimes led into discussions, which showed, as it were in spite of himself, the scholar and the man of the world; and, at other times, as if in requital of the hospitality which he experienced, he seemed to compel himself, against his fixed nature, to enter into the society of those around him, especially when it assumed the grave, melancholy, or satirical cast, which best suited the temper of his own mind. Upon such occasions, the Zetlanders were universally of opinion that he must have had an excellent education, neglected only in one striking particular, namely, that Mr Mertoun scarce knew the stem of a ship from the stern; and in the management of a boat, a cow could not be more ignorant. It seemed astonishing such gross ignorance of the most necessary art of life (in the Zetland Isles at least), should subsist along with his accomplishments in other respects; but so it was.

Unless called forth in the manner we have mentioned, the habits of Basil Mertoun were retired and gloomy. From loud mirth he instantly fled; and even the moderated cheerfulness of a friendly party, had the invariable effect of throwing him into deeper dejection than even his usual demeanour indicated.

Women are always particularly desirous of investigating mystery, and of alleviating melancholy, especially when these circumstances are united in a handsome man about the prime of life. It is possible, therefore, that amongst the fair-haired and blue-eyed daughters of Thule this mysterious and pensive stranger might have found some one to take upon herself the task of consolation, had he shown any willingness to accept such kindly offices; but far from doing so, he seemed even to shun the presence of the sex, to which in our distresses, whether of mind or body, we generally apply for pity and comfort.

To these peculiarities Mr Mertoun added another, which was particularly disagreeable to his host and principal patron, Magnus Troil. This magnate of Zetland, descended by the father's side, as we have already said, from an ancient Norwegian family, by the marriage of its representative with a Danish lady, held the devout opinion that a cup of Geneva or Nantz was specific against all cares and afflic-

tions whatsoever. These were remedies to which Mr Mertoun never applied; his drink was water, and water alone, and no persuasion or entreaties could induce him to taste any stronger beverage than was afforded by the pure spring. Now this Magnus Troil could not tolerate; it was a defiance to the ancient northern laws of conviviality, which, for his own part, he had so rigidly observed, that although he was wont to assert that he had never in his life gone to bed drunk (that is, in his own sense of the word), it would have been impossible to prove that he had ever resigned himself to slumber in a state of actual and absolute sobriety. It may be therefore asked, What did this stranger bring into society to compensate the displeasure given by his austere and abstemious habits? He had, in the first place, that manner and self-importance which mark a person of some consequence; and although it was conjectured that he could not be rich, yet it was certainly known by his expenditure that neither was he absolutely poor. He had, besides, some powers of conversation, when, as we have already hinted, he chose to exert them, and his misanthropy, or aversion to the business and intercourse of ordinary life, was often expressed in an antithetical manner, which passed for wit, when better was not to be had. Above all, Mr Mertoun's secret seemed impenetrable, and his presence had all the interest of a riddle, which men love to read over and over, because they cannot find out the meaning of it.

Notwithstanding these recommendations, Mertoun differed in so many material points from his host, that after he had been for some time a guest at his principal residence, Magnus Troil was agreeably surprised when, one evening after they had sate two hours in absolute silence, drinking brandy and water,—that is, Magnus drinking the alcohol, and Mertoun the element,—the guest asked his host's permission to occupy, as his tenant, this deserted mansion of Jarshof, at the extremity of the territory called Dunrossness, and situated just beneath Sumburgh-head. "I shall be handsomely rid of him," quoth Magnus to himself, "and his kill-joy visage will never again stop the bottle in its round. His departure will ruin me in lemons, however, for his mere look was quite sufficient to sour a whole ocean of punch."

Yet the kind-hearted Zetlander generously and disinterestedly remonstrated with Mr Mertoun on the solitude and inconveniences to which he was about to subject himself. "There were scarce," he said, "even the most necessary articles of furniture in the old house—there was no society within many miles—for provisions, the principal article of food would be sour sillocks, and his only company gulls and gannets."

"My good friend," replied Mertoun, "if you could have named a circumstance which would render the residence more eligible to me than any other, it is that there would be neither human luxury nor human society near the place of my retreat; a shelter from the weather for my own head, and for the boy's, is all I seek for. So name your rent, Mr Troil, and let me be your tenant at Jarshof."

"Rent?" answered the Zetlander; "why, no great rent for an old house which no one has lived

in since my mother's time, God rest her; and as for shelter, the old walls are thick enough, and will bear many a bang yet. But, Heaven love you, Mr Mertoun, think what you are purposing. — For one of us to live at Jarlshof, were a wild scheme enough, but you, who are from another country, whether English, Scotch, or Irish, no one can tell" —

"Nor does it greatly matter," said Mertoun, somewhat abruptly.

"Not a herring's scale," answered the laird; "only that I like you the better for being no Scot, as I trust you are not one. Hither they have come like the clack-geese—every chamberlain has brought over a flock of his own name, and his own hatching, for what I know, and here they roost for ever—catch them returning to their own barren Highlands or Lowlands, when they have tasted our Zetland beef, and seen our bonny voes* and lochs. No sir, (here Magnus proceeded with great animation, sipping from time to time the half-diluted spirit which at the same time animated his resentment against the intruders, and enabled him to endure the mortifying reflection which it suggested)—No, sir, the ancient days and the genuine manners of these islands are no more; for our ancient possessors,—our Patersons, our Feas, our Schlagbrenners, our Yhiorbiorns, have given place to Giffords, Scotts, Mouats, men whose names bespeak them or their ancestors strangers to the soil which we the Troils have inhabited long before the days of Turf-Einar, who first taught these isles the mystery of burning peat for fuel, and who has been handed down to a grateful posterity by a name which records the discovery."

This was a subject upon which the potentate of Jarlshof was usually very diffuse, and Mertoun saw him enter upon it with pleasure, because he knew he would not be called upon to contribute any aid to the conversation, and might therefore indulge his own saturnine humour while the Norwegian Zetlander declaimed on the change of times and inhabitants. But just as Magnus had arrived at the melancholy conclusion, "how probable it was, that in another century scarce a *merk*—scarce even an *ure* of land, would be in possession of the Norse inhabitants, the true Udallers† of Zetland," he recollected the circumstances of his guest, and stopped suddenly short. "I do not say all this," he added, interrupting himself, "as if I were unwilling that you should settle on my estate, Mr Mertoun—But for Jarlshof—the place is a wild one—Come from where you will, I warrant you will say, like other travellers, you came from a better climate than ours, for so say you all. And yet you think of a retreat which the very natives run away from. Will you not take your glass?—(This was to be considered as interjectional)—then here's to you."

"My good sir," answered Mertoun, "I am indifferent to climate; if there is but air enough to fill my lungs, I care not if it be the breath of Arabia or of Lapland."

* *Voe*—Salt-water lake.

† The Udallers are the *allodial* possessors of Zetland, who hold their possessions under the old Norwegian law, instead of the feudal tenures introduced among them from Scotland.

"Air enough you may have," answered Magnus, "no lack of that—somewhat damp, strangers allege it to be, but we know a corrective for that—Here's to you, Mr Mertoun—You must learn to *do so*, and to smoke a pipe; and then, as you say, you will find the air of Zetland equal to that of Arabia.—But have you seen Jarlshof?"

The stranger intimated he had not.

"Then," replied Magnus, "you have no idea of your undertaking. If you think it a comfortable roadstead like this, with the house situated on the side of an inland voe, that brings the herrings up to your door, you are mistaken, my heart. At Jarlshof you will see nought but the wild waves tumbling on the bare rocks, and the Roost of Sumburgh running at the rate of fifteen knots an hour."

"I shall see nothing at least of the current of human passions," replied Mertoun.

"You will hear nothing but the clanging and screaming of scarfs, sheer waters, and sea-gulls, from day-break till sun set."

"I will compound, my friend," replied the stranger, "so that I do not hear the chattering of women's tongues."

"Ah," said the Norseman, "that is because you hear just now my little Minna and Brenda singing in the garden with your Mordaunt. Now, I would rather listen to their little voices, than the sky-lark which I once heard in Caithness, or the nightingale that I have read of.—What will the girls do for want of their playmate Mordaunt?"

"They will shift for themselves," answered Mertoun; "younger or elder they will find playmates or dupes.—But the question is, Mr Troil, will you let to me, as your tenant, this old mansion of Jarlshof?"

"Gladly, since you make it your option to live in a spot so desolate."

"And as for the rent?" continued Mertoun.

"The rent?" replied Magnus; "hum—why, you must have the bit of *plantie cruive*, which they once called a garden, and a right in the *scat-hold*, and a six-penny merk of land, that the tenants may fish for you;—eight *lispunds* of butter, and eight shillings sterling yearly is not too much?"

Mr Mertoun agreed to terms so moderate, and from thenceforward resided chiefly at the solitary mansion which we have described in the beginning of this chapter, conforming not only without complaint, but, as it seemed, with a sullen pleasure, to all the privations which so wild and desolate a situation necessarily imposed on its inhabitant.

CHAPTER II.

'T is not alone the scene—the man, Anselmo,
The man finds sympathies in these wild wastes,
And roughly tumbling seas, which faire views
And smother waves deny him.

Ancient Drama.

THE few inhabitants of the township of Jarlshof had at first heard with alarm, that a person of rank superior to their own was come to reside in the ruinous tenement, which they still called the Castle. In those days (for the present times are greatly al-

tered for the better), the presence of a superior, in such a situation, was almost certain to be attended with additional burthens and exactions, for which, under one pretext or another, feudal customs furnished a thousand apologies. By each of these, a part of the tenants' hard won and precarious profits was diverted for the use of their powerful neighbour and superior, the tacksman, as he was called. But the sub-tenants speedily found that no oppression of this kind was to be apprehended at the hands of Basil Mertoun. His own means, whether large or small, were at least fully adequate to his expenses, which, so far as regarded his habits of life, were of the most frugal description. The luxuries of a few books, and some philosophical instruments, with which he was supplied from London as occasion offered, seemed to indicate a degree of wealth unusual in these islands; but, on the other hand, the table and the accommodations at Jarlshof did not exceed what was maintained by a Zetland proprietor of the most inferior description.

The tenants of the hamlet troubled themselves very little about the quality of their superior, as soon as they found that their situation was rather to be mended than rendered worse by his presence; and, once relieved from the apprehension of his tyrannizing over them, they laid their heads together to make the most of him by various petty tricks of overcharge and extortion, which for a while the stranger submitted to with the most philosophic indifference. An incident, however, occurred, which put his character in a new light, and effectually checked all future efforts at extravagant imposition.

A dispute arose in the kitchen of the castle betwixt an old governante, who acted as housekeeper to Mr Mertoun, and Sweyn Erickson, as good a Zetlander as ever rowed a boat to the haaf fishing;* which dispute, as is usual in such cases, was maintained with such increasing heat and vociferation as to reach the ears of the master (as he was called), who, secluded in a solitary turret, was deeply employed in examining the contents of a new package of books from London, which, after long expectation, had found its way to Hull, from thence by a whaling vessel to Lerwick, and so to Jarlshof. With more than the usual thrill of indignation which indolent people always feel when roused into action on some unpleasant occasion, Mertoun descended to the scene of contest, and so suddenly, peremptorily, and strictly, inquired into the cause of dispute, that the parties, notwithstanding every evasion which they attempted, became unable to disguise from him that their difference respected the several interests to which the honest governante, and no less honest fisherman, were respectively entitled, in an over-charge of about one hundred per cent on a bargain of rock-cod, purchased by the former from the latter, for the use of the family at Jarlshof.

When this was fairly ascertained and confessed, Mr Mertoun stood looking upon the culprits with eyes in which the utmost scorn seemed to contend with awakening passion. "Hark you, ye old hag," said he at length to the housekeeper, "avoid my

* *I. e.* The deep-sea fishing, in distinction to that which is practised along shore.

house this instant! and know that I dismiss you, not for being a liar, a thief, and an ungrateful quean,—for these are qualities as proper to you as your name of woman,—but for daring, in my house, to scold above your breath.—And for you, you rascal, who suppose you may cheat a stranger as you would fluch* a whale, know that I am well acquainted with the rights which, by delegation from your master, Magnus Troil, I can exercise over you, if I will. Provoke me to a certain pitch, and you shall learn, to your cost, I can break your rest as easily as you can interrupt my leisure. I know the meaning of *scat*, and *wattle*, and *hawkhen*, and *hagalef*, and every other exaction by which your lords, in ancient and modern days, have wrung your withers; nor is there one of you that shall not rue the day that you could not be content with robbing me of my money, but must also break in on my leisure with your atrocious northern clamour, that rivals in discord the screaming of a flight of arctic gulls."

Nothing better occurred to Sweyn, in answer to this oburgation, than in preferring a humble request that his honour would be pleased to keep the cod-fish without payment, and say no more about the matter; but by this time Mr Mertoun had worked up his passions to an ungovernable rage, and with one hand he threw the money at the fisherman's head, while with the other he pelted him out of the apartment with his own fish.

There was so much of appalling and tyrannic fury in the stranger's manner on this occasion, that Sweyn neither stopped to collect the money nor take back his commodity, but fled at a precipitate rate to the small hamlet, to tell his comrades that if they provoked Master Mertoun any farther, he would turn an absolute Pate Stuart† on their hand, and head and hang without either judgment or mercy.

Hither also came the discarded housekeeper, to consult with her neighbours and kindred (for she also was a native of the village), what she should do to regain the desirable situation from which she had been so suddenly expelled. The old rauzellaar of the village, who had the voice most potential in the deliberations of the township, after hearing what had happened, pronounced that Sweyn Erickson had gone too far in raising the market upon Mr Mertoun; and that whatever pretext the tacksman might assume for thus giving way to his anger, the real grievance must have been the charging the rock cod-fish at a penny instead of a halfpenny a pound; he therefore exhorted all the community never to raise their exactions in future beyond the proportion of threepence upon the shilling, at which rate their master at the castle could not reasonably be expected to grumble, since, as he was disposed to do them no harm, it was reasonable to think that, in a moderate way, he had no objection to do them good. "And three upon twelve," said the experienced rauzellaar, "is a decent and moderate profit, and

* The operation of slicing the blubber from the bones of the whale, is called, technically, *flinching*.

† Meaning, probably, Patrick Stuart, Earl of Orkney, executed for tyranny and oppression, practised on the inhabitants of these remote islands, in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

will bring with it God's blessing and Saint Ronald's."

Proceeding upon the tariff thus judiciously recommended to them, the inhabitants of Jarlshof cheated Mertoun in future only to the moderate extent of twenty-five per cent; a rate to which all nabobs, army-contractors, speculators in the funds, and others, whom recent and rapid success has enabled to settle in the country upon a great scale, ought to submit, as very reasonable treatment at the hand of their rustic neighbours. Mertoun at least seemed of that opinion, for he gave himself no further trouble upon the subject of his household expenses.

The conscript fathers of Jarlshof, having settled their own matters, took next under their consideration the case of Swertha, the banished matron who had been expelled from the castle, whom, as an experienced and useful ally, they were highly desirous to restore to her office of housekeeper, should that be found possible. But as their wisdom here failed them, Swertha, in despair, had recourse to the good offices of Mordaunt Mertoun, with whom she had acquired some favour by her knowledge in old Norwegian ballads, and dismal tales concerning the trows or drows (the dwarfs of the scalds), with whom superstitious eld had peopled many a lonely cavern and brown dale in Dunrossness, as in every other district of Zetland. "Swertha," said the youth, "I can do but little for you, but you may do something for yourself. My father's passion resembles the fury of those ancient champions you sing songs about."

"Ay, ay, fish of my heart," replied the old woman, with a pathetic whine; "the Berserkars were champions who lived before the blessed days of Saint Olave, and who used to run like madmen on swords and spears, and harpoons and muskets, and snap them all into pieces as a finner would go through a herring-net, and then, when the fury went off, were as weak and unstable as water."

"That's the very thing, Swertha," said Mordaunt. "Now, my father never likes to think of his passion after it is over, and is so much of a Berserkar, that, let him be desperate as he will to-day, he will not care about it to-morrow. Therefore, he has not filled up your place in the household at the castle, and not a mouthful of warm food has been dressed there since you went away, and not a morsel of bread baked, but we have lived just upon whatever cold thing came to hand. Now, Swertha, I will be your warrant, that if you go boldly up to the castle, and enter upon the discharge of your duties as usual, you will never hear a single word from him."

Swertha hesitated at first to obey this bold counsel. She said, "To her thinking, Mr Mertoun, when he was angry, looked more like a fiend than any Berserkar of them all; that the fire flashed from his eyes, and the foam flew from his lips; and that it would be a plain tempting of Providence to put herself again in such a venture."

"But, on the encouragement which she received from the son, she determined at length once more to face the parent; and, dressing herself in her ordinary household attire, for so Mordaunt particularly recommended, she slipped into the castle,

and presently resuming the various and numerous occupations which devolved on her, seemed as deeply engaged in household cares as if she had never been out of office.

The first day of her return to her duty, Swertha made no appearance in presence of her master, but trusted that, after his three days' diet on cold meat, a hot dish, dressed with the best of her simple skill, might introduce her favourably to his recollection. When Mordaunt had reported that his father had taken no notice of this change of diet, and when she herself observed that, in passing and repassing him occasionally, her appearance produced no effect upon her singular master, she began to imagine that the whole affair had escaped Mr Mertoun's memory. Neither was she convinced of the contrary until one day, when, happening somewhat to elevate her tone in a dispute with the other maid-servant, her master, who at that time passed the place of contest, eyed her with a strong glance, and pronounced the single word, *Remember!* in a tone which taught Swertha the government of her tongue for many weeks after.

If Mertoun was whimsical in his mode of governing his household, he seemed no less so in his plan of educating his son. He showed the youth but few symptoms of parental affection; yet, in his ordinary state of mind, the improvement of Mordaunt's education seemed to be the utmost object of his life. He had both books and information sufficient to discharge the task of tutor in the ordinary branches of knowledge; and in this capacity was regular, calm, and strict, not to say severe, in exacting from his pupil the attention necessary for his profiting. But in the perusal of history, to which their attention was frequently turned, as well as in the study of classic authors, there often occurred facts or sentiments which produced an instant effect upon Mertoun's mind, and brought on himself suddenly what Swertha, Sweyn, and even Mordaunt, came to distinguish by the name of his dark hour. He was aware, in the usual case, of its approach, and retreated to an inner apartment, into which he never permitted even Mordaunt to enter. Here he would abide in seclusion for days, and even weeks, only coming out at uncertain times, to take such food as they had taken care to leave within his reach, which he used in wonderfully small quantities. At other times, and especially during the winter solstice, when almost every person spends the time within doors in feasting and merriment, this unhappy man would wrap himself in a dark-coloured sea-cloak, and wander out along the stormy beach, or upon the desolate heath, indulging his own gloomy and wayward reveries under the inclement sky, the rather that he was then most sure to wander unencountered and unobserved.

As Mordaunt grew older, he learned to note the particular signs which preceded these fits of gloomy despondency, and to direct such precautions as might insure his unfortunate parent from ill-timed interruption (which had always the effect of driving him to fury), while, at the same time, full provision was made for his subsistence. Mordaunt perceived that at such periods the melancholy fit of his father was greatly prolonged, if he chanced to

present himself to his eyes while the dark hour was upon him. Out of respect, therefore, to his parent, as well as to indulge the love of active exercise and of amusement natural to his period of life, Mordaunt used often altogether to absent himself from the mansion of Jarlshof, and even from the district, secure that his father, if the dark hour passed away in his absence, would be little inclined to inquire how his son had disposed of his leisure, so he was sure he had not watched his own weak moments; that being the subject on which he entertained the utmost jealousy.

At such times, therefore, all the sources of amusement which the country afforded, were open to the younger Mertoun, who in these intervals of his education, had an opportunity to give full scope to the energies of a bold, active, and daring character. He was often engaged with the youth of the hamlet in those desperate sports, to which the "dreadful trade of the samphire-gatherer" is like a walk upon level ground—often joined those midnight excursions upon the face of the giddy cliffs, to secure the eggs or the young of the sea-fowl; and in these daring adventures displayed an address, presence of mind, and activity, which, in one so young, and not a native of the country, astonished the oldest fowlers.

At other times, Mordaunt accompanied Sweyn and other fishermen in their long and perilous expeditions to the distant and deep sea, learning under their direction the management of the boat, in which they equal, or exceed perhaps, any natives of the British empire. This exercise had charms for Mordaunt, independently of the fishing alone.

At this time, the old Norwegian sagas were much remembered, and often rehearsed by the fishermen, who still preserved among themselves the ancient Norse tongue, which was the speech of their forefathers. In the dark romance of those Scandinavian tales, lay much that was captivating to a youthful ear; and the classic fables of antiquity were rivaled at least, if not excelled, in Mordaunt's opinion, by the strange legends of Berserkars, of sea-kings, of dwarfs, giants, and sorcerers, which he heard from the native Zetlanders. Often the scenes around him were assigned as the localities of the wild poems, which, half recited, half chaunted, by voices as hoarse, if not so loud, as the waves over which they floated, pointed out the very bay on which they sailed as the scene of a bloody sea-fight; the scarce-seen heap of stones that bristled over the projecting cape, as the dun or castle of some potent earl or noted pirate; the distant and solitary grey stone on the lonely moor, as marking the grave of a hero; the wild cavern, up which the sea rolled in heavy, broad, and unbroken billows, as the dwelling of some noted sorceress.

The ocean also had its mysteries, the effect of which was aided by the dim twilight, through which it was imperfectly seen for more than half the year. Its bottomless depths and secret caves contained, according to the account of Sweyn and others, skilled in legendary lore, such wonders as modern navigators reject with disdain. In the quiet moon-light bay, where the waves came rippling to the shore, upon a bed of smooth sand intermingled

with shells, the mermaid was still seen to glide along the waters by moon-light, and, mingling her voice with the sighing breeze, was often heard to sing of subterraneous wonders, or to chaunt prophecies of future events. The kraken, that hugest of living things, was still supposed to cumber the recesses of the Northern Ocean; and often, when some fog-bank covered the sea at a distance, the eye of the experienced boatman saw the horns of the monstrous leviathan welking and waving amidst the wreaths of mist, and bore away with all press of oar and sail, lest the sudden suction, occasioned by the sinking of the monstrous mass to the bottom, should drag within the grasp of its multifarious feelers his own frail skiff. The sea-snake was also known, which, arising out of the depths of ocean, stretches to the skies his enormous neck, covered with a mane like that of a war-horse, and with its broad glittering eyes, raised mast-head high, looks out, as it seems, for plunder or for victims.

Many prodigious stories of these marine monsters, and of many others less known, were then universally received among the Zetlanders, whose descendants have not as yet by any means abandoned faith in them.

Such legends are, indeed, everywhere current amongst the vulgar; but the imagination is far more powerfully affected by them on the deep and dangerous seas of the north, amidst precipices and headlands, many hundred feet in height,—amid perilous straits, and currents, and eddies,—long sunken reefs of rock, over which the vivid ocean foams and boils,—dark caverns, to whose extremities neither man nor skiff has ever ventured,—lonely, and often uninhabited isles,—and occasionally the ruins of ancient northern fastnesses, dimly seen by the feeble light of the arctic winter. To Mordaunt, who had much of romance in his disposition, these superstitions formed a pleasing and interesting exercise of the imagination, while, half doubting, half inclined to believe, he listened to the tales chaunted concerning these wonders of nature, and creatures of credulous belief, told in the rude but energetic language of the ancient scalds.

But there wanted not softer and lighter amusement, that might seem better suited to Mordaunt's age, than the wild tales and rude exercises which we have already mentioned. The season of winter, when, from the shortness of the day-light, labour becomes impossible, is in Zetland the time of revel, feasting, and merriment. Whatever the fisherman has been able to acquire during summer, was expended, and often wasted, in maintaining the mirth and hospitality of his hearth during this period; while the landholders and gentlemen of the island gave double loose to their convivial and hospitable dispositions, thronged their houses with guests, and drove away the rigour of the season with jest, glee, and song, the dance, and the wine-cup.

Amid the revels of this merry, though rigorous season, no youth added more spirit to the dance, or glee to the revel, than the young stranger, Mordaunt Mertoun. When his father's state of mind permitted, or indeed required his absence, he wandered from house to house, a welcome guest wherever he came, and lent his willing voice to the song, and

his foot to the revel. A boat, or, if the weather, as was often the case, permitted not that convenience, one of the numerous ponies, which, straying in hordes about the extensive moors, may be said to be at any man's commandment, conveyed him from the mansion of one hospitable Zetlander to that of another. None excelled him in performing the warlike sword-dance, a species of amusement which had been derived from the habits of the ancient Norsemen. He could play upon the *gue*, and upon the common violin, the melancholy and pathetic tunes peculiar to the country; and with great spirit and execution could relieve their monotony with the livelier airs of the North of Scotland. When a party set forth as masquers, or, as they are called in Scotland, *guizards*, to visit some neighbouring laird, or rich udaller, it augured well of the expedition, if Mordaunt Mertoun could be prevailed upon to undertake the office of *skudler*, or leader of the band. Upon these occasions, full of fun and frolic, he led his retinue from house to house, bringing mirth where he went, and leaving regret when he departed. Mordaunt became thus generally known, and beloved as generally, through most of the houses composing the patriarchal community of the main isle; but his visits were most frequently and most willingly paid at the mansion of his father's landlord and protector, Magnus Troil.

It was not entirely the hearty and sincere welcome of the worthy old magnate, nor the sense that he was in effect his father's patron, which occasioned these frequent visits. The hand of welcome was indeed received as eagerly as it was sincerely given, while the ancient udaller, raising himself in his huge chair, whereof the inside was lined with well-dressed seal-skins, and the outside composed of massive oak, carved by the rude graving-tool of some Hamburgh carpenter, shouted forth his welcome in a tone, which might, in ancient times, have hailed the return of *Ioul*, the highest festival of the Goths. There was metal yet more attractive, and younger hearts, whose welcome, if less loud, was as sincere as that of the jolly udaller. But it is matter which ought not to be discussed at the conclusion of a chapter.

CHAPTER III.

O, Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,
They were twa bonnie lasses;
They bigged a house on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it ower wi' rashes.

Fair Bessy Bell I loo'd yestreen,
And thought I ne'er could alter;
But Mary Gray's twa pawky een
Have garr'd my courage falter.

Scots Song.

WE have already mentioned Minna and Brenda, the daughters of Magnus Troil. Their mother had been dead for many years, and they were now two beautiful girls, the eldest only eighteen, which might be a year or two younger than Mordaunt Mertoun, the second about seventeen.—They were the joy of their father's heart, and the light of his old eyes; and although indulged to a degree which might have

endangered his comfort and their own, they repaid his affection with a love, into which even blind indulgence had not introduced slight regard, or feminine caprice. The difference of their tempers and of their complexions was singularly striking, although combined, as is usual, with a certain degree of family resemblance.

The mother of these maidens had been a Scottish lady from the Highlands of Sutherland, the orphan of a noble chief, who, driven from his own country during the feuds of the seventeenth century, had found shelter in those peaceful islands, which, amidst poverty and seclusion, were thus far happy, that they remained unvexed by discord, and unstained by civil broil. The father (his name was Saint Clair) pined for his native glen, his feudal tower, his clansmen, and his fallen authority, and died not long after his arrival in Zetland. The beauty of his orphan daughter, despite her Scottish lineage, melted the stout heart of Magnus Troil. He sued and was listened to, and she became his bride; but dying in the fifth year of their union, left him to mourn his brief period of domestic happiness.

From her mother, Minna inherited the stately form and dark eyes, the raven locks and finely-penciled brows, which showed she was, on one side at least, a stranger to the blood of Thule. Her cheek,—

O call it fair, not pale!

was so slightly and delicately tinged with the rose, that many thought the lily had an undue proportion in her complexion. But in that predominance of the paler flower, there was nothing sickly or languid; it was the true natural colour of health, and corresponded in a peculiar degree with features which seemed calculated to express a contemplative and high-minded character. When Minna Troil heard a tale of woe or of injustice, it was then her blood rushed to her cheeks, and showed plainly how warm it beat, notwithstanding the generally serious, composed, and retiring disposition, which her countenance and demeanour seemed to exhibit. If strangers sometimes conceived that these fine features were clouded by melancholy, for which her age and situation could scarce have given occasion, they were soon satisfied, upon further acquaintance, that the placid, mild quietude of her disposition, and the mental energy of a character which was but little interested in ordinary and trivial occurrences, was the real cause of her gravity; and most men, when they knew that her melancholy had no ground in real sorrow, and was only the aspiration of a soul bent on more important objects than those by which she was surrounded, might have wished her whatever could add to her happiness, but could scarce have desired that, graceful as she was in her natural and unaffected seriousness, she should change that deportment for one more gay. In short, notwithstanding our wish to have avoided that hackneyed simile of an angel, we cannot avoid saying there was something in the serious beauty of her aspect, in the measured, yet graceful ease of her motions, in the music of her voice, and the serene purity of her eye, that seemed as if Minna Troil belonged naturally to some higher and better sphere, and was only the

chance visitant of a world that was scarce worthy of her.

The scarce less beautiful, equally lovely, and equally innocent Brenda, was of a complexion as differing from her sister, as they differed in character, taste, and expression. Her profuse locks were of that paly brown which receives from the passing sun-beam a tinge of gold, but darkens again when the ray has passed from it. Her eye, her mouth, the beautiful row of teeth, which in her innocent vivacity were frequently disclosed; the fresh, yet not too bright glow of a healthy complexion, tinged a skin like the drifted snow, spoke her genuine Scandinavian descent. A fairy form, less tall than that of Minna, but still more finely moulded into symmetry—a careless, and almost childish lightness of step—an eye that seemed to look on every object with pleasure, from a natural and serene cheerfulness of disposition, attracted even more general admiration than the charms of her sister, though perhaps that which Minna did excite, might be of a more intense, as well as a more reverential character.

The dispositions of these lovely sisters were not less different than their complexions. In the kindly affections, neither could be said to excel the other, so much were they attached to their father and to each other. But the cheerfulness of Brenda mixed itself with the every-day business of life, and seemed inexhaustible in its profusion. The less buoyant spirit of her sister appeared to bring to society a contented wish to be interested and pleased with what was going forward, but was rather placidly carried along with the stream of mirth and pleasure, than disposed to aid its progress by any efforts of her own. She endured mirth, rather than enjoyed it; and the pleasures in which she most delighted, were those of a graver and more solitary cast. The knowledge which is derived from books was beyond her reach. Zetland afforded few opportunities, in those days of studying the lessons, bequeathed

By dead men to their kind;

and Magnus Troil, such as we have described him, was not a person within whose mansion the means of such knowledge were to be acquired. But the book of nature was before Minna, that noblest of volumes, where we are ever called to wonder and to admire, even when we cannot understand. The plants of those wild regions, the shells on the shores, and the long list of feathered clans which haunt their cliffs and eyries, were as well known to Minna Troil, as to the most experienced of the fowlers. Her powers of observation were wonderful, and little interrupted by other tones of feeling. The information which she acquired by habits of patient attention, were indelibly riveted in a naturally powerful memory. She had also a high feeling for the solitary and melancholy grandeur of the scenes in which she was placed. The ocean, in all its varied forms of sublimity and terror—the tremendous cliffs that resound to the ceaseless roar of the billows, and the clang of the sea-fowl, had for Minna a charm in almost every state in which the changing seasons exhibited them. With the enthusiastic feelings proper to the romantic race from which her mother de-

scended, the love of natural objects was to her a passion capable of not only occupying, but at times of agitating, her mind. Scenes upon which her sister looked with a sense of transient awe or emotion, which vanished on her return from witnessing them, continued long to fill Minna's imagination, not only in solitude, and in the silence of the night, but in the hours of society. So that sometimes when she sat like a beautiful statue, a present member of the domestic circle; her thoughts were far absent, wandering on the wild sea-shore, and among the yet wilder mountains of her native isles. And yet, when recalled to conversation, and mingling in it with interest there were few to whom her friends were more indebted for enhancing its enjoyments; and although something in her manners claimed deference (notwithstanding her early youth) as well as affection, even her gay, lovely, and amiable sister was not more generally beloved than the more retired and pensive Minna.

Indeed the two lovely sisters were not only the delight of their friends, but the pride of those islands, where the inhabitants of a certain rank were formed, by the remoteness of their situation, and the general hospitality of their habits, into one friendly community. A wandering poet and parcel-musician, who, after going through various fortunes, had returned to end his days as he could in his native islands, had celebrated the daughters of Magnus in a poem, which he entitled *Night and Day*; and, in his description of Minna, might almost be thought to have anticipated, though only in a rude outline, the exquisite lines of Lord Byron,—

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

Their father loved the maidens both so well, that it might be difficult to say which he loved best; saving that, perchance, he liked his graver damsel better in the walk without doors, and his merry maiden better by the fireside; that he more desired the society of Minna when he was sad, and that of Brenda when he was mirthful; and, what was nearly the same thing, preferred Minna before noon, and Brenda after the glass had circulated in the evening.

But it was still more extraordinary, that the affections of Mordaunt Mertoun seemed to hover with the same impartiality as those of their father betwixt the two lovely sisters. From his boyhood, as we have noticed, he had been a frequent inmate of the residence of Magnus at Burgh-Westra, although it lay nearly twenty miles distant from Jarlshof. The impassable character of the country betwixt these places, extending over hills covered with loose and quaking bog, and frequently intersected by the creeks or arms of the sea, which indent the island on either side, as well as by fresh-water streams and lakes, rendered the journey difficult, and even dangerous, in the dark season; yet, as soon as the state of his father's mind warned him to absent himself, Mordaunt, at every risk, and under every

difficulty, was pretty sure to be found the next day at Burgh-Westra, having achieved his journey in less time than would have been employed perhaps by the most active native.

He was of course set down as a wooer of one of the daughters of Magnus, by the public of Zetland; and when the old udaller's great partiality to the youth was considered, nobody doubted that he might aspire to the hand of either of those distinguished beauties, with as large a share of islets, rocky moorland, and shore-fishings, as might be the fitting portion of a favoured child, and with the prospect of possessing half the domains of the ancient house of Troil, when their present owner should be no more. This seemed all a reasonable speculation, and, in theory at least, better constructed than many that are current through the world as unquestionable facts. But, alas! all that sharpness of observation which could be applied to the conduct of the parties, failed to determine the main point, to which of the young persons, namely, the attentions of Mordaunt were peculiarly devoted. He seemed, in general, to treat them as an affectionate and attached brother might have treated two sisters, so equally dear to him that a breath would have turned the scale of affection. Or if at any time, which often happened, the one maiden appeared the more especial object of his attention, it seemed only to be because circumstances called her peculiar talents and disposition into more particular and immediate exercise.

They were both accomplished in the simple music of the north, and Mordaunt, who was their assistant, and sometimes their preceptor, when they were practising this delightful art, might be now seen assisting Minna in the acquisition of those wild, solemn, and simple airs, to which scalds and harpers sung of old the deeds of heroes, and presently found equally active in teaching Brenda the more lively and complicated music, which their father's affection caused to be brought from the English or Scottish capital for the use of his daughters. And while conversing with them, Mordaunt, who mingled a strain of deep and ardent enthusiasm with the gay and ungovernable spirits of youth, was equally ready to enter into the wild and poetical visions of Minna, or into the lively and often humorous chat of her gayer sister. In short, so little did he seem to attach himself to either damsel exclusively, that he was sometimes heard to say, that Minna never looked so lovely, as when her light-hearted sister had induced her, for the time, to forget her habitual gravity; or Brenda so interesting, as when she sate listening, a subdued and affected partaker of the deep pathos of her sister Minna.

The public were, therefore, to use the hunter's phrase, at fault in their farther conclusions, and could but determine, after long vacillating betwixt the maidens, that Mordaunt was positively to marry one of them, but which could only be determined when his approaching manhood, or the interference of stout old Magnus, the father, should teach Master Mordaunt Mertoun to know his own mind. "It was a pretty thing, indeed," they usually concluded, "that he, no native born, and possessed of no visible means of subsistence that was known to any one, should presume to hesitate, or affect to have

the power of selection and choice, betwixt the two most distinguished beauties of Zetland. If they were Magnus Troil, they would soon be at the bottom of the matter"—and so forth. All which remarks were only whispered, for the hasty disposition of the udaller had too much of the old Norse fire about it to render it safe for any one to become an unauthorized intermeddler with his family affairs; and thus stood the relation of Mordaunt Mertoun to the family of Mr Troil of Burgh-Westra, when the following incidents took place.

CHAPTER IV.

This is no pilgrim's morning—yon grey mist
Lies upon hill, and dale, and field, and forest,
Like the dun wimple of a new-made widow;
And, by my faith, although my heart be soft,
I'd rather hear that widow weep and sigh,
And tell the virtues of the dear departed,
Than, when the tempest sends his voice abroad,
Be subject to its fury.

The Double Nuptials.

THE spring was far advanced, when, after a week spent in sport and festivity at Burgh-Westra, Mordaunt Mertoun bade adieu to the family, pleading the necessity of his return to Jarlshof. The proposal was combated by the maidens, and more decidedly by Magnus himself: He saw no occasion whatever for Mordaunt returning to Jarlshof. If his father desired to see him, which, by the way, Magnus did not believe, Mr Mertoun had only to throw himself into the stern of Sweyn's boat, or betake himself to a pony, if he liked a land journey better, and he would see not only his son, but twenty folks besides, who would be most happy to find that he had not lost the use of his tongue entirely during his long solitude; "although I must own," added the worthy udaller, "that when he lived amongst us, nobody ever made less use of it."

Mordaunt acquiesced both in what respected his father's taciturnity, and his dislike to general society; but suggested, at the same time, that the first circumstance rendered his own immediate return more necessary, as he was the usual channel of communication betwixt his father and others; and that the second corroborated the same necessity, since Mr Mertoun's having no other society whatever, seemed a weighty reason why his son's should be restored to him without loss of time. As to his father's coming to Burgh-Westra, "they might as well," he said, "expect to see Sumburgh Cape come thither."

"And that would be a cumbrous guest," said Magnus. "But you will stop for our dinner to-day? There are the families of Muness, Quendale, Therlivoë, and I know not who else, are expected; and, besides the thirty that were in the house this blessed night, we shall have as many more as chamber and bower, and barn and boat-house, can furnish with beds, or with barley-straw, and you will leave all this behind you!"

"And the blithe dance at night," added Brenda, in a tone betwixt reproach and vexation; "and the young men from the Isle of Paba that are to dance

the sword-dance, whom shall we find to match them, for the honour of the Main?"

"There is many a merry dancer on the Main-land, Brenda," replied Mordaunt, "even if I should never rise on tiptoe again. And where good dancers are found, Brenda Troil will always find the best partner. I must trip it to-night through the wastes of Dunrossness."

"Do not say so, Mordaunt," said Minna, who, during this conversation, had been looking from the window something anxiously; "go not, to-day at least, through the wastes of Dunrossness."

"And why not to day, Minna," said Mordaunt, laughing, "any more than to-morrow?"

"O, the morning mist lies heavy upon yonder chain of isles, nor has it permitted us since day-break even a single glimpse of Fitful-head, the lofty cape that concludes yon splendid range of mountains. The fowl are winging their way to the shore, and the shell-drake seems, through the mist, as large as the scarf. See, the very sheerwaters and bonxies are making to the cliffs for shelter."

"And they will ride out a gale against a king's frigate," said her father; "there is foul weather when they cut and run."

"Stay, then, with us," said Minna; "the storm will be dreadful, yet it will be grand to see it from Burgh-Westra, if we have no friend exposed to its fury. See, the air is close and sultry, though the season is yet so early, and the day so calm, that not a windle-straw moves on the heath. Stay with us, Mordaunt; the storm which these signs announce will be a dreadful one."

"I must be gone the sooner," was the conclusion of Mordaunt, who could not deny the signs, which had not escaped his own quick observation. "If the storm be too fierce, I will abide for the night at Stourburgh."

"What!" said Magnus; "will you leave us for the new chamberlain's new Scotch tacksman, who is to teach all us Zetland savages new ways? Take your own gate, my lad, if that is the song you sing."

"Nay," said Mordaunt, "I had only some curiosity to see the new implements he has brought."

"Ay, ay, ferlies make fools fain. I would like to know if his new plough will bear against a Zetland rock?" answered Magnus.

"I must not pass Stourburgh on the journey," said the youth, deferring to his patron's prejudice against innovation, "if this boding weather bring on tempest; but if it only break in rain, as is most probable, I am not likely to be melted in the wetting."

"It will not soften into rain alone," said Minna; "see how much heavier the clouds fall every moment, and see these weather-gaws that streak the lead-coloured mass with partial gleams of faded red and purple."

"I see them all," said Mordaunt; "but they only tell me I have no time to tarry here. Adieu, Minna; I will send you the eagle's feathers, if an eagle can be found on Fair-isle or Foulah. And fare thee well, my pretty Brenda, and keep a thought for me, should the Paba men dance ever so well."

"Take care of yourself, since go you will," said both sisters, together.

Old Magnus scolded them formally for supposing

there was any danger to an active young fellow from a spring gale, whether by sea or land; yet ended by giving his own caution also to Mordaunt, advising him seriously to delay his journey, or at least to stop at Stourburgh. "For," said he, "second thoughts are best; and as this Scotchman's howf lies right under your lee, why, take any port in a storm. But do not be assured to find the door on latch, let the storm blow ever so hard; there are such matters as bolts and bars in Scotland, though, thanks to Saint Ronald, they are unknown here, save that great lock on the old Castle of Scalloway, that all men run to see—maybe they make part of this man's improvements. But go, Mordaunt, since go you will. You should drink a stirrup-cup now, were you three years older, but boys should never drink, excepting after dinner; I will drink it for you, that good customs may not be broken, or bad luck come of it. Here is your bonally, my lad." And so saying, he quaffed a rummer glass of brandy with as much impunity as if it had been spring-water. Thus regretted and cautioned on all hands, Mordaunt took leave of the hospitable household, and looking back at the comforts with which it was surrounded, and the dense smoke that rolled upwards from its chimneys, he first recollected the guestless and solitary desolation of Jarlishof, then compared with the sullen and moody melancholy of his father's temper the warm kindness of those whom he was leaving, and could not refrain from a sigh at the thoughts which forced themselves on his imagination.

The signs of the tempest did not dishonour the predictions of Minna. Mordaunt had not advanced three hours upon his journey, before the wind, which had been so deadly still in the morning, began at first to wail and sigh, as if bemoaning beforehand the evils which it might perpetrate in its fury, like a madman in the gloomy state of dejection which precedes his fit of violence; then gradually increasing, the gale howled, raged, and roared, with the full fury of a northern storm. It was accompanied by showers of rain mixed with hail, which were dashed with the most unrelenting rage against the hills and rocks with which the traveller was surrounded, distracting his attention, in spite of his uttermost exertions, and rendering it very difficult for him to keep the direction of his journey in a country where is neither road, nor even the slightest track to direct the steps of the wanderer, and where he is often interrupted by large pools of water, lakes, and lagoons. All these inland waters were now lashed into sheets of tumbling foam, much of which, carried off by the fury of the whirlwind, was mingled with the gale, and transported far from the waves of which it had lately made a part; while the salt relish of the drift which was pelted against his face, showed Mordaunt that the spray of the more distant ocean, disturbed to frenzy by the storm, was mingled with that of the inland lakes and streams.

Amidst this hideous combustion of the elements, Mordaunt Mertoun struggled forward as one to whom such elemental war was familiar, and who regarded the exertions which it required to withstand its fury, but as a mark of resolution and manhood.

He felt even, as happens usually to those who endure great hardships, that the exertion necessary to subdue them, is in itself a kind of elevating triumph. To see and distinguish his path when the cattle were driven from the hill, and the very fowls from the firmament, was but the stronger proof of his own superiority. "They shall not hear of me at Burgh-Westra," said he to himself, "as they heard of old doited Ringan Ewenson's boat, that foundered betwixt roadstead and key. I am more of a crags-man than to mind fire or water, wave by sea, or quagmire by land." Thus he struggled on, buffeting with the storm, supplying the want of the usual signs by which travellers directed their progress (for rock, mountain, and headland, were shrouded in mist and darkness), by the instinctive sagacity with which long acquaintance with these wilds had taught him to mark every minute object, which could serve in such circumstances to regulate his course. Thus, we repeat, he struggled onward, occasionally standing still, or even lying down, when the gust was most impetuous; making way against it when it was somewhat lulled, by a rapid and bold advance even in its very current; or, when this was impossible, by a movement resembling that of a vessel working to windward by short tacks, but never yielding one inch of the way which he had fought so hard to gain.

Yet, notwithstanding Mordaunt's experience and resolution, his situation was sufficiently uncomfortable, and even precarious; not because his sailor's jacket and trowsers, the common dress of young men through these isles when on a journey, were thoroughly wet, for that might have taken place within the same brief time, in any ordinary day, in this watery climate; but the real danger was, that, notwithstanding his utmost exertions, he made very slow way through brooks that were sending their waters all abroad, through morasses drowned in double deluges of moisture, which rendered all the ordinary passes more than usually dangerous, and repeatedly obliged the traveller to perform a considerable circuit, which in the usual case was unnecessary. Thus repeatedly baffled, notwithstanding his youth and strength, Mordaunt, after maintaining a dogged conflict with wind, rain, and the fatigue of a prolonged journey, was truly happy, when, not without having been more than once mistaken in his road, he at length found himself within sight of the house of Stourburgh, or Harfra; for the names were indifferently given to the residence of Mr Triptolemus Yellowley, who was the chosen missionary of the Chamberlain of Orkney and Zetland, a speculative person, who designed, through the medium of Triptolemus, to introduce into the *Ultima Thule* of the Romans a spirit of improvement, which at that early period was scarce known to exist in Scotland itself.

At length, and with much difficulty, Mordaunt reached the house of this worthy agriculturist, the only refuge from the relentless storm which he could hope for several miles; and going straight to the door, with the most undoubting confidence of instant admission, he was not a little surprised to find it not merely latched, which the weather might excuse, but even bolted, a thing which, as Magnus Troil

has already intimated, was almost unknown in the Archipelago. To knock, to call, and finally to batter the door with staff and stones, were the natural resources of the youth, who was rendered alike impatient by the pelting of the storm, and by the most unexpected and unusual obstacles to instant admission. As he was suffered, however, for many minutes to exhaust his impatience in noise and clamour, without receiving any reply, we will employ them in informing the reader who Triptolemus Yellowley was, and how he came by a name so singular.

Old Jasper Yellowley, the father of Triptolemus (though born at the foot of Roseberry-Topping), had been *come over* by a certain noble Scottish Earl, who, proving too far north for canny Yorkshire, had persuaded him to accept of a farm in the Mearns, where, it is unnecessary to add, he found matters very different from what he had expected. It was in vain that the stout farmer set manfully to work, to counterbalance, by superior skill, the inconveniences arising from a cold soil and a weeping climate. These might have been probably overcome; but his neighbourhood to the Grampians exposed him eternally to that species of visitation from the plaided gentry who dwelt within their skirts, which made young Norval a warrior and a hero, but only converted Jasper Yellowley into a poor man. This was, indeed, balanced in some sort by the impression which his ruddy cheek and robust form had the fortune to make upon Miss Barbara Clinksale, daughter to the umquhile, and sister to the then existing Clinksale of that ilk.

This was thought a horrid and unnatural union in the neighbourhood, considering that the house of Clinksale had at least as great a share of Scottish pride as of Scottish parsimony, and was amply endowed with both. But Miss Babie had her handsome fortune of two thousand merks at her own disposal, was a woman of spirit who had been *major* and *sui juris* (as the writer who drew the contract assured her) for full twenty years; so that she set consequences and commentaries alike at defiance, and wedded the hearty Yorkshire yeoman. Her brother and her more wealthy kinsmen drew off in disgust, and almost disowned their degraded relative. But the house of Clinksale was allied (like every other family in Scotland at the time) to a set of relations who were not so nice—tenth and sixteenth cousins, who not only acknowledged their kinswoman Babie after her marriage with Yellowley, but even condescended to eat beans and bacon (though the latter was then the abomination of the Scots as much as of the Jews) with her husband, and would willingly have cemented the friendship by borrowing a little cash from him, had not his good lady (who understood trap as well as any woman in the Mearns) put a negative on this advance to intimacy. Indeed she knew how to make young Deil-belicket, old Dougald Baresword, the Laird of Brandybrawl, and others, pay for the hospitality which she did not think proper to deny them, by rendering them useful in her negotiations with the light-handed lads beyond the Cairn, who, finding their late object of plunder was now allied to "kend folks, and owned by them at kirk and market," became

satisfied, on a moderate yearly composition, to desist from their depredations.

This eminent success reconciled Jasper to the dominion which his wife began to assume over him; and which was much confirmed by her proving to be—let me see—what is the prettiest mode of expressing it?—in the family way. On this occasion, Mrs Yellowley had a remarkable dream, as is the usual practice of teeming mothers previous to the birth of an illustrious offspring. She “was a-dreamed,” as her husband expressed it, that she was safely delivered of a plough, drawn by three yoke of Angushire oxen; and being a mighty investigator into such portents, she sate herself down with her gossips, to consider what the thing might mean. Honest Jasper ventured, with much hesitation, to intimate his own opinion, that the vision had reference rather to things past than things future, and might have been occasioned by his wife’s nerves having been a little startled by meeting in the loan above the house, his own great plough with the six oxen, which were the pride of his heart. But the good cummers raised such a hue and cry against this exposition, that Jasper was fain to put his fingers in his ears, and to run out of the apartment.

“Hear to him,” said an old whigamore carline—“hear to him, wi’ his owsen, that are as an idol to him, even as the calf of Bethel!—Na, na—it’s nae pleugh of the flesh that the bonnie lad-bairn—for a lad it sall be—sall e’er striddle between the stilts o’—it’s the pleugh of the spirit—and I trust mysell to see him wag the head o’ him in a pu’pit; or, at the warst, on a hill-side.”

“Now the de’il’s in your whiggery,” said the old Lady Glenprosing; “wad ye hae our cummer’s bonnie lad-bairn wag the head aff his shouthers like your godly Mess James Guthrie, that ye hald such a clavering about?—Na, na, he sall walk a mair siccar path, and be a dainty curate—and say he should live to be a bishop, what the waur wad he be?”

The gauntlet thus fairly flung down by one sibyl, was caught up by another, and the controversy raged, roared, or rather screamed, a round of cinnamon-water serving only like oil to the flame, till Jasper entered with the plough-staff; and by the awe of his presence, and the shame of misbehaving “before the stranger man,” imposed some conditions of silence upon the disputants.

I do not know whether it was impatience to give to the light a being destined to such high and doubtful fates, or whether poor Dame Yellowley was rather frightened at the hurly-burly which had taken place in her presence, but she was taken suddenly ill; and, contrary to the formula in such cases used and provided, was soon reported to be “a good deal worse than was to be expected.” She took the opportunity (having still all her wits about her) to extract from her sympathetic husband two promises; first, that he would christen the child, whose birth was like to cost her so dear, by a name indicative of the vision with which she had been favoured; and next, that he would educate him for the ministry. The canny Yorkshireman, thinking she had a good title at present to dictate in such matters, subscribed to all she required. A man-child was accordingly born under these conditions, but the state of the mother did not permit her for many days to inquire

how far they had been complied with. When she was in some degree convalescent, she was informed, that as it was thought fit the child should be immediately christened, it had received the name of Triptolemus; the curate, who was a man of some classical skill, conceiving that this epithet contained a handsome and classical allusion to the visionary plough, with its triple yoke of oxen. Mrs Yellowley was not much delighted with the manner in which her request had been complied with; but grumbling being to as little purpose as in the celebrated case of Tristram Shandy, she e’en sat down contented with the heathenish name, and endeavoured to counteract the effects it might produce upon the taste and feelings of the nominee, by such an education as might put him above the slightest thought of sacks, coulter, stilt, mould-board, or anything connected with the servile drudgery of the plough.

Jasper, sage Yorkshireman, smiled slyly in his sleeve, conceiving that young Trippie was likely to prove a chip of the old block, and would rather take after the jolly Yorkshire yeoman, than the gentle but somewhat *aigre* blood of the house of Clinkscale. He remarked, with suppressed glee, that the tune which best answered the purpose of a lullaby, was the “Ploughman’s Whistle;” and the first words the infant learned to stammer, were the names of the oxen; moreover, that the “bern” preferred home-brewed ale to Scotch two-penny, and never quitted hold of the tankard with so much reluctance, as when there had been, by some manoeuvre of Jasper’s own device, a double straik of malt allowed to the brewing, above that which was sanctioned by the most liberal recipe of which his dame’s household thrift admitted. Besides this, when no other means could be fallen upon to divert an occasional fit of squalling, his father observed that Trip could be always silenced by jingling a bridle at his ear. From all which symptoms he used to swear in private, that the boy would prove true Yorkshire, and mother and mother’s kin would have small share of him.

Meanwhile, and within a year after the birth of Triptolemus, Mrs Yellowley bore a daughter, named after herself Barbara, who, even in earliest infancy, exhibited the pinched nose and thin lips by which the Clinkscale family were distinguished among the inhabitants of the Mearns; and as her childhood advanced, the readiness with which she seized, and the tenacity wherewith she detained, the playthings of Triptolemus, besides a desire to bite, pinch, and scratch, on slight, or no provocation, were all considered by attentive observers as proofs that Miss Babie would “prove her mither over again.” Malicious people did not stick to say, that the acrimony of the Clinkscale blood had not, on this occasion, been cooled and sweetened by that of Old England; that young Deilbelicket was much about the house, and they could not but think it odd that Mrs Yellowley, who, as the whole world knew, gave nothing for nothing, should be so uncommonly attentive to heap the trencher, and to fill the caup, of an idle blackguard ne’er-do-weel. But when folks had once looked upon the austere and awfully virtuous countenance of Mrs Yellowley, they did full jus-

tice to her propriety of conduct, and Deilbelicket's delicacy of taste.

Meantime young Triptolemus, having received such instructions as the curate could give him (for though Dame Yellowley adhered to the persecuted remnant, her jolly husband, edified by the black gown and prayer-book, still conformed to the church as by law established), was, in due process of time, sent to St Andrews to prosecute his studies. He went, it is true, but with an eye turned back with sad remembrances on his father's plough, his father's pancakes, and his father's ale, for which the small beer of the college, commonly there termed "thorough-go-nimble," furnished a poor substitute. Yet he advanced in his learning, being found, however, to show a particular favour to such authors of antiquity as had made the improvement of the soil the object of their researches. He endured the *Bucolics* of Virgil—the *Georgics* he had by heart—but the *Æneid* he could not away with; and he was particularly severe upon the celebrated line expressing a charge of cavalry, because, as he understood the word *putrem*,* he opined that the combatants, in their inconsiderate ardour, galloped over a new-manured ploughed field. Cato, the Roman censor, was his favourite among classical heroes and philosophers, not on account of the strictness of his morals, but because of his treatise, *de Re Rustica*. He had ever in his mouth the phrase of Cicero, *Jam neminem antepones Catoni*. He thought well of Palladius, and of Terentius Varro, but Columella was his pocket companion. To these ancient worthies, he added the more modern Tusser, Hartlib, and other writers on rural economics, not forgetting the lucubrations of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, and such of the better informed Philomaths, who, instead of loading their almanacks with vain predictions of political events, direct the attention of their readers to that course of cultivation from which the production of good crops may be safely predicted, and who, careless of the rise and downfall of empires, content themselves with pointing out the fit seasons to reap and sow, with a fair guess at the weather which each month will be likely to present; as, for example, that if Heaven pleases, we shall have snow in January, and the author will stake his reputation that July proves, on the whole, a month of sunshine. Now, although the Rector of Saint Leonard's was greatly pleased, in general, with the quiet, laborious, and studious bent of Triptolemus Yellowley, and deemed him, in so far, worthy of a name of four syllables having a Latin termination, yet he relished not, by any means, his exclusive attention to his favourite authors. It savoured of the earth, he said, if not of something worse, to have a man's mind always groveling in mould, stercorated or unstercorated; and he pointed out, but in vain, history, and poetry, and divinity, as more elevating subjects of occupation. Triptolemus Yellowley was obstinate in his own course: Of the battle of Pharsalie, he thought not as it affected the freedom of the world, but dwelt on the rich crop which the Emathian fields were likely to produce the next season. In vernacular poetry Triptolemus could

scarce be prevailed upon to read a single couplet excepting old Tusser, as aforesaid, whose *Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* he had got by heart; and excepting also Piers Ploughman's *Vision*, which, charmed with the title, he bought with avidity from a packman, but after reading the two first pages, flung it into the fire as an impudent and misnamed political libel. As to divinity, he summed that matter up by reminding his instructors, that to labour the earth and win his bread with the toil of his body and sweat of his brow, was the lot imposed upon fallen man; and, for his part, he was resolved to discharge, to the best of his abilities, a task so obviously necessary to existence, leaving others to speculate as much as they would, upon the more recondite mysteries of theology.

With a spirit so much narrowed and limited to the concerns of rural life, it may be doubted whether the proficiency of Triptolemus in learning, or the use he was like to make of his acquisitions, would have much gratified the ambitious hope of his affectionate mother. It is true, he expressed no reluctance to embrace the profession of a clergyman, which suited well enough with the habitual personal indolence which sometimes attaches to speculative dispositions. He had views, to speak plainly (I wish they were peculiar to himself), of cultivating the *glebe* six days in the week, preaching on the seventh with due regularity, and dining with some fat franklin or country laird, with whom he could smoke a pipe and drink a tankard after dinner, and mix in secret conference on the exhaustless subject,

Quæ faciunt lætas segetes,

Now, this plan, besides that it indicated nothing of what was then called the root of the matter, implied necessarily the possession of a manse; and the possession of a manse inferred compliance with the doctrines of prelacy, and other enormities of the time. There was some question how far manse and glebe, stipend, victual, and money, might have out-balanced the good lady's predisposition towards presbytery; but her zeal was not put to so severe a trial. She died before her son had completed his studies, leaving her afflicted spouse just as disconsolate as was to be expected. The first act of old Jasper's undivided administration was to recal his son from St Andrews, in order to obtain his assistance in his domestic labours. And here it might have been supposed that our Triptolemus, summoned to carry into practice what he had so fondly studied in theory, must have been, to use a simile which *he* would have thought lively, like a cow entering upon a clover park. Alas, mistaken thoughts, and deceitful hopes of mankind!

A laughing philosopher, the Democritus of our day, once compared human life to a table pierced with a number of holes, each of which has a pin made exactly to fit it, but which pins being stuck in hastily, and without selection, chance leads inevitably to the most awkward mistakes. "For, how often do we see," the orator pathetically concluded,—“how often, I say, do we see the round man stuck into the three-cornered hole!” This new illustration of the vagaries of fortune set every one

* Quadrupedumque putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.

present into convulsions of laughter, excepting one fat alderman, who seemed to make the case his own, and insisted that it was no jesting matter. To take up the simile, however, which is an excellent one, it is plain that Triptolemus Yellowley had been shaken out of the bag at least a hundred years too soon. If he had come on the stage in our own time, that is, if he had flourished at any time within these thirty or forty years, he could not have missed to have held the office of vice-president of some eminent agricultural society, and to have transacted all the business thereof under the auspices of some noble duke or lord, who, as the matter might happen, either knew, or did not know, the difference betwixt a horse and a cart, and a cart-horse. He could not have missed such preferment, for he was exceedingly learned in all those particulars, which, being of no consequence in actual practice, go, of course, a great way to constitute the character of a connoisseur in any art, but especially in agriculture. But, alas! Triptolemus Yellowley had, as we already have hinted, come into the world at least a century too soon; for, instead of sitting in an arm-chair, with a hammer in his hand, and a bumper of port before him, giving forth the toast,—“To breeding, in all its branches,” his father planted him betwixt the stils of a plough, and invited him to guide the oxen, on whose beauties he would, in our day, have descanted, and whose rumps he would not have goaded, but have carved. Old Jasper complained, that although no one talked so well of common and several, wheat and rape, fallow and lea, as his learned son (whom he always called Tolimus), yet, “dang it,” added the Seneca, “nought thrives wi’ un—nought thrives wi’ un.” It was still worse, when Jasper, becoming frail and ancient, was obliged, as happened in the course of a few years, gradually to yield up the reins of government to the academical neophyte.

As if nature had meant him a spite, he had got one of the *dourest* and most untractable farms in the Mearns, to try conclusions withal, a place which seemed to yield everything but what the agriculturist wanted; for there were plenty of thistles, which indicates dry land; and store of fern, which is said to intimate deep land; and nettles, which show where lime hath been applied; and deep furrows in the most unlikely spots, which intimated that it had been cultivated in former days by the Peghts, as popular tradition bore. There was also plenty of stones to keep the ground warm, according to the creed of some farmers, and great abundance of springs to render it cool and sappy, according to the theory of others. It was in vain that, acting alternately on these opinions, poor Triptolemus endeavoured to avail himself of the supposed capabilities of the soil. No kind of butter that might be churned could be made to stick upon his own bread, any more than on that of poor Tusser, whose Hundred Points of Good Husbandry, so useful to others of his day, were never to himself worth as many pennies.

In fact, excepting an hundred acres of infield, to which old Jasper had early seen the necessity of limiting his labours, there was not a corner of the farm fit for anything but to break plough-graith, and kill cattle. And then, as for the part which was

really tilled with some profit, the expense of the farming establishment of Triptolemus, and his disposition to experiment, soon got rid of any good arising from the cultivation of it. “The carles and the cart-avers,” he confessed, with a sigh, speaking of his farm-servants and horses, “make it all, and the carles and cart-avers eat it all;” a conclusion which might sum up the year-book of many a gentleman-farmer.

Matters would have soon been brought to a close with Triptolemus in the present day. He would have got a bank-credit, manœuvred with wind-bills, dashed out upon a large scale, and soon have seen his crop and stock sequestrated by the sheriff; but in those days a man could not ruin himself so easily. The whole Scottish tenantry stood upon the same level flat of poverty, so that it was extremely difficult to find any vantage ground, by climbing up to which a man might have an opportunity of actually breaking his neck with some eclat. They were pretty much in the situation of people, who, being totally without credit, may indeed suffer from indigence, but cannot possibly become bankrupt. Besides, notwithstanding the failure of Triptolemus’s projects, there was to be balanced against the expenditure which they occasioned, all the savings which the extreme economy of his sister Barbara could effect; and in truth her exertions were wonderful. She might have realized, if any one could, the idea of the learned philosopher, who pronounced that sleeping was a fancy, and eating but a habit, and who appeared to the world to have renounced both, until it was unhappily discovered that he had an intrigue with the cook-maid of the family, who indemnified him for his privations by giving him private *entrée* to the larder, and to a share of her own couch. But no such deceptions were practised by Barbara Yellowley. She was up early, and down late, and seemed, to her over-watched and over-tasked maidens, to be as *wakerife* as the cat herself. Then, for eating, it appeared that the air was a banquet to her, and she would fain have made it so to her retinue. Her brother, who, besides being lazy in his person, was somewhat luxurious in his appetite, would willingly now and then have tasted a mouthful of animal food, were it but to know how his sheep were fed off; but a proposal to eat a child could not have startled Mistress Barbara more; and, being of a compliant and easy disposition, Triptolemus reconciled himself to the necessity of a perpetual Lent, too happy when he could get a scrap of butter to his oaten cake, or (as they lived on the banks of the Esk) escape the daily necessity of eating salmon, whether in or out of season, six days out of the seven.

But although Mrs Barbara brought faithfully to the joint stock all savings which her awful powers of economy accomplished to scrape together, and although the dower of their mother was by degrees expended, or nearly so, in aiding them upon extreme occasions, the term at length approached when it seemed impossible that they could sustain the conflict any longer against the evil star of Triptolemus, as he called it himself, or the natural result of his absurd speculations, as it was termed by others. Luckily at this sad crisis, a god jumped down to

their relief out of a machine. In plain English, the noble lord, who owned their farm, arrived at his mansion-house in their neighbourhood, with his coach and six and his running footmen, in the full splendour of the seventeenth century.

This person of quality was the son of the nobleman who had brought the ancient Jasper into the country from Yorkshire, and he was, like his father, a fanciful and scheming man. He had schemed well for himself, however, amid the mutations of the time, having obtained for a certain period of years, the administration of the remote islands of Orkney and Zetland, for payment of a certain rent, with the right of making the most of whatever was the property or revenue of the crown in these districts, under the title of lord chamberlain. Now, his lordship had become possessed of a notion, in itself a very true one, that much might be done to render this grant available, by improving the culture of the crown lands, both in Orkney and Zetland; and then, having some acquaintance with our friend Triptolemus, he thought (rather less happily) that he might prove a person capable of furthering his schemes. He sent for him to the great Hall-house, and was so much edified by the way in which our friend laid down the law upon every given subject, that he lost no time in securing the co-operation of so valuable an assistant.

The terms were arranged much to the mind of Triptolemus, who had already been taught, by many years' experience, a dark sort of notion, that, without undervaluing or doubting for a moment his own skill, it would be quite as well that almost all the trouble and risk should be at the expense of his employer. Indeed the hopes of advantage which he held out to his patron were so considerable, that the lord chamberlain dropped every idea of admitting his dependent into any share of the expected profits; for, rude as the arts of agriculture were in Scotland, they were far superior to those known and practised in the regions of Thule, and Triptolemus Yellowley conceived himself to be possessed of a degree of insight into these mysteries, far superior to what was possessed or practised in the Mearns. The improvement, therefore, which was to be expected, would bear a double proportion, and the lord chamberlain was to reap all the profit, deducting a handsome salary for his steward, Yellowley, together with the accommodation of a house and domestic farm, for the support of his family. Joy seized the heart of Mistress Barbara, at hearing this happy termination of what threatened to be so very bad an affair as their lease of Cauldshouthers.

"If we cannot," she said, "provide for our own house, when all is coming in, and nothing going out, surely we must be worse than infidels."

Triptolemus was a busy man for some time, huffing and puffing, and eating and drinking in every change-house, while he ordered and collected together proper implements of agriculture, to be used by the natives of these devoted islands, whose destinies were menaced with this formidable change. Strange tools these would be, if presented before a modern agricultural society; but everything is relative, nor could the heavy cart-load of timber, called the old Scotch plough, seem more strange to

a Scottish farmer of this present day, than the corslets and casques of the soldiers of Cortes might seem to a regiment of our soldiers. Yet the latter conquered Mexico, and undoubtedly the former would have been a splendid improvement on the state of agriculture in Thule.

We have never been able to learn why Triptolemus preferred fixing his residence in Zetland, to becoming an inhabitant of the Orkneys. Perhaps he thought the inhabitants of the latter Archipelago the more simple and docile of the two kindred tribes; or perhaps he preferred the situation of the house and farm which he himself was to occupy (which was indeed a tolerable one), as preferable to that which he had it in his power to have had upon Pomona (so the main island of the Orkneys is entitled). At Harfra, or, as it was sometimes called, Stourburgh, from the remains of a Pictish fort, which was almost close to the mansion-house, the factor settled himself, in the plenitude of his authority; determined to honour the name he bore by his exertions, in precept and example, to civilize the Zetlanders, and improve their very confined knowledge in the primary arts of human life.

CHAPTER V.

The wind blew keen frae north and east;
It blew upon the floor.
Quo' our goodman to our goodwife,
"Get up and bar the door."

"My hand is in my housewife-skep,
Goodman, as ye may see;
If it shouldna be barr'd this hundred years,
It's no be barr'd for me."

Old Song.

WE can only hope that the gentle reader has not found the latter part of the last chapter extremely tedious; but, at any rate, his impatience will scarce equal that of young Mordaunt Mertoun, who, while the lightning came flash after flash, while the wind, veering and shifting from point to point, blew with all the fury of a hurricane, and while the rain was dashed against him in deluges, stood hammering, calling, and roaring at the door of the old Place o' Harfra, impatient for admittance, and at a loss to conceive any position of existing circumstances, which could occasion the exclusion of a stranger, especially during such horrible weather. At length, finding his noise and vociferation were equally in vain, he fell back so far from the front of the house as was necessary to enable him to reconnoitre the chimneys; and amidst "storm and shade," could discover, to the increase of his dismay, that though noon, then the dinner hour of these islands, was now nearly arrived, there was no smoke proceeding from the tunnels of the vents to give any note of preparation within.

Mordaunt's wrathful impatience was now changed into sympathy and alarm; for, so long accustomed to the exuberant hospitality of the Zetland islands, he was immediately induced to suppose some strange and unaccountable disaster had befallen the family; and forthwith set himself to discover some place at which he could make forcible entry, in order to as-

certain the situation of the inmates, as much as to obtain shelter from the still increasing storm. His present anxiety was, however, as much thrown away as his late clamorous importunities for admittance had been. Triptolemus and his sister had heard the whole alarm without, and had already had a sharp dispute on the propriety of opening the door.

Mrs Babie, as we have described her, was no willing renderer of the rites of hospitality. In their farm of Cauldshouthers, in the Mearns, she had been the dread and abhorrence of all gaberlunzie men, and travelling packmen, gipsies, long-remembered beggars, and so forth; nor was there one of them so wily, as she used to boast, as could ever say they had heard the clink of her sneck. In Zetland, where the new settlers were yet strangers to the extreme honesty and simplicity of all classes, suspicion and fear joined with frugality in her desire to exclude all wandering guests of uncertain character; and the second of these motives had its effect on Triptolemus himself, who, though neither suspicious nor penurious, knew good people were scarce, good farmers scarcer, and had a reasonable share of that wisdom which looks towards self-preservation as the first law of nature. These hints may serve as a commentary on the following dialogue which took place between the brother and sister.

"Now good be gracious to us," said Triptolemus, as he sate thumbing his old school-copy of Virgil, "here is a pure day for the bear seed!—Well spoke the wise Mantuan—*ventis surgentibus*—and then the groans of the mountains, and the long resounding shores—but where's the woods, Babie? tell me, I say, where we shall find the *nemorum murmur*, sister Babie, in these new seats of ours?"

"What's your foolish will?" said Babie, popping her head from out of a dark recess in the kitchen, where she was busy about some nameless deed of housewifery.

Her brother, who had addressed himself to her more from habit than intention, no sooner saw her bleak red nose, keen grey eyes, with the sharp features thereunto conforming, shaded by the flaps of the loose *toy* which depended on each side of her eager face, than he bethought himself that his query was like to find little acceptance from her, and therefore stood another volley before he would resume the topic.

"I say, Mr Yellowley," said sister Babie, coming into the middle of the room, "what for are ye crying on me, and me in the midst of my housewife-skep?"

"Nay, for nothing at all, Babie," answered Triptolemus, "saving that I was saying to myself, that here we had the sea, and the wind, and the rain sufficient enough, but where's the wood? where's the wood, Babie? answer me that."

"The wood?" answered Babie—"Were I no to take better care of the wood than you, brother, there would soon be no more wood about the town than the barber's block that's on your own shoulders, Triptolemus. If ye be thinking of the wreck-wood that the callants brought in yesterday, there was six ounces of it gaed to boil your parritch this morning; though, I trow, a carefu' man would have ta'en dram-

mock, if breakfast he behoved to have, rather than waste baith meltith and fuel in the same morning."

"That is to say, Babie," replied Triptolemus, who was somewhat of a dry joker in his way, "that when we have fire we are not to have food, and when we have food we are not to have fire, these being too great blessings to enjoy both in the same day. Good luck, you do not propose we should starve with cold and starve with hunger *unico contextu*? But to tell you the truth, I could never away with raw oatmeal, slockened with water, in all my life. Call it drammock, or crowdie, or just what ye list, my vivers must thole fire and water."

"The mair gowk you," said Babie; "can ye not make your brose of the Sunday, and sup them cauld on the Monday, since ye're sae dainty? Mony is the fairer face than yours that has licked the lip after such a cogfu'."

"Mercy on us, sister!" said Triptolemus; "at this rate, it's a finished field with me—I must unyoke the pleugh, and lie down to wait for the dead-thraw. Here is that in this house wad hold all Zetland in meal for a twelvemonth, and ye grudge a cogfu' of warm parritch to me, that has sic a charge!"

"Whisht—hold your silly claverin tongue," said Babie, looking round with apprehension—"ye are a wise man to speak of what is in the house, and a fitting man to have the charge of it.—Hark, as I live by bread, I hear a tapping at the outer yett!"

"Go and open it then, Babie," said her brother, glad at anything that promised to interrupt the dispute.

"Go and open it, said he?" echoed Babie, half angry, half frightened, and half triumphant, at the superiority of her understanding over that of her brother—"Go and open it, said you, indeed?—is it to lend robbers a chance to take all that is in the house?"

"Robbers!" echoed Triptolemus in his turn;—"there are no more robbers in this country than there are lambs at Youle. I tell you, as I have told you a hundred times, there are no Highlandmen to harry us here. This is a land of quiet and honesty. *O fortunati nimium!*"

"And what good is Saint Rimian to do ye, Tolemus?" said his sister, mistaking the quotation for a catholic invocation. "Besides, if there be no Highlandmen, there may be as bad. I saw sax or seven as ill-looking chields gang past the place yesterday, as ever came frae beyont Cloch-na-ben; ill-far'd tools they had in their hands, whaaling knives they ca'd them, but they looked as like whingers as ae bit airn can look like anither. There is nae honest men carry siccan tools."

Here the knocking and shouts of Mordaunt were very audible betwixt every swell of the horrible blast which was careering without. The brother and sister looked at each other in real perplexity and fear. "If they have heard of the siller," said Babie, her very nose changing with terror from red to blue, "we are but gane folks."

"Who speaks now, when they should hold their peace?" said Triptolemus. "Go to the shot-window instantly, and see how many there are of them, while I load the old Spanish-barreled duck-gun—go as if you were stepping on new-laid eggs."

Babie crept to the window, and reported that she saw only "one young chield, clattering and roaring

as gin he were daft. How many there might be out of sight, she could not say."

"Out of sight!—nonsense," said Triptolemus, laying aside the ramrod with which he was loading the piece, with a trembling hand. "I will warrant them out of sight and hearing both—this is some poor fellow caught in the tempest, wants the shelter of our roof, and a little refreshment. Open the door, Babie, it's a christian deed."

"But is it a christian deed of him to come in at the window then?" said Babie, setting up a most doleful shriek, as Mordaunt Mertoun, who had forced open one of the windows, leaped down into the apartment, dripping with water like a river god. Triptolemus, in great tribulation, presented the gun which he had not yet loaded, while the intruder exclaimed, "Hold, hold—what the devil mean you by keeping your doors bolted in weather like this, and leveling your gun at folk's heads as you would at a sealgh's."

"And who are you, friend, and what want you?" said Triptolemus, lowering the butt of his gun to the floor as he spoke, and so recovering his arms.

"What do I want!" said Mordaunt; "I want everything—I want meat, drink, and fire, a bed for the night, and a sheltie for to-morrow morning to carry me to Jarlshof."

"And ye said there were nae caterans or sorners here?" said Babie to the agriculturist, reproachfully. "Heard ye ever a breeless loon frae Lochaber tell his mind and his errand mair deftly?—Come, come, friend," she added, addressing herself to Mordaunt, "put up your pipes and gang your gate; this is the house of his lordship's factor, and no place of reset for thiggers or sorners."

Mordaunt laughed in her face at the simplicity of the request. "Leave built walls," he said, "and in such a tempest as this? What take you me for?—a gannet or a scarf do you think I am, that your clapping your hands and skirling at me like a mad woman, should drive me from the shelter into the storm?"

"And so you propose, young man," said Triptolemus, gravely, "to stay in my house, *volens nolens*—that is to say, whether we will or no?"

"Will!" said Mordaunt; "what right have you to will anything about it? Do you not hear the thunder? Do you not hear the rain? Do you not see the lightning? And do you not know this is the only house within I wot not how many miles? Come, my good master and dame, this may be Scottish jesting, but it sounds strange in Zetland ears. You have let out the fire too, and my teeth are dancing a jig in my head with cold; but I'll soon put that to rights."

He seized the fire-tongs, raked together the embers upon the hearth, broke up into life the gathering-peat, which the hostess had calculated should have preserved the seeds of fire, without giving them forth, for many hours; then casting his eye round, saw in a corner the stock of drift wood, which Mistress Babie had served forth by ounces, and transferred two or three logs of it at once to the hearth, which, conscious of such unwonted supply, began to transmit to the chimney such a smoke as had not

issued from the Place of Harfra for many a day.

While their uninvited guest was thus making himself at home, Babie kept edging and jogging the factor to turn out the intruder. But for this undertaking, Triptolemus Yellowley felt neither courage nor zeal, nor did circumstances seem at all to warrant the favourable conclusion of any fray in which he might enter with the young stranger. The sinewy limbs and graceful form of Mordaunt Mertoun were seen to great advantage in his simple sea-dress; and with his dark sparkling eye, finely formed head, animated features, close curled dark hair, and bold free looks, the stranger formed a very strong contrast with the host on whom he had intruded himself. Triptolemus was a short, clumsy, duck-legged disciple of Ceres, whose bottle-nose, turned up and handsomely coppered at the extremity, seemed to intimate something of an occasional treaty with Bacchus. It was like to be no equal mellay betwixt persons of such unequal form and strength; and the difference betwixt twenty and fifty years was nothing in favour of the weaker party. Besides, the factor was an honest good-natured fellow at bottom, and being soon satisfied that his guest had no other views than those of obtaining refuge from the storm, it would, despite his sister's instigations, have been his last act to deny a boon so reasonable and necessary to a youth whose exterior was so prepossessing. He stood, therefore, considering how he could most gracefully glide into the character of the hospitable landlord, out of that of the churlish defender of his domestic castle, against an unauthorized intrusion, when Babie, who had stood appalled at the extreme familiarity of the stranger's address and demeanour, now spoke up for herself.

"My troth, lad," said she to Mordaunt, "ye are no blate, to light on at that rate, and the best of wood too—nane of your sharney peats, but good aik timber, nae less maun serve ye!"

"You come lightly by it, dame," said Mordaunt, carelessly; "and you should not grudge the fire what the sea gives you for nothing. These good ribs of oak did their last duty upon earth and ocean, when they could hold no longer together under the brave hearts that manned the bark."

"And that's true, too," said the old woman, softening—"this maun be awsome weather by sea. Sit down and warm ye, since the sticks are a-low."

"Ay, ay," said Triptolemus, "it is a pleasure to see siccan a bonnie bleeze. I havena seen the like o't since I left Cauldaces."

"And shallna see the like o't again in a hurry," said Babie, "unless the house take fire, or there suld be a coal-heugh found out."

"And wherefore should not there be a coal-heugh found out?" said the factor, triumphantly—"I say, wherefore should not a coal-heugh be found out in Zetland as well as in Fife, now that the chamberlain has a far-sighted and discreet man upon the spot to make the necessary perquisitions? They are baith fishing-stations, I trow."

"I tell you what it is, Tolemus Yellowley," answered his sister, who had practical reasons to fear of her brother's opening upon any false scent, "if you promise my lord sae mony of these bonnie-wawlies, we'll no be weel hafted here before we are

found out and set a-trotting again. If ane was to speak to ye about a gold mine, I ken weel wha would promise he suld have Portugal pieces clinking in his pouch before the year gaed by."

"And why suld I not?" said Triptolemus—"maybe your head does not know there is a laud in Orkney called Ophir, or something very like it; and wherefore might not Solomon, the wise King of the Jews, have sent thither his ships and his servants for four hundred and fifty talents? I hope he knew best where to go or send, and I hope you believe in your Bible, Babie?"

Babie was silenced by an appeal to Scripture, however *mal-à-propos*, and only answered by an inarticulate humph of incredulity or scorn, while her brother went on addressing Mordaunt—"Yes, you shall all of you see what a change shall coin introduce, even into such an unpropitious country as yours. Ye have not heard of copper, I warrant, or of iron-stone, in these islands neither?" Mordaunt said he had heard there was copper near the Cliffs of Konigsburgh. "Ay, and a copper scum is found on the Loch of Swana too, young man. But the youngest of you, doubtless, thinks himself a match for such as I am."

Babie, who during all this while had been closely and accurately reconnoitring the youth's person, now interposed in a manner by her brother totally unexpected. "Ye had mair need, Mr Yellowley, to give the young man some dry clothes, and to see about getting something for him to eat, than to sit there bleezing away with your lang tales, as if the weather were not windy enow without your help; and maybe the lad would drink some *bland*, or siclike, if ye had the grace to ask him."

While Triptolemus stood astonished at such a proposal, considering the quarter it came from, Mordaunt answered, he "would be very glad to have dry clothes, but begged to be excused from drinking until he had eaten somewhat."

Triptolemus accordingly conducted him into another apartment, and accommodating him with a change of dress, left him to his arrangements, while he himself returned to the kitchen, much puzzled to account for his sister's unusual fit of hospitality. "She must be fey,"* he said, "and in that case has not long to live, and though I fall heir to her tocher-good, I am sorry for it; for she has held the house-gear well together—drawn the girth over tight it may be now and then, but the saddle sits the better."

When Triptolemus returned to the kitchen, he found his suspicions confirmed; for his sister was in the desperate action of consigning to the pot a smoked goose, which, with others of the same tribe, had long hung in the large chimney, muttering to herself at the same time,—“It maun be eaten sune or syne and what for no by the puir callant?”

"What is this of it, sister?" said Triptolemus. "You have on the girdle and the pot at ance. What day is this wi' you?"

* When a person changes his condition suddenly, as when a miser becomes liberal, or a churl good-humoured, he is said, in Scotch, to be *fey*; that is, predestined to speedy death, of which such mutations of humour are received as a sure indication.

"E'en such a day as the Israelites had beside the flesh-pots of Egypt, billie Triptolemus; but ye little ken wha ye have in your house this blessed day."

"Troth, and little I do ken," said Triptolemus, "as little as I would ken the naig I never saw before. I would take the lad for a yagger, but he has rather ower good havings, and he has no pack."

"Ye ken as little as ane of your ain bits of nowt, man," retorted sister Babie; "if ye kenna him, do ye ken Tronda Dronsdaughter?"

"Tronda Dronsdaughter?" echoed Triptolemus—"how should I but ken her, when I pay her twal pennies Scots by the day, for working in the house here? I trow she works as if the things burned her fingers. I had better give a Scots lass a groat of English siller."

"And that's the maist sensible word ye have said this blessed morning.—Weel, but Tronda kens this lad weel, and she has often spoke to me about him. They call his father the Silent Man of Sumburgh, and they say he's uncanny."

"Hout, hout—nonsense, nonsense—they are aye at sic trash as that," said the brother, "when you want a day's wark out of them—they have stepped ower the tangs, or they have met an uncanny body, or they have turned about the boat against the sun, and then there's nought to be done that day."

"Well, well, brother, ye are so wise," said Babie, "because ye knapped Latin at Saint Andrew's; and can your lair tell me then what the lad has round his halse?"

"A Barcelona napkin, as wet as a dishclout, and I have just lent him one of my own overlays," said Triptolemus.

"A Barcelona napkin!" said Babie, elevating her voice, and then suddenly lowering it, as from apprehension of being overheard—"I say a gold chain."

"A gold chain!" said Triptolemus.

"In troth is it, hinny; and how like you that? The folk say here, as Tronda tells me, that the King of the Drows gave it to his father the Silent Man of Sumburgh."

"I wish you would speak sense, or be the silent woman," said Triptolemus. "The upshot of it all is, then, that this lad is the rich stranger's son, and that you are giving him the goose you were to keep till Michaelmas?"

"Troth, brother, we maun do something for God's sake, and to make friends; and the lad," added Babie (for even she was not altogether above the prejudices of her sex in favour of outward form), "the lad has a fair face of his ain."

"Ye would have let mony a fair face," said Triptolemus, "pass the door pining, if it had not been for the gold chain."

"Nae doubt, nae doubt," replied Barbara; "ye wad not have me waste our substance on every thigger or sornier that has the luck to come by the door in a wet day? But this lad has a fair and a wide name in the country, and Tronda says he is to be married to a daughter of the rich ndaller, Magnus Troil, and the marriage-day is to be fixed whenever he makes choice (set him up) between the twa lasses; and so it wad be as much as our good name, and our quiet is worth forbye, to let him

sit unserved, although he does come unsent for."

"The best reason in life," said Triptolemus, "for letting a man into a house is, that you dare not bid him go by. However, since there is a man of quality amongst them, I will let him know whom he has to do with, in my person." Then advancing to the door, he exclaimed, "*Heus tibi, Dave!*"

"*Adsum,*" answered the youth, entering the apartment.

"Hem!" said the erudite Triptolemus, "not altogether deficient in his humanities, I see. I will try him farther.—Canst thou aught of husbandry, young gentleman?"

"Troth, sir, not I," answered Mordaunt; "I have been trained to plough upon the sea, and to reap upon the crag."

"Plough the sea!" said Triptolemus; "that's a furrow requires small harrowing; and for your harvest on the crag, I suppose you mean these *scowries*, or whatever you call them. It is a sort of in-gathering which the ranzelman should stop by the law; nothing more likely to break an honest man's bones. I profess I cannot see the pleasure men propose by dangling in a rope's-end betwixt earth and heaven. In my case, I had as lief the other end of the rope were fastened to the gibbet; I should be sure of not falling, at least."

"Now, I would only advise you to try it," replied Mordaunt. "Trust me, the world has few grander sensations than when one is perched in mid-air between a high-browed cliff and a roaring ocean, the rope by which you are sustained seeming scarce stronger than a silken thread, and the stone on which you have one foot steadied, affording such a breadth as the kitty-wake might rest upon—to feel and know all this with the full confidence that your own agility of limb, and strength of head, can bring you as safe off as if you had the wing of the goss-hawk—this is indeed being almost independent of the earth you tread on."

Triptolemus stared at this enthusiastic description of an amusement which had so few charms for him; and his sister, looking at the glancing eye and elevated bearing of the young adventurer, answered, by ejaculating, "My certie, lad, but ye are a brave chield!"

"A brave chield?" returned Yellowley,—"I say a brave goose, to be flichtering and fleeing in the wind when he might abide upon *terra firma*; but come, here's a goose that is more to the purpose, when once it is well boiled. Get us trenchers and salt, Babie—but in truth it will prove salt enough—a tasty morsel it is; but I think the Zetlanders be the only folks in the world that think of running such risks to catch geese, and then boiling them when they have done."

"To be sure," replied his sister (it was the only word they had agreed in that day), "it would be an unco thing to bid any gudewife in Angus or a' the Mearns boil a goose, while there was sic things as spits in the warld.—But wha's this neist?" she added, looking towards the entrance with great indignation. "My certie, open doors and dogs come in—and wha opened the door to him?"

"I did, to be sure," replied Mordaunt; "you would not have a poor devil stand beating your deaf

door-cheeks in weather like this?—Here goes something, though, to help the fire," he added, drawing out the sliding bar of oak with which the door had been secured, and throwing it on the hearth, whence it was snatched by Dame Babie in great wrath, she exclaiming at the same time,—

"It's sea-borne timber, as there's little else here, and he dings it about as if it were a fir-clog!—And who be you, an it please you?" she added, turning to the stranger—"a very hallanshaker loon, as ever crossed my twa een."

"I am a jagger, if it like your ladyship," replied the uninvited guest, a stout, vulgar little man, who had indeed the humble appearance of a pedlar, called jagger in those islands—"never travelled in a waur day, or was more willing to get to harbourage.—Heaven be praised for fire and house-room!"

So saying, he drew a stool to the fire, and sate down without farther ceremony. Dame Babie stared "wild as grey goss-hawk," and was meditating how to express her indignation in something warmer than words, for which the boiling pot seemed to offer a convenient hint, when an old half-starved serving-woman, the sharer of her domestic cares, who had been as yet in some remote corner of the mansion, now hobbled into the room, and broke out into exclamations which indicated some new cause of alarm.

"O master!" and "O mistress!" were the only sounds she could for some time articulate, and then followed them up with, "The best in the house—the best in the house—set a' on the board, and a' will be little eneugh—there is auld Norna of Fitful-head, the most fearful woman in all the isles!"

"Where can she have been wandering?" said Mordaunt, not without some apparent sympathy with the surprise, if not with the alarm, of the old domestic; "but it is needless to ask—the worse the weather, the more likely is she to be a traveller."

"What new tramper is this?" echoed the distracted Babie, whom the quick succession of guests had driven well nigh crazy with vexation. "I'll soon settle her wandering, I sall warrant, if my brother has but the soul of a man in him, or if there be a pair of jouns at Scalloway."

"The iron was never forged on stithy that would haud her," said the old maid-servant. "She comes—she comes—God's sake speak her fair and canny, or we will have a raveled hasp on the yarn-windles."

As she spoke, a woman tall enough almost to touch the top of the door with her cap, stepped into the room, signing the cross as she entered, and pronouncing, with a solemn voice, "The blessing of God and Saint Ronald on the open door, and their broad malison and mine upon close-handed churls!"

"And wha are ye, that are sae bauld wi' your blessing and banning in other folk's houses? What kind of country is this, that folks cannot sit quiet for an hour, and serve Heaven, and keep their bit gear thegither, without gangrel men and women coming thigging and sörning aue after another, like a string of wild-geese?"

This speech, the understanding reader will easily saddle on Mistress Babie, and what effects it might

have produced on the last stranger, can only be matter of conjecture; for the old servant and Mordaunt applied themselves at once to the party addressed, in order to deprecate her resentment; the former speaking to her some words of Norse, in a tone of intercession, and Mordaunt saying in English, "They are strangers, Norna, and know not your name or qualities; they are unacquainted, too, with the ways of this country, and therefore we must hold them excused for their lack of hospitality."

"I lack no hospitality, young man," said Triptolemus, "*miseris succurrere disco*—the goose that was destined to roost in the chimney till Michaelmas, is boiling in the pot for you; but if we had twenty geese, I see we are like to find mouths to eat them every feather—this must be amended."

"What must be amended, sordid slave?" said the stranger Norna, turning at once upon him with an emphasis that made him start—"What must be amended? Bring hither, if thou wilt, thy new-fangled coulter, spades, and harrows, alter the implements of our fathers from the plough-share to the mouse-trap; but know thou art in the land that was won of old by the flaxen-haired Kempions of the north, and leave us their hospitality at least, to show we come of what was once noble and generous. I say to you, beware—while Norna looks forth at the measureless waters from the crest of Fitful-head, something is yet left that resembles power of defence. If the men of Thule have ceased to be champions, and to spread the banquet for the raven, the women have not forgotten the arts that lifted them of yore into queens and prophetesses."

The woman who pronounced this singular tirade, was as striking in appearance as extravagantly lofty in her pretensions and in her language. She might well have represented on the stage, so far as features, voice, and stature were concerned, the Bonduca or Boadicea of the Britons, or the sage Velleda, Aurinia, or any other fated Pythoness, who ever led to battle a tribe of the ancient Goths. Her features were high and well formed, and would have been handsome but for the ravages of time, and the effects of exposure to the severe weather of her country. Age, and perhaps sorrow, had quenched, in some degree, the fire of a dark-blue eye, whose hue almost approached to black, and had sprinkled snow on such parts of her tresses as had escaped from under her cap, and were disheveled by the rigour of the storm. Her upper garment, which dropped with water, was of a coarse dark-coloured stuff, called wadmaal, then much used in the Zetland islands, as also in Iceland and Norway. But as she threw this cloak back from her shoulders, a short jacket, of dark-blue velvet, stamped with figures, became visible, and the vest which corresponded to it was of crimson colour, and embroidered with tarnished silver. Her girdle was plaited with silver ornaments, cut into the shape of planetary signs—her blue apron was embroidered with similar devices, and covered a petticoat of crimson cloth. Strong, thick, enduring shoes, of the half-dressed leather of the country, were tied with straps like those of the Roman buskins, over

her scarlet stockings. She wore in her belt an ambiguous-looking weapon, which might pass for a sacrificing knife, or dagger, as the imagination of the spectator chose to assign to the wearer the character of a priestess or of a sorceress. In her hand she held a staff, squared on all sides, and engraved with Runic characters and figures, forming one of those portable and perpetual calendars which were used among the ancient natives of Scandinavia, and which, to a superstitious eye, might have passed for a divining rod.

Such were the appearance, features, and attire, of Norna of the Fitful-head, upon whom many of the inhabitants of the island looked with observance, many with fear, and almost all with a sort of veneration. Less pregnant circumstances of suspicion would, in any other part of Scotland, have exposed her to the investigation of those cruel inquisitors, who were then often invested with the delegated authority of the privy council, for the purpose of persecuting, torturing, and finally consigning to the flames, those who were accused of witchcraft or sorcery. But superstitions of this nature pass through two stages ere they become entirely obsolete. Those supposed to be possessed of supernatural powers, are venerated in the earlier stages of society. As religion and knowledge increase, they are first held in hatred and horror, and are finally regarded as impostors. Scotland was in the second state—the fear of witchcraft was great, and the hatred against those suspected of it intense. Zetland was as yet a little world of itself, where, among the lower and ruder classes, so much of the ancient northern superstition remained, as cherished the original veneration for those affecting supernatural knowledge, and power over the elements, which made a constituent part of the ancient Scandinavian creed. At least if the natives of Thule admitted that one class of magicians performed their feats by their alliance with Satan, they devoutly believed that others dealt with spirits of a different and less odious class—the ancient dwarfs, called, in Zetland, trows or drows, the modern fairies, and so forth.

Among those who were supposed to be in league with disembodied spirits, this Norna, descended from, and representative of, a family which had long pretended to such gifts, was so eminent, that the name assigned to her, which signifies one of those fatal sisters who weave the web of human fate, had been conferred in honour of her supernatural powers. The name by which she had been actually christened was carefully concealed by herself and her parents; for to its discovery they superstitiously annexed some fatal consequences. In those times, the doubt only occurred whether her supposed powers were acquired by lawful means. In our days, it would have been questioned whether she was an impostor, or whether her imagination was so deeply impressed with the mysteries of her supposed art, that she might be in some degree a believer in her own pretensions to supernatural knowledge. Certain it is, that she performed her part with such undoubting confidence, and such striking dignity of look and action, and evinced, at the same time, such strength of language, and energy of purpose, that it would have been difficult for the

greatest sceptic to have doubted the reality of her enthusiasm, though he might smile at the pretensions to which it gave rise.

CHAPTER VI.

— If, by your art, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.

Tempest.

THE storm had somewhat relaxed its rigour just before the entrance of Norna, otherwise she must have found it impossible to travel during the extremity of its fury. But she had hardly added herself so unexpectedly to the party whom chance had assembled at the dwelling of Triptolemus Yellowley, when the tempest suddenly resumed its former vehemence, and raged around the building with a fury which made the inmates insensible to anything except the risk that the old mansion was about to fall above their heads.

Mistress Babie gave vent to her fears in loud exclamations of “the Lord guide us—this is surely the last day—what kind of a country of guizards and gyre-carlines is this!—and you, ye fool carle,” she added, turning on her brother (for all her passions had a touch of acidity in them), “to quit the bonnie Mearns land to come here, where there is naething but sturdy beggars and gaberlunzies within ane’s house, and Heaven’s anger on the outside on’t!”

“I tell you, sister Babie,” answered the insulted agriculturist, “that all shall be reformed and amended,—excepting,” he added betwixt his teeth, “the scaulding humours of an ill-natured jaud, that can add bitterness to the very storm.”

The old domestic and the pedlar meanwhile exhausted themselves in entreaties to Norna, of which, as they were couched in the Norse language, the master of the house understood nothing.

She listened to them with a haughty and unmoved air, and replied at length aloud, and in English—“I will not. What if this house be strewed in ruins before morning—where would be the world’s want in the crazed projector, and the niggardly pinch-commons, by which it is inhabited? They will needs come to reform Zetland customs, let them try how they like a Zetland storm.—You that would not perish, quit this house.”

The pedlar seized on his little knapsack, and began hastily to brace it on his back; the old maid-servant cast her cloak about her shoulders, and both seemed to be in the act of leaving the house as fast as they could.

Triptolemus Yellowley, somewhat commoved by these appearances, asked Mordaunt, with a voice which faltered with apprehension, whether he thought there was any, that is, so very much danger?

“I cannot tell,” answered the youth, “I have scarce ever seen such a storm. Norna can tell us better than any one when it will abate; for no one in these islands can judge of the weather like her.”

“And is that all thou thinkest Norna can do?” said the sibyl; “thou shalt know her powers are not bounded within such a narrow space. Hear me, Mordaunt, youth of a foreign land, but of a friendly

heart—Doest thou quit this doomed mansion with those who now prepare to leave it?”

“I do not—I will not, Norna,” replied Mordaunt; “I know not your motive for desiring me to remove, and I will not leave, upon these dark threats, the house in which I have been kindly received in such a tempest as this. If the owners are unaccustomed to our unlimited customs of hospitality, I am the more obliged to them that they have relaxed their usages, and opened their doors in my behalf.”

“He is a brave lad,” said Mistress Babie, whose superstitious feelings had been daunted by the threats of the supposed sorceress, and who, amidst her eager, narrow, and repining disposition, had some sparks of higher feeling, which made her sympathize with generous sentiments, though she thought it too expensive to entertain them at her own cost—“He is a brave lad,” she again repeated, “and worthy of ten geese, if I had them to boil for him, or roast either. I’ll warrant him a gentleman’s son, and no churl’s blood.”

“Hear me, young Mordaunt,” said Norna, “and depart from this house. Fate has high views on you—you shall not remain in this hovel to be crushed amid its worthless ruins, with the relics of its more worthless inhabitants, whose life is as little to the world as the vegetation of the house-leek, which now grows on their thatch, and which shall soon be crushed amongst their mangled limbs.”

“I—I—I will go forth,” said Yellowley, who, despite of his bearing himself scholarly and wisely, was beginning to be terrified for the issue of the adventure; for the house was old, and the walls rocked formidably to the blast.

“To what purpose?” said his sister. “I trust the prince of the power of the air has not yet such like power over those that are made in God’s image, that a good house should fall about our heads, because a randy quean (here she darted a fierce glance at the Pythoness) should boast us with her glamour, as if we were sae mony dogs to crouch at her bidding?”

“I was only wanting,” said Triptolemus, ashamed of his motion, “to look at the bear-braird, which must be sair laid with the tempest; but if this honest woman like to bide wi’ us, I think it were best to let us a’ sit down canny thegither, till it’s working weather again.”

“Honest woman!” echoed Babie—“Foul warlock thief—Aroint ye, ye limmer!” she added, addressing Norna directly; “out of an honest house, or shame fa’ me, but I’ll take the bittle to you!”

Norna cast on her a look of supreme contempt; then, stepping to the window, seemed engaged in deep contemplation of the heavens, while the old maid-servant, Tronda, drawing close to her mistress, implored, for the sake of all that was dear to man or woman, “do not provoke Norna of Fitful-head. You have no sic woman on the main-land of Scotland—she can ride on one of these clouds as easily as man ever rode on a sheltie.”

“I shall live to see her ride on the reek of a fat tar-barrel,” said Mistress Babie; “and that will be a fit pacing palfrey for her.”

Again Norna regarded the enraged Mrs Babie Yellowley with a look of that unutterable scorn which her haughty features could so well express,

and moving to the window which looked to the north-west, from which quarter the gale seemed at present to blow, she stood for some time with her arms crossed, looking out upon the leaden-coloured sky, obscured as it was by the thick drift, which, coming on in successive gusts of tempest, left ever and anon sad and dreary intervals of expectation betwixt the dying and the reviving blast.

Norna regarded this war of the elements as one to whom their strife was familiar; yet the stern serenity of her features had in it a cast of awe, and at the same time of authority, as the cabalist may be supposed to look upon the spirit he has evoked, and which, though he knows how to subject him to his spell, bears still an aspect appalling to flesh and blood. The attendants stood by in different attitudes, expressive of their various feelings. Mordaunt, though not indifferent to the risk in which they stood, was more curious than alarmed. He had heard of Norna's alleged power over the elements, and now expected an opportunity of judging for himself of its reality. Triptolemus Yellowley was confounded at what seemed to be far beyond the bounds of his philosophy; and, if the truth must be spoken, the worthy agriculturist was far more frightened than curious. His sister was not in the least curious on the subject; but it was difficult to say whether anger or fear predominated in her sharp eyes and thin compressed lips. The pedlar and old Tronda, confident that the house would never fall while the redoubted Norna was beneath its roof, held themselves ready for a start the instant she should take her departure.

Having looked on the sky for some time in a fixed attitude, and with the most profound silence, Norna, at once, yet with a slow and majestic gesture, extended her staff of black oak towards that part of the heavens from which the blast came hardest, and in the midst of its fury chaunted a Norwegian invocation, still preserved in the Island of Uist, under the name of the Song of the Reim-kennar, though some call it the Song of the Tempest. The following is a free translation, it being impossible to render literally many of the elliptical and metaphorical terms of expression, peculiar to the ancient northern poetry:—

1.

" Stern eagle of the far north-west,
Thou that bearest in thy grasp the thunderbolt,
Thou whose rushing pinions stir ocean to madness,
Thou the destroyer of herds, thou the scatterer of navies,
Amidst the scream of thy rage,
Amidst the rushing of thy onward wings,
Though thy scream be loud as the cry of a perishing nation,
Though the rushing of thy wings be like the roar of ten thousand waves,
Yet hear, in thine ire and thy haste,
Hear thou the voice of the Reim-kennar !

2.

" Thou hast met the pine-trees of Drontheim,
Their dark-green heads lie prostrate beside their uprooted stems;
Thou hast met the rider of the ocean,
The tall, the strong bark of the fearless rover,

And she has struck to thee the topsail
That she had not veiled to a royal armada
Thou hast met the tower that bears its crest among the clouds,
The battled massive tower of the Jarl of former days,
And the cope-stone of the turret
Is lying upon its hospitable hearth;
But thou too shalt stoop, proud compeller of clouds.
When thou hearest the voice of the Reim-kennar.

3.

" There are verses that can stop the stag in the forest.
Ay, and when the dark-coloured dog is opening on his track;
There are verses can make the wild hawk pause on the wing,
Like the falcon that wears the hood and the jesses,
And who knows the shrill whistle of the fowler.
Thou who canst mock at the scream of the drowning mariner,
And the crash of the ravaged forest,
And the groan of the overwhelmed crowds,
When the church hath fallen in the moment of prayer,
There are sounds which thou also must list,
When they are chaunted by the voice of the Reim-kennar.

4.

" Enough of woe hast thou wrought on the ocean,
The widows wring their hands on the beach;
Enough of woe hast thou wrought on the land,
The husbandman folds his arms in despair.
Cease thou the waving of thy pinions,
Let the ocean repose in her dark strength;
Cease thou the flashing of thine eye,
Let the thunderbolt sleep in the armoury of Odin;
Be thou still at my bidding, viewless racer of the north-western heaven,
Sleep thou at the voice of Norna the Reim-kennar."

We have said that Mordaunt was naturally fond of romantic poetry and romantic situation; it is not therefore surprising that he listened with interest to the wild address thus uttered to the wildest wind of the compass, in a tone of such dauntless enthusiasm. But though he had heard so much of the Runic rhyme and of the northern spell, in the country where he had so long dwelt, he was not on this occasion so credulous as to believe that the tempest, which had raged so lately, and which was now declining, was sinking subdued before the charmed verse of Norna. Certain it was, that the blast seemed passing away, and the apprehended danger was already over; but it was not improbable that this issue had been for some time foreseen by the Pythoness, through signs of the weather imperceptible to those who had not dwelt long in the country, or had not bestowed on the meteorological phenomena the attention of a strict and close observer. Of Norna's experience he had no doubt, and that went a far way to explain what seemed supernatural in her demeanour. Yet still the noble countenance, half-shaded by disheveled tresses, the air of majesty with which, in a tone of menace as well as of command, she addressed the viewless spirit of the tempest, gave him a strong inclination to believe in the ascendancy of the occult arts over the powers of nature; for, if a woman ever moved on earth to whom such authority over the ordinary laws of the universe could belong, Norna of Fitful-head, judging from bearing, figure, and face, was born to that high destiny.

The rest of the company were less slow in receiving conviction. To Tronda and the jagger none was necessary; they had long believed in the full extent of Norna's authority over the elements. But Triptolemus and his sister gazed at each other with wondering and alarmed looks, especially when the wind began perceptibly to decline, as was remarkably visible during the pauses which Norna made betwixt the strophes of her incantation. A long silence followed the last verse, until Norna resumed her chaunt, but with a changed and more soothing modulation of voice and tune.

"Eagle of the far north-western waters,
Thou hast heard the voice of the Reim-kennar,
Thou hast closed thy wide sails at her bidding,
And folded them in peace by thy side.
My blessing be on thy retiring path!
When thou stoopest from thy place on high,
Soft be thy slumbers in the caverns of the unknown ocean,
Rest till destiny shall again awaken thee;
Eagle of the north-west, thou hast heard the voice of the
Reim-kennar."

"A pretty song that would be to keep the corn from shaking in har'st," whispered the agriculturist to his sister; "we must speak her fair, Babie—she will maybe part with the secret for a hundred pund Scots."

"An hundred fules' heads," replied Babie—"bid her five merks of ready siller. I never knew a witch in my life but she was as poor as Job."

Norna turned towards them as if she had guessed their thoughts; it may be that she did so. She passed them with a look of the most sovereign contempt, and walking to the table on which the preparations for Mrs Barbara's frugal meal were already disposed, she filled a small wooden quaigh from an earthen pitcher which contained bland, a subacid liquor made out of the serous part of the milk. She broke a single morsel from a barley-cake, and having eaten and drunk, returned towards the churlish hosts. "I give you no thanks," she said, "for my refreshment, for you bid me not welcome to it; and thanks bestowed on a churl are like the dew of heaven on the cliffs of Foulah, where it finds nought that can be refreshed by its influences. I give you no thanks," she said again, but drawing from her pocket a leathern purse that seemed large and heavy, she added, "I pay you with what you will value more than the gratitude of the whole inhabitants of Hialtland. Say not that Norna of Fitful-head hath eaten of your bread and drunk of your cup, and left you sorrowing for the charge to which she hath put your house." So saying, she laid on the table a small piece of antique coin, bearing the rude and half-defaced effigies of some ancient northern king.

Triptolemus and his sister exclaimed against this liberality with vehemence; the first protesting that he kept no public, and the other exclaiming, "Is the carline mad? Heard ye ever of any of the gentle house of Clinkscale that gave meat for siller?"

"Or for love either?" muttered her brother; "haud to that, tittie."

"What are ye whitty-whattying about, ye gowk?" said his gentle sister, who suspected the tenor of his murmurs; "gie the ladie back her bonnie-die there,

VOL. III.

and be blithe to be sae rid on't—it will be a sclate-stane the morn, if not something worse."

The honest factor lifted the money to return it, yet could not help being struck when he saw the impression, and his hand trembled as he handed it to his sister.

"Yes," said the Pythoness again, as if she read the thoughts of the astonished pair, "you have seen that coin before—beware how you use it! It thrives not with the sordid or the mean-souled—it was won with honourable danger, and must be expended with honourable liberality. The treasure which lies under a cold hearth will one day, like the hidden talent, bear witness against its avaricious possessors."

This last obscure intimation seemed to raise the alarm and the wonder of Mrs Babie and her brother to the uttermost. The latter tried to stammer out something like an invitation to Norna to tarry with them all night, or at least to take share of the "dinner," so he at first called it; but looking at the company, and remembering the limited contents of the pot, he corrected the phrase, and hoped she would take some part of the "snack, which would be on the table ere a man could loose a pleugh."

"I eat not here—I sleep not here," replied Norna—"nay, I relieve you not only of my own presence, but I will dismiss your unwelcome guests—Mordaunt," she added, addressing young Mertoun, "the dark fit is past, and your father looks for you this evening."

"Do you return in that direction?" said Mordaunt. "I will but eat a morsel, and give you my aid, good mother, on the road. The brooks must be out, and the journey perilous."

"Our ways lie different," answered the sibyl, "and Norna needs not mortal arm to aid her on the way. I am summoned far to the east, by those who know well how to smooth my passage. For thee, Bryce Snailsfoot," she continued, speaking to the pedlar, "speed thee on to Sumburgh—the roost will afford thee a gallant harvest, and worthy the gathering in. Much goodly ware will ere now be seeking a new owner, and the careful skipper will sleep still enough in the deep haaf, and care not that bale and kist are dashing against the shores."

"Na, na, good mother," answered Snailsfoot, "I desire no man's life for my private advantage, and am just grateful for the blessing of Providence on my sma' trade. But doubtless one man's loss is another's gain; and as these storms destroy a' thing on land, it is but fair they suld send us something by sea. Sae, taking the freedom, like yoursell, mother, to borrow a lump of barley-bread, and a draught of bland, I will bid good day, and thank you, to this good gentleman and lady, and e'en go on my way to Jarlshof, as you advise."

"Ay," replied the Pythoness, "where the slaughter is, the eagles will be gathered; and where the wreck is on the shore, the jagger is as busy to purchase spoil as the shark to gorge upon the dead."

This rebuke, if it was intended for such, seemed above the comprehension of the travelling-merchant, who, bent upon gain, assumed the knapsack and ellwand, and asked Mordaunt, with the familiarity per-

mitted in a wild country, whether he would not take company along with him.

"I wait to eat some dinner with Mr Yellowley and Mrs Babie," answered the youth, "and will set forward in half an hour."

"Then I'll just take my piece in my hand," said the pedlar. Accordingly he muttered a benediction, and without more ceremony, helped himself to what, in Mrs Babie's covetous eyes, appeared to be two-thirds of the bread, took a long pull at the jug of bland, seized on a handful of the small fish called sillocks, which the domestic was just placing on the board, and left the room without farther ceremony.

"My certie," said the despoiled Mrs Babie, "there is the chapman's drouth and his hunger baith, as folks say! If the laws against vagrants be executed this gate—It's no that I wad shut the door against decent folks," she said, looking to Mordaunt, "more especially in such judgment weather.—But I see the goose is dished, poor thing."

This she spoke in a tone of affection for the smoked goose, which, though it had long been an inanimate inhabitant of her chimney, was far more interesting to Mrs Babie in that state, than when it screamed amongst the clouds. Mordaunt laughed and took his seat, then turned to look for Norna, but she had glided from the apartment during the discussion with the pedlar.

"I am glad she is gane, the dour carline," said Mrs Babie, "though she has left that piece of gowd to be an everlasting shame to us."

"Whisht, mistress, for the love of heaven," said Tronda Dronsdaughter; "wha kens where she may be this moment?—we are no sure but she may hear us, though we cannot see her."

Mrs Babie cast a startled eye around, and instantly recovering herself, for she was naturally courageous as violent, said, "I bid her aroint before, and I bid her aroint again, whether she sees me or hears me, or whether she's ower the cairn and awa.—And you, ye silly sumph," she said to poor Yellowley, "what do ye stand glowering there for?—*You* a Saunt Andrews student!—*you* studied lair and Latin humanities, as ye ca' them, and daunted wi' the clavers of an auld randie wife! Say your best college-grace, man, and, witch or nae witch, we'll eat our dinner and defy her. And for the value of the gowden piece, it shall never be said I pouched her siller. I will gie it to some poor body—that is, I will test upon it at my death, and keep it for a purse-penny till that day comes, and that's no using it in the way of spending-siller. Say your best college-grace, man, and let us eat and drink in the meantime."

"Ye had muckle better say an *oramus* to Saint Ronald, and fling a saxpence ower your left shouther, master," said Tronda.

"That ye may pick it up, ye jaud," said the implacable Mistress Babie; "it will be lang or ye win the worth of it ony other gate.—Sit down, Triptolemus, and mindna the words of a daft wife."

"Daft or wise," replied Yellowley, very much disconcerted, "she kens more than I would wish she kend. It was awfu' to see sic a wind fa' at the voice of flesh and blood like oursells—and then you

about the hearth-stane—I cannot but think"—

"If ye cannot but think," said Mrs Babie, very sharply, "at least ye can haud your tongue?"

The agriculturist made no reply, but sate down to their scanty meal, and did the honours of it with unusual heartiness to his new guest, the first of the intruders who had arrived, and the last who left them. The sillocks speedily disappeared, and the smoked goose, with its appendages, took wing so effectually, that Tronda, to whom the polishing of the bones had been destined, found the task accomplished, or nearly so, to her hand. After dinner, the host produced his bottle of brandy; but Mordaunt, whose general habits were as sober almost as those of his father, laid a very light tax upon this unusual exertion of hospitality.

During the meal, they learned so much of young Mordaunt, and of his father, that even Babie resisted his wish to reassume his wet garments, and pressed him (at the risk of an expensive supper being added to the charges of the day) to tarry with them till next morning. But what Norna had said excited the youth's wish to reach home, nor, however far the hospitality of Stourburgh was extended in his behalf, did the house present any particular temptations to induce him to remain there longer. He therefore accepted the loan of the factor's clothes, promising to return them, and send for his own; and took a civil leave of his host and Mistress Babie, the latter of whom, however affected by the loss of her goose, could not but think the cost well bestowed (since it was to be expended at all) upon so handsome and cheerful a youth.

CHAPTER VII.

She does no work by halves, yon raving ocean;
Engulphing those she strangles, her wild womb
Affords the mariners whom she hath dealt on,
Their death at once, and sepulchre.

Old Play.

THERE were ten "lang Scots miles" betwixt Stourburgh and Jarlshof; and though the pedestrian did not number all the impediments which crossed Tam o' Shanter's path,—for, in a country where there are neither hedges nor stone enclosures, there can be neither "slaps nor stiles,"—yet the number and nature of the "mosses and waters" which he had to cross in his peregrination, was fully sufficient to balance the account, and to render his journey as toilsome and dangerous as the celebrated retreat from Ayr. Neither witch nor warlock crossed Mordaunt's path, however. The length of the day was already considerable, and he arrived safe at Jarlshof by eleven o'clock at night. All was still and dark round the mansion, and it was not till he had whistled twice or thrice beneath Swertha's window, that she replied to the signal.

At the first sound, Swertha fell into an agreeable dream of a young whale-fisher, who some forty years since used to make such a signal beneath the window of her hut; at the second, she waked to remember that Johnie Fea had slept sound among the frozen waves of Greenland for this many a year, and that she

was Mr Mertoun's governante at Jarlshof; at the third, she arose and opened the window.

"Whae is that," she demanded, "at sic an hour of the night?"

"It is I," said the youth.

"And what for comena ye in? The door's on the latch, and there is a gathering-peat on the kitchen fire, and a spunk beside it—ye can light your ain candle."

"All well," replied Mordaunt; "but I want to know how my father is?"

"Just in his ordinary, gude gentleman—asking for you, Maister Mordaunt; ye are ower far and ower late in your walks, young gentleman."

"Then the dark hour has passed, Swertha?"

"In troth has it, Maister Mordaunt," answered the governante; "and your father is very reasonably good-natured for him, poor gentleman. I spake to him twice yesterday without his speaking first; and the first time he answered me as civil as you could do, and the neist time he bade me no plague him; and then, thought I, three times were aye canny, so I spake to him again for luck's-sake, and he called me a chattering old devil, but it was quite and clean in a civil sort of way."

"Enough, enough, Swertha," answered Mordaunt; "and now get up and find me something to eat, for I have dined but poorly."

"Then you have been at the new folks' at Stourburgh; for there is no another house in a' the isles but they wad hae gi'en ye the best share of the best they had. Saw ye aught of Norna of the Fitful-head? She went to Stourburgh this morning, and returned to the town at night."

"Returned!—then she is here? How could she travel three leagues and better in so short a time?"

"Wha kens how she travels?" replied Swertha; "but I heard her tell the ranzelman wi' my ain lugs, that she intended that day to have gone on to Burgh-Westra, to speak with Minna Troil, but she had seen that at Stourburgh (indeed she said at Harfra, for she never calls it by the other name of Stourburgh) that sent her back to our town. But gang your ways round, and ye shall have plenty of supper—ours is nae toom pantry, and still less a locked ane, though my master be a stranger, and no just that tight in the upper rigging, as the ranzelman says."

Mordaunt walked round to the kitchen accordingly, where Swertha's care speedily accommodated him with a plentiful, though coarse meal, which indemnified him for the scanty hospitality he had experienced at Stourburgh.

In the morning, some feelings of fatigue made young Mertoun later than usual in leaving his bed; so that, contrary to what was the ordinary case, he found his father in the apartment where they eat, and which served them indeed for every common purpose, save that of a bed-chamber or of a kitchen. The son greeted the father in mute reverence, and waited until he should address him.

"You were absent yesterday, Mordaunt?" said his father. Mordaunt's absence had lasted a week and more; but he had often observed that his father never seemed to notice how time passed during the period he was affected with his sullen vapours. He

assented to what the elder Mr Mertoun had said.

"And you were at Burgh-Westra, as I think?" continued his father.

"Yes, sir," replied Mordaunt.

The elder Mertoun was then silent for some time, and paced the floor in deep silence, with an air of sombre reflection, which seemed as if he was about to relapse into his moody fit. Suddenly turning to his son, however, he observed, in the tone of a query, "Magnus Troil has two daughters—they must be now young women; they are thought handsome, of course?"

"Very generally, sir," answered Mordaunt, rather surprised to hear his father making any inquiries about the individuals of a sex which he usually thought so light of—a surprise which was much increased by the next question, put as abruptly as the former.

"Which think you the handsomest?"

"I, sir?" replied the son, with some wonder, but without embarrassment—"I really am no judge—I never considered which was absolutely the handsomest. They are both very pretty young women."

"You evade my question, Mordaunt; perhaps I have some particular reason for my wish to be acquainted with your taste in this matter. I am not used to waste words for no purpose. I ask you again, which of Magnus Troil's daughters you think most handsome?"

"Really, sir," replied Mordaunt—"but you only jest in asking me such a question."

"Young man," replied Mertoun, with eyes which began to roll and sparkle with impatience, "I never jest. I desire an answer to my question."

"Then, upon my word, sir," said Mordaunt, "it is not in my power to form a judgment betwixt the young ladies—they are both very pretty, but by no means like each other. Minna is dark-haired, and more grave than her sister—more serious, but by no means either dull or sullen."

"Um," replied his father; "you have been gravely brought up, and this Minna, I suppose, pleases you most?"

"No, sir, really I can give her no preference over her sister Brenda, who is as gay as a lamb in a spring morning—less tall than her sister, but so well formed, and so excellent a dancer"—

"That she is best qualified to amuse the young man, who has a dull home and a moody father," said Mr Mertoun.

Nothing in his father's conduct had ever surprised Mordaunt so much as the obstinacy with which he seemed to pursue a theme so foreign to his general train of thought, and habits of conversation; but he contented himself with answering once more, "that both the young ladies were highly admirable, but he had never thought of them with a wish to do either injustice, by ranking her lower than her sister—that others would probably decide between them as they happened to be partial to a grave or a gay disposition, or to a dark or fair complexion; but that he could see no excellent quality in the one that was not balanced by something equally captivating in the other."

It is possible that even the coolness with which Mordaunt made this explanation might not have

satisfied his father concerning the subject of investigation; but Swertha at this moment entered with breakfast, and the youth, notwithstanding his late supper, engaged in that meal with an air which satisfied Mertoun that he held it matter of more grave importance than the conversation which they had just had, and that he had nothing more to say upon the subject explanatory of the answers he had already given. He shaded his brow with his hand, and looked long fixedly upon the young man as he was busied with his morning meal. There was neither abstraction nor a sense of being observed in any of his motions; all was frank, natural, and open.

"He is fancy-free," muttered Mertoun to himself—"so young, so lively, and so imaginative, so handsome and so attractive in face and person, strange, that at his age, and in his circumstances, he should have avoided the meshes which catch all the world beside."

When the breakfast was over, the elder Mertoun, instead of proposing, as usual, that his son, who awaited his commands, should betake himself to one branch or other of his studies, assumed his hat and staff, and desired that Mordaunt should accompany him to the top of the cliff, called Sumburgh-head, and from thence to look out upon the state of the ocean, agitated as it must be by the tempest of the preceding day. Mordaunt was at the age when young men willingly exchange sedentary pursuits for active exercise, and started up with alacrity to comply with his father's request; and in the course of a few minutes they were mounting together the hill, which, ascending from the land side in a long, steep, and grassy slope, sinks at once from the summit to the sea in an abrupt and tremendous precipice.

The day was delightful; there was just so much motion in the air as to disturb the little fleecy clouds which were scattered on the horizon, and by floating them occasionally over the sun, to chequer the landscape with that variety of light and shade which often gives to a bare and unenclosed scene, for the time at least, a species of charm approaching to the varieties of a cultivated and planted country. A thousand flitting hues of light and shade played over the expanse of wild moor, rocks, and inlets, which, as they climbed higher and higher, spread in wide and wider circuit around them.

The elder Mertoun often paused and looked around upon the scene, and for some time his son supposed that he halted to enjoy its beauties; but as they ascended still higher up the hill, he remarked his shortened breath and his uncertain and toilsome step, and became assured, with some feelings of alarm, that his father's strength was, for the moment, exhausted, and that he found the ascent more toilsome and fatiguing than usual. To draw close to his side, and offer him in silence the assistance of his arm, was an act of youthful deference to advanced age, as well as of filial reverence; and Mertoun seemed at first so to receive it, for he took in silence the advantage of the aid thus afforded him.

It was but for two or three minutes, however, that the father availed himself of his son's support. They had not ascended fifty yards farther, ere he

pushed Mordaunt suddenly, if not rudely, from him; and, as if stung into exertion by some sudden recollection, began to mount the acclivity with such long and quick paces, that Mordaunt, in his turn, was obliged to exert himself to keep pace with him. He knew his father's peculiarity of disposition; he was aware, from many slight circumstances, that he loved him not even while he took much pains of his education, and while he seemed to be the sole object of his care upon earth. But the conviction had never been more strongly or more powerfully forced upon him than by the hasty churlishness with which Mertoun rejected from a son that assistance, which most elderly men are willing to receive from youths with whom they are but slightly connected, as a tribute which it is alike graceful to yield and to receive. Mertoun, however, did not seem to perceive the effect which his unkindness had produced upon his son's feelings. He paused upon a sort of level terrace which they had now attained, and addressed his son with an indifferent tone, which seemed in some degree affected.

"Since you have so few inducements, Mordaunt, to remain in these wild islands, I suppose you sometimes wish to look a little more abroad into the world?"

"By my word, sir," replied Mordaunt, "I cannot say I ever have thought on such a subject."

"And why not, young man?" demanded his father; "it were but natural, I think, at your age. At your age, the fair and varied breadth of Britain could not gratify me, much less the compass of a sea-girdled peat-moss."

"I have never thought of leaving Zetland, sir," replied the son. "I am happy here, and have friends. You yourself, sir, would miss me, unless indeed"—

"Why, thou wouldst not persuade me," said his father, somewhat hastily, "that you stay here, or desire to stay here, for the love of me?"

"Why should I not, sir?" answered Mordaunt, mildly; "it is my duty, and I hope I have hitherto performed it."

"O ay," replied Mertoun, in the same tone—"your duty—your duty. So it is the duty of the dog to follow the groom that feeds him."

"And does he not do so, sir?" said Mordaunt.

"Ay," said his father, turning his head aside; "but he fawns only on those that caress him."

"I hope, sir," replied Mordaunt, "I have not been found deficient?"

"Say no more on't—say no more on't," said Mertoun, abruptly, "we have both done enough by each other—we must soon part—Let that be our comfort—if our separation should require comfort."

"I shall be ready to obey your wishes," said Mordaunt, not altogether displeased at what promised him an opportunity of looking farther abroad into the world. "I presume it will be your pleasure that I commence my travels with a season at the whale-fishing."

"Whale-fishing!" replied Mertoun; "that were a mode indeed of seeing the world; but thou speakest but as thou hast learned. Enough of this for the present. Tell me where you had shelter from the storm yesterday?"

"At Stourburgh, the house of the new factor from Scotland."

"A pedantic, fantastic, visionary schemer," said Mertoun—"and whom saw you there?"

"His sister, sir," replied Mordaunt, "and old Norna of the Fitful-head."

"What! the mistress of the potent spell," answered Mertoun, with a sneer—"she who can change the wind by pulling her curch on one side, as King Erick used to do by turning his cap? The dame journeys far from home—how fares she? Does she get rich by selling favourable winds to those who are port-bound?"

"I really do not know, sir," said Mordaunt, whom certain recollections prevented from freely entering into his father's humour.

"You think the matter too serious to be jested with, or perhaps esteem her merchandize too light to be cared after," continued Mertoun, in the same sarcastic tone, which was the nearest approach he ever made to cheerfulness; "but consider it more deeply. Everything in the universe is bought and sold, and why not wind, if the merchant can find purchasers? The earth is rented, from its surface down to its most central mines;—the fire, and the means of feeding it, are currently bought and sold;—the wretches that sweep the boisterous ocean with their nets, pay ransom for the privilege of being drowned in it. What title has the air to be exempted from the universal course of traffic? All above the earth, under the earth, and around the earth, has its price, its sellers, and its purchasers. In many countries the priests will sell you a portion of heaven—in all countries men are willing to buy, in exchange for health, wealth, and peace of conscience, a full portion of hell. Why should not Norna pursue her traffic?"

"Nay, I know no reason against it," replied Mordaunt; "only I wish she would part with the commodity in smaller quantities. Yesterday she was a wholesale dealer—whoever treated with her had too good a pennyworth."

"It is even so," said the father, pausing on the verge of the wild promontory which they had attained, where the huge precipice sinks abruptly down on the wide and tempestuous ocean, "and the effects are still visible."

The face of that lofty cape is composed of the soft and crumbling stone called sand-flag, which gradually yields to the action of the atmosphere, and becomes split into large masses, that hang loose upon the verge of the precipice, and, detached from it by the fury of the tempests, often descend with great fury into the vexed abyss which lashes the foot of the rock. Numbers of these huge fragments lie strewed beneath the rocks from which they have descended, and amongst these the tide foams and rages with a fury peculiar to these latitudes.

At the period when Mertoun and his son looked from the verge of the precipice, the wide sea still heaved and swelled with the agitation of yesterday's storm, which had been far too violent to subside speedily. The tide therefore poured on the headland with a fury deafening to the ear, and dizzying to the eye, threatening instant destruction to whatever might be at the time involved in its current.

The sight of nature, in her magnificence, or in her beauty, or in her terrors, has at all times an overpowering interest, which even habit cannot greatly weaken; and both father and son sate themselves down on the cliff to look out upon that unbounded war of waters, which rolled in their wrath to the foot of the precipice.

At once Mordaunt, whose eyes were sharper, and probably his attention more alert than that of his father, started up and exclaimed, "God in Heaven! there is a vessel in the roost."

Mertoun looked to the north-westward, and an object was visible amid the rolling tide. "She shows no sail," he observed; and immediately added, after looking at the object through his spy-glass, "She is dismasted, and lies a sheer hulk upon the water."

"And is drifting on the Sumburgh-head," said Mordaunt, struck with horror, "without the slightest means of weathering the cape."

"She makes no effort," replied his father; "she is probably deserted by her crew."

"And in such a day as yesterday," replied Mordaunt, "when no open boat could live were she manned with the best men ever handled an oar—all must have perished."

"It is most probable," said his father, with stern composure; "and one day, sooner or later, all must have perished. What signifies whether the fowler, whom nothing escapes, caught them up at one swoop from yonder shattered deck, or whether he clutched them individually, as chance gave them to his grasp? What signifies it?—The deck, the battle-field, are scarce more fatal to us than our table and our bed; and we are saved from the one, merely to drag out a heartless and wearisome existence, till we perish at the other. Would the hour were come—that hour which reason would teach us to wish for, were it not that nature has implanted the fear of it so strongly within us! You wonder at such a reflection, because life is yet new to you. Ere you have attained my age, it will be the familiar companion of your thoughts."

"Surely, sir," replied Mordaunt, "such distaste to life is not the necessary consequence of advanced age?"

"To all who have sense to estimate that which it is really worth," said Mertoun. "Those who, like Magnus Troil, possess so much of the animal impulses about them, as to derive pleasure from sensual gratification, may perhaps, like the animals, feel pleasure in mere existence."

Mordaunt liked neither the doctrine nor the example. He thought a man who discharged his duties towards others as well as the good old udaller, had a better right to have the sun shine fair on his setting, than that which he might derive from mere insensibility. But he let the subject drop; for to dispute with his father, had always the effect of irritating him, and again he adverted to the condition of the wreck.

The hulk, for it was little better, was now in the very midst of the current, and drifting at a great rate towards the foot of the precipice, upon whose verge they were placed. Yet it was a long while ere they had a distinct view of the object which they had at

first seen as a black speck amongst the waters, and then at a nearer distance, like a whale, which now scarce shows its back-fin above the waters, now throws to view its large black side. Now, however, they could more distinctly observe the appearance of the ship, for the huge swelling waves which bore it forward to the shore, heaved it alternately high upon the surface, and then plunged it into the trough or furrow of the sea. She seemed a vessel of two or three hundred tons, fitted up for defence, for they could see her port-holes. She had been dismasted probably in the gale of the preceding day, and lay water-logged on the waves, a prey to their violence. It appeared certain that the crew, finding themselves unable either to direct the vessel's course or to relieve her by pumping, had taken to their boats, and left her to her fate. All apprehensions were therefore unnecessary, so far as the immediate loss of human lives was concerned; and yet it was not without a feeling of breathless awe that Mordaunt and his father beheld the vessel—that rare master-piece by which human genius aspires to surmount the waves, and contend with the winds, upon the point of falling a prey to them.

Onward it came, the large black hulk seeming larger at every fathom's length. She came nearer, until she bestrode the summit of one tremendous billow, which rolled on with her unbroken, until the wave and its burthen were precipitated against the rock, and then the triumph of the elements over the work of human hands was at once completed. One wave, we have said, made the wrecked vessel completely manifest in her whole bulk, as it raised her, and bore her onward against the face of the precipice. But when that wave receded from the foot of the rock, the ship had ceased to exist; and the retiring billow only bore back a quantity of beams, planks, casks, and similar objects, which swept out to the offing, to be brought in again by the next wave, and again precipitated upon the face of the rock.

It was at this moment that Mordaunt conceived he saw a man floating on a plank or water-cask, which, drifting away from the main current, seemed about to go a-shore upon a small spot of sand, where the water was shallow, and the waves broke more smoothly. To see the danger, and to exclaim, "He lives, and may yet be saved!" was the first impulse of the fearless Mordaunt. The next was, after one rapid glance at the front of the cliff, to precipitate himself—such seemed the rapidity of his movement—from the verge, and to commence, by means of slight fissures, projections, and crevices in the rock a descent, which, to a spectator, appeared little else than an act of absolute insanity.

"Stop, I command you, rash boy!" said his father; "the attempt is death. Stop, and take the safer path to the left." But Mordaunt was already completely engaged in his perilous enterprise.

"Why should I prevent him?" said his father, checking his anxiety with the stern and unfeeling philosophy whose principles he had adopted. "Should he die now, full of generous and high feeling, eager in the cause of humanity, happy in the exertion of his own conscious activity and youthful strength—should he die now, will he not escape misanthropy, and remorse, and age, and the consciousness of de-

caying powers, both of body and mind?—I will not look upon it, however—I will not—I cannot behold his young light so suddenly quenched."

He turned from the precipice accordingly, and hastening to the left for more than a quarter of a mile, he proceeded toward a riva, or cleft in the rock, containing a path, called Erick's Steps, neither safe, indeed, nor easy, but the only one by which the inhabitants of Jarlshof were wont, for any purpose, to seek access to the foot of the precipice.

But long ere Mertoun had reached even the upper end of the pass, his adventurous and active son had accomplished his more desperate enterprise. He had been in vain turned aside from the direct line of descent, by the intervention of difficulties which he had not seen from above—his route became only more circuitous, but could not be interrupted. More than once, large fragments to which he was about to intrust his weight, gave way before him, and thundered down into the tormented ocean; and in one or two instances, such detached pieces of rock rushed after him, as if to bear him headlong in their course. A courageous heart, a steady eye, a tenacious hand, and a firm foot, carried him through his desperate attempt; and in the space of seven minutes, he stood at the bottom of the cliff, from the verge of which he had achieved his perilous descent.

The place which he now occupied was the small projecting spot of stones, sand, and gravel, that extended a little way into the sea, which on the right hand lashed the very bottom of the precipice, and on the left, was scarce divided from it by a small wave-worn portion of beach, which extended as far as the foot of the rent in the rocks called Erick's Steps, by which Mordaunt's father proposed to descend.

When the vessel split and went to pieces, all was swallowed up in the ocean, which had, after the first shock, been seen to float upon the waves, excepting only a few pieces of wreck, casks, chests, and the like, which a strong eddy, formed by the reflux of the waves, had landed, or at least grounded, upon the shallow where Mordaunt now stood. Amongst these, his eager eye discovered the object which had at first engaged his attention, and which now, seen at nigher distance, proved to be in truth a man, and in a most precarious state. His arms were still wrapt with a close and convulsive grasp round the plank to which he had clung in the moment of the shock, but sense and the power of motion were fled; and, from the situation in which the plank lay, partly grounded upon the beach, partly floating in the sea, there was every chance that it might be again washed off shore, in which case the man's death was inevitable. Just as he had made himself aware of these circumstances, Mordaunt beheld a huge wave advancing, and hastened to interpose his aid ere it burst, aware that the reflux might probably sweep away the sufferer.

He rushed into the surf, and fastened on the body, with the same tenacity, though under a different impulse, with that wherewith the hound seizes his prey. The strength of the retiring wave proved even stronger than he had expected, and it was not without a struggle for his own life, as well as for that of the stranger, that Mordaunt resisted being

swept out to sea with the receding billow, when, though an adroit swimmer, the strength of the tide must either have dashed him against the rocks, or hurried him out to sea. He stood his ground, however, and ere another such billow had returned to the attack, he drew up, upon the small slip of dry sand, both the body of the man, and the plank to which he continued firmly attached. But how to save and to recal the means of ebbing life and strength, and how to remove into a place of greater safety the sufferer, who was incapable of giving any assistance towards his own preservation, were questions which Mordaunt asked himself eagerly, but in vain.

He looked to the summit of the cliff on which he had left his father, and shouted to him for his assistance; but his eye could not distinguish his form, and his voice was only answered by the scream of the sea-birds. He gazed again on the sufferer. A dress richly laced, according to the fashion of the times, fine linens, and rings upon his fingers, evinced he was a man of superior rank; and his features showed youth and comeliness, notwithstanding they were pallid and disfigured. He still breathed, but so feebly, that his respiration was almost imperceptible, and life seemed to keep such slight hold of his frame, that there was every reason to fear it would become altogether extinguished, unless it were speedily reinforced. To loosen the handkerchief from his neck, to raise him with his face towards the breeze, to support him with his arms, was all that Mordaunt could do for his assistance, whilst he anxiously looked round for some one who might lend his aid in dragging the unfortunate to a more safe situation.

At this moment he beheld a man advancing slowly and cautiously along the beach. He was in hopes, at first, it was his father, but instantly recollected that he had not had time to come round by the circuitous descent, to which he must necessarily have recourse, and besides he saw that the man who approached him was shorter in stature.

As he came nearer, Mordaunt was at no loss to recognize the pedlar whom the day before he had met with at Harfra, and who was known to him before upon many occasions. He shouted as loud as he could, "Bryce, hollo! Bryce, come hither!" But the merchant, intent upon picking up some of the spoils of the wreck, and upon dragging them out of reach of the tide, paid for some time little attention to his shouts.

When he did at length approach Mordaunt, it was not to lend him his aid, but to remonstrate with him on his rashness in undertaking the charitable office. "Are you mad?" said he; "you that have lived sae lang in Zetland, to risk the saving of a drowning man? Wot ye not, if you bring him to life again, he will be sure to do you some capital injury?—Come, Maister Mordaunt, bear a hand to what's mair to the purpose. Help me to get ane or twa of these kists ashore before anybody else comes, and we shall share, like good christians, what God sends us, and be thankful."

Mordaunt was indeed no stranger to this inhuman superstition, current at a former period among the lower orders of the Zetlanders, and the more ge-

nerally adopted, perhaps, that it served as an apology for refusing assistance to the unfortunate victims of shipwreck, while they made plunder of their goods. At any rate, the opinion, that to save a drowning man was to run the risk of future injury from him, formed a strange contradiction in the character of these islanders; who, hospitable, generous, and disinterested, on all other occasions, were sometimes, nevertheless, induced by this superstition, to refuse their aid in these mortal emergencies, which were so common upon their rocky and stormy coasts. We are happy to add, that the exhortation and example of the proprietors have eradicated even the traces of this inhuman belief, of which there might be some observed within the memory of those now alive. It is strange that the minds of men should have ever been hardened towards those involved in a distress to which they themselves were so constantly exposed; but perhaps the constant sight and consciousness of such danger tends to blunt the feelings to its consequences, whether affecting ourselves or others.

Bryce was remarkably tenacious of this ancient belief; the more so, perhaps, that the mounting of his pack depended less upon the warehouses of Lerwick or Kirkwall, than on the consequences of such a north-western gale as that of the day preceding; for which (being a man who, in his own way, professed great devotion) he seldom failed to express his grateful thanks to Heaven. It was indeed said of him, that if he had spent the same time in assisting the wrecked seamen, that he had done in rifling their bales and boxes, he would have saved many lives, and lost much linen. He paid no sort of attention to the repeated entreaties of Mordaunt, although he was now upon the same slip of sand with him—well known to Bryce as a place on which the eddy was likely to land such spoils as the ocean disgorged—but occupied himself busily in securing and appropriating whatever seemed most portable and of greatest value. At length Mordaunt saw the honest pedlar fix his views upon a strong sea-chest, framed of some Indian wood, well secured by brass plates, and seeming to be of a foreign construction. The stout lock resisted all Bryce's efforts to open it, until, with great composure, he plucked from his pocket a very neat hammer and chisel, and began forcing the hinges.

Incensed at his assurance beyond patience, Mordaunt caught up a wooden stretcher which lay near him, and laying his charge softly on the sand, approached Bryce with a menacing gesture, and exclaimed, "You cold-blooded inhuman rascal! either get up instantly and lend me your assistance to recover this man, and bear him out of danger from the surf, or I will not only beat you to a mummy on the spot, but inform Magnus Troil of your thievery, that he may have you flogged till your bones are bare, and then banish you from the main island?"

The lid of the chest had just sprung open as this rough address saluted Bryce's ears, and the inside presented a tempting view of wearing apparel for sea and land; shirts, plain and with lace ruffles, a silver compass, a silver-hilted sword, and other valuable articles, which the pedlar well knew to be

such as stir in the trade. He was half-disposed to start up, draw the sword, which was a cut-and-thrust, and "darraign battaile," as Spenser says, rather than quit his prize, or brook interruption. Being, though short, a stout-square-made personage, and not much past the prime of life, having besides the better weapon, he might have given Mordaunt more trouble than his benevolent knight-errantry deserved.

Already, as with vehemence he repeated his injunctions that Bryce should forbear his plunder, and come to the assistance of the dying man, the pedlar retorted with a voice of defiance, "Dinna swear, sir; dinna swear, sir—I will endure no swearing in my presence; and if you lay a finger on me, that am taking the lawful spoil of the Egyptians, I will give ye a lesson ye shall remember from this day to Yule."

Mordaunt would speedily have put the pedlar's courage to the test, but a voice behind him suddenly said, "Forbear!" It was the voice of Norna of the Fitful-head, who, during the heat of their altercation, had approached them unobserved. "Forbear!" she repeated; "and, Bryce, do thou render Mordaunt the assistance he requires. It shall avail thee more, and it is I who say the word, than all that you could earn to-day besides."

"It is se'enteen hundred linen," said the pedlar, giving a tweak to one of the shirts, in that knowing manner with which matrons and judges ascertain the texture of the loom;—"it's se'enteen hundred linen, and as strong as an it were dowlas. Nevertheless, mother, your bidding is to be done; and I would have done Mr Mordaunt's bidding too," he added, relaxing from his note of defiance, into the deferential whining tone with which he cajoled his customers, "if he hadna made use of profane oaths, which made my very flesh grue, and caused me, in some sort, to forget myself." He then took a flask from his pocket, and approached the shipwrecked man. "It's the best of brandy," he said; "and if that doesna cure him, I ken nought that will." So saying, he took a preliminary gulp himself, as if to show the quality of the liquor, and was about to put it to the man's mouth, when suddenly withholding his hand, he looked at Norna—"You insure me against all risk of evil from him, if I am to render him my help?—Ye ken yoursell what folks say, mother."

For all other answer, Norna took the bottle from the pedlar's hand, and began to chafe the temples and throat of the shipwrecked man; directing Mordaunt how to hold his head, so as to afford him the means of disgorging the sea-water which he had swallowed during his immersion.

The pedlar looked on inactive for a moment, and then said, "To be sure, there is not the same risk in helping him, now he is out of the water, and lying high and dry on the beach; and, to be sure, the principal danger is to those that first touch him; and, to be sure, it is a world's pity to see how these rings are pinching the poor creature's swalled fingers—they make his hand as blue as a partan's back before boiling." So saying, he seized one of the man's cold hands, which had just, by a tremulous motion, indicated the return of life, and began his charitable

work of removing the rings, which seemed to be of some value.

"As you love your life, forbear," said Norna, sternly, "or I will lay that on you which shall spoil your travels though the isles."

"Now, for mercy's sake, mother, say nae mair about it," said the pedlar, "and I'll e'en do your pleasure in your ain way. I *did* feel a rheumatize in my back-spauld yestreen; and it wad be a sair thing for the like of me to be debarred my quiet walk round the country, in the way of trade—making the honest penny, and helping myself with what Providence sends on our coasts."

"Peace, then," said the woman—"Peace, as thou wouldst not rue it; and take this man on thy broad shoulders. His life is of value, and you will be rewarded."

"I had muckle need," said the pedlar, pensively looking at the lidless chest, and the other matters which strewed the sand; "for he has comed between me and as muckle spreacheries as wad hae made a man of me for the rest of my life; and now it maun lie here till the next tide sweep it a' down the roost, after them that aught it yesterday morning."

"Fear not," said Norna, "it will come to man's use. See, there come carrion-crows, of scent as keen as thine own."

She spoke truly; for several of the people from the hamlet of Jarlshof were now hastening along the beach, to have their share in the spoil. The pedlar beheld them approach with a deep groan. "Ay, ay," he said, "the folk of Jarlshof, they will make clean wark; they are kenn'd for that far and wide; they winna leave the value of a rotten ratlen; and what's waur, there isna ane o' them has mense or sense enough to give thanks for the mercies when they have gotten them. There is the auld ranzelman, Neil Ronaldson, that canna walk a mile to hear the minister, but he will hirple ten if he hears of a ship embayed."

Norna, however, seemed to possess over him so complete an ascendancy, that he no longer hesitated to take the man, who now gave strong symptoms of reviving existence, upon his shoulders; and, assisted by Mordaunt, trudged along the sea-beach with his burden, without farther remonstrance. Ere he was borne off, the stranger pointed to the chest, and attempted to mutter something, to which Norna replied, "Enough. It shall be secured."

Advancing towards the passage called Erick's Steps, by which they were to ascend the cliffs, they met the people from Jarlshof, hastening in the opposite direction. Man and woman, as they passed, reverently made room for Norna, and saluted her—not without an expression of fear upon some of their faces. She passed them a few paces, and then turning back, called aloud to the ranzelman, who (though the practice was more common than legal) was attending the rest of the hamlet upon this plundering expedition; "Neil Ronaldson," she said, "mark my words. There stands yonder a chest, from which the lid has been just prized off. Look it be brought down to your own house at Jarlshof, just as it now is. Beware of moving or touching the slightest article. He were better in his grave, that so much as looks at the contents. I speak

not for nought, nor in aught will I be disobeyed."

"Your pleasure shall be done, mother," said Ronaldson. "I warrant we will not break bulk, since sic is your bidding."

Far behind the rest of the villagers, followed an old woman, talking to herself, and cursing her own decrepitude, which kept her the last of the party, yet pressing forward with all her might to get her share of the spoil.

When they met her, Mordaunt was astonished to recognize his father's old housekeeper. "How now," he said, "Swertha, what make you so far from home?"

"Just e'en daikering out to look after my auld master and your honour," replied Swertha, who felt like a criminal caught in the manner; for on more occasions than one, Mr Mertoun had intimated his high disapprobation of such excursions as she was at present engaged in.

But Mordaunt was too much engaged with his own thoughts to take much notice of her delinquency. "Have you seen my father?" he said.

"And that I have," replied Swertha—"The gude gentleman was gauging to hirsell himsell down Erick's Steps, whilk would have been the ending of him, that is in no way a crag's-man. Sae I e'en gat him wiled away hame—and I was just seeking you that you may gang after him to the hall-house, for, to my thought, he is far frae weel."

"My father unwell?" said Mordaunt, remembering the faintness he had exhibited at the commencement of that morning's walk.

"Far frae weel—far frae weel," groaned out Swertha, with a piteous shake of the head—"white o' the gills—white o' the gills—and him to think of coming down the riva!"

"Return home, Mordaunt," said Norna, who was listening to what had passed. "I will see all that is necessary done for this man's relief, and you will find him at the ranzelman's when you list to inquire. You cannot help him more than you already have done."

Mordaunt felt this was true, and, commanding Swertha to follow him home instantly, betook himself to the path homeward.

Swertha hobbled reluctantly after her young master in the same direction, until she lost sight of him on his entering the cleft of the rock; then instantly turned about, muttering to herself, "Haste home, in good sooth?—haste home, and lose the best chance of getting a new rokelay and owerlay that I have had these ten years? by my certie, no—It's seldom sic rich godsend comes on our coast—no since the Jenny and James came ashore in King Charlie's time."

So saying, she mended her pace as well as she could, and, a willing mind making amends for frail limbs, posted on with wonderful dispatch to put in for her share of the spoil. She soon reached the beach, where the ranzelman, stuffing his own pouches all the while, was exhorting the rest to part things fair, and be neighbourly, and to give to the auld and helpless a share of what was going, which, he charitably remarked, would bring a blessing on the shore, and send them "mair wrecks ere winter."

CHAPTER VIII.

He was a lovely youth, I guess;
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he.
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay,
Upon the tropic sea.

WORDSWORTH.

THE light foot of Mordaunt Mertoun was not long of bearing him to Jarlshof. He entered the house hastily; for what he himself had observed that morning, corresponded in some degree with the ideas which Swertha's tale was calculated to excite. He found his father, however, in the inner apartment, reposing himself after his fatigue; and his first question satisfied him that the good dame had practised a little imposition to get rid of them both.

"Where is this dying man, whom you have so wisely ventured your own neck to relieve?" said the elder Mertoun to the younger.

"Norna, sir," replied Mordaunt, "has taken him under her charge; she understands such matters."

"And is quack as well as witch?" said the elder Mertoun. "With all my heart—it is a trouble saved. But I hasted home, on Swertha's hint, to look out for lint and bandages; for her speech was of broken bones."

Mordaunt kept silence, well knowing his father would not persevere in his inquiries upon such a matter, and not willing either to prejudice the old governante, or to excite his father to one of those excesses of passion into which he was apt to burst, when, contrary to his wont, he thought proper to correct the conduct of his domestic.

It was late in the day ere old Swertha returned from her expedition, heartily fatigued, and bearing with her a bundle of some bulk, containing, it would seem, her share of the spoil. Mordaunt instantly sought her out, to charge her with the deceits she had practised on both his father and himself; but the accused matron lacked not her reply.

"By her troth," she said, "she thought it was time to bid Mr Mertoun gang hame and get bandages, when she had seen, with her ain twa een, Mordaunt ganging down the cliff like a wild cat—it was to be thought broken bones would be the end, and lucky if bandages wad do any good;—and, by her troth, she might weel tell Mordaunt his father was purily, and him looking sae white in the gills (whilk, she wad die upon it, was the very word she used), and it was a thing that couldna be denied by man at this very moment."

"But, Swertha," said Mordaunt, as soon as her clamorous defence gave him time to speak in reply, "how came you, that should have been busy with your housewifery and your spinning, to be out this morning at Erick's Steps, in order to take all this unnecessary care of my father and me?—And what is in that bundle, Swertha? for I fear, Swertha, you have been transgressing the law, and have been out upon the wrecking system."

"Fair fa' your sonsy face, and the blessing of Saint Ronald upon you!" said Swertha, in a tone

betwixt coaxing and jesting; "would you keep a puir body frae mending hersell, and sae muckle gear lying on the loose sand for the lifting?—Hout, Maister Mordaunt, a ship ashore is a sight to wile the minister out of his very pu'pit in the middle of his preaching, muckle mair a puir auld ignorant wife frae her rock and her tow. And little did I get for my day's wark—just some rags o' cambric things, and a bit or twa of coorse claith, and sic like—the strong and the hearty get a' thing in this world."

"Yes, Swertha," replied Mertoun, "and that is rather hard, as you must have your share of punishment in this world and the next, for robbing the poor mariners."

"Hout, callant, wha wad punish an auld wife like me for a wheen duds?—Folk speak muckle black ill of Earl Patrick; but he was a freend to the shore, and made wise laws against onybody helping vessels that were like to gang on the breakers.*—And the mariners, I have heard Bryce Jagger say, lose their right frae the time keel touches sand; and, moreover, they are dead and gane, puir souls—dead and gane, and care little about world's wealth now—Nay, nae mair than the great Jarls and sea-kings, in the Norse days, did about the treasures that they buried in the tombs and sepulchres auld langsyne. Did I ever tell you the sang, Maister Mordaunt, how Olaf Tryguarson garr'd hide five gold crouns in the same grave with him?"

"No, Swertha," said Mordaunt, who took pleasure in tormenting the cunning old plunderer—"You never told me that; but I tell you, that the stranger whom Norna has taken down to the town, will be well enough to-morrow, to ask where you have hidden the goods that you have stolen from the wreck."

"But wha will tell him a word about it, hinny?" said Swertha, looking slily up in her young master's face—"The mair by token, since I maun tell ye, that I have a bonnie remnant of silk amangt he lave, that will make a dainty waistcoat to yoursell, the first merry-making ye gang to."

Mordaunt could no longer forbear laughing at the cunning with which the old dame proposed to bribe off his evidence by imparting a portion of her plunder; and, desiring her to get ready what provisions she had made for dinner, he returned to his father, whom he still found sitting in the same place, and nearly in the same posture, in which he had left him.

When their hasty and frugal meal was finished, Mordaunt announced to his father his purpose of going down to the town, or hamlet, to look after the shipwrecked sailor.

The elder Mertoun assented with a nod.

"He must be ill accommodated there, sir," added his son,—a hint which only produced another nod of assent. "He seemed, from his appearance," pursued Mordaunt, "to be of very good rank—and, admitting these poor people do their best to receive him, in his present weak state, yet"—

"I know what you would say," said his father, interrupting him; "we, you think, ought to do some-

thing towards assisting him. Go to him, then—if he lacks money, let him name the sum, and he shall have it; but, for lodging the stranger here, and holding intercourse with him, I neither can nor will do so. I have retired to this farthest extremity of the British isles, to avoid new friends, and new faces, and none such shall intrude on me either their happiness or their misery. When you have known the world half a score of years longer, your early friends will have given you reason to remember them, and to avoid new ones for the rest of your life. Go, then—why do you stop?—rid the country of the man—let me see no one about me but those vulgar countenances, the extent and character of whose petty knavery I know, and can submit to, as to an evil too trifling to cause irritation." He then threw his purse to his son, and signed to him to depart with all speed.

Mordaunt was not long before he reached the village. In the dark abode of Neil Ronaldson, the ranzelman, he found the stranger seated by the peat-fire, upon the very chest which had excited the cupidity of the devout Bryce Snailsfoot, the pedlar. The ranzelman himself was absent, dividing, with all due impartiality, the spoils of the wrecked vessel amongst the natives of the community; listening to and redressing their complaints of inequality; and (if the matter in hand had not been, from beginning to end, utterly unjust and indefensible) discharging the part of a wise and prudent magistrate, in all the details relating to it. For at this time, and probably until a much later period, the lower orders of the islanders entertained an opinion, common to barbarians also when in the same situation, that whatever was cast on their shores, became their indisputable property.

Margery Bimbister, the worthy spouse of the ranzelman, was in the charge of the house, and introduced Mordaunt to her guest, saying, with no great ceremony, "This is the young tacksman—You will maybe tell him your name, though you will not tell it to us. If it had not been for his four quarters, it's but little you would have said to anybody, sae lang as life lasted."

The stranger arose, and shook Mordaunt by the hand; observing, he understood that he had been the means of saving his life and his chest. "The rest of the property," he said, "is, I see, walking the plank; for they are as busy as the devil in a gale of wind."

"And what was the use of your seamanship, then," said Margery, "that you couldna keep off the Sumburgh-head? It would have been long ere Sumburgh-head had come to you."

"Leave us for a moment, good Margery Bimbister," said Mordaunt; "I wish some private conversation with this gentleman."

"Gentleman!" said Margery, with an emphasis; "not but the man is well enough to look at," she added, again surveying him, "but I doubt if there is muckle of the gentleman."

Mordaunt looked at the stranger, and was of a different opinion. He was rather above the middle size, and formed handsomely as well as strongly. Mordaunt's intercourse with society was not extensive; but he thought his new acquaintance, to a bold sunburnt handsome countenance, which seemed to

* This was literally true.

have faced various climates, added the frank and open manners of a sailor. He answered cheerfully the inquiries which Mordaunt made after his health; and maintained that one night's rest would relieve him from all the effects of the disaster he had sustained. But he spoke with bitterness of the avarice and curiosity of the ranzelman and his spouse.

"That chattering old woman," said the stranger, "has persecuted me the whole day for the name of the ship. I think she might be contented with the share she has had of it. I was the principal owner of the vessel that was lost yonder, and they have left me nothing but my wearing apparel. Is there no magistrate, or justice of the peace, in this wild country, that would lend a hand to help one when he is among the breakers?"

Mordaunt mentioned Magnus Troil, the principal proprietor, as well as the fowd, or provincial judge of the district, as the person from whom he was most likely to obtain redress; and regretted that his own youth, and his father's situation as a retired stranger, should put it out of their power to afford him the protection he required.

"Nay, for your part you have done enough," said the sailor; "but if I had five out of the forty brave fellows that are fishes' food by this time, the devil a man would I ask to do me the right that I could do for myself."

"Forty hands!" said Mordaunt; "you were well manned for the size of the ship."

"Not so well as we needed to be. We mounted ten guns, besides chasers; but our cruise on the main had thinned us of men, and lumbered us up with goods. Six of our guns were in ballast.—Hands! if I had had enough of hands, we would never have miscarried so infernally. The people were knocked up with working the pumps, and so took to their boats, and left me with the vessel, to sink or swim. But the dogs had their pay, and I can afford to pardon them.—The boats swamped in the current—all were lost—and here am I."

"You had come north about then, from the West Indies?" said Mordaunt.

"Ay, ay; the vessel was the Good Hope of Bristol, a letter of marque. She had fine luck down on the Spanish main, both with commerce and privateering, but the luck's ended with her now. My name is Clement Cleveland, captain, and part owner, as I said before—I am a Bristol man born—my father was well known on the Tollsell—old Clem Cleveland of the College-green."

Mordaunt had no right to inquire farther, and yet it seemed to him as if his own mind was but half-satisfied. There was an affectation of bluntness, a sort of defiance, in the manner of the stranger, for which circumstances afforded no occasion. Captain Cleveland had suffered injustice from the islanders, but from Mordaunt he had only received kindness and protection; yet he seemed as if he involved all the neighbourhood in the wrongs he complained of. Mordaunt looked down and was silent, doubting whether it would be better to take his leave, or to proceed farther in his offers of assistance. Cleveland seemed to guess at his thoughts, for he immediately added, in a conciliating manner,—“I am a plain man, Master Mertoun (for that I understand

is your name), and I am a ruined man to boot, and that does not mend one's good manners. But you have done a kind and friendly part by me, and it may be I think as much of it as if I thanked you more. And so before I leave this place, I'll give you my fowling-piece; she will put a hundred swan-shot through a Dutchman's cap at eighty paces—she will carry ball too—I have hit a wild bull within a hundred and fifty yards—but I have two that are as good, or better, so you may keep this for my sake."

"That would be to take my share of the wreck," answered Mordaunt, laughing.

"No such matter," said Cleveland, undoing a case which contained several guns and pistols,—“you see I have saved my private arm-chest, as well as my clothes—that the tall old woman in the dark rigging managed for me. And, between ourselves, it is worth all I have lost; for,” he added, lowering his voice and looking round, “when I speak of being ruined in the hearing of these land-sharks, I do not mean ruined stock and block: No, here is something will do more than shoot sea-fowl.” So saying, he pulled out a great ammunition-pouch marked swan-shot, and showed Mordaunt hastily that it was full of Spanish pistoles and Portugues (as the broad Portugal pieces were then called). “No, no,” he added, with a smile, “I have ballast enough to trim the vessel again; and now, will you take the piece?”

"Since you are willing to give it me," said Mordaunt, laughing, "with all my heart. I was just going to ask you, in my father's name," he added, showing his purse, "whether you wanted any of that same ballast."

"Thanks, but you see I am provided—take my old acquaintance, and may she serve you as well as she has served me; but you will never make so good a voyage with her. You can shoot, I suppose?"

"Tolerably well," said Mordaunt, admiring the piece, which was a beautiful Spanish barrel gun, inlaid with gold, small in the bore, and of unusual length, such as is chiefly used for shooting sea-fowl, and for ball-practice.

"With slugs," continued the donor, "never gun shot closer; and with single ball, you may kill a seal two hundred yards at sea from the top of the highest peak of this iron-bound coast of yours. But I tell you again, that the old rattler will never do you the service she has done me."

"I shall not use her so dexterously, perhaps," said Mordaunt.

"Umph!—perhaps not," replied Cleveland; "but this is not the question. What say you to shooting the man at the wheel, just as we run aboard of a Spaniard? So the Don was taken aback, and we laid him athwart the hawse, and carried her, cutlass in hand; and worth the while she was—stout brigantine—El Santo Francisco—bound for Porto Bello, with gold and negroes. That little bit of lead was worth twenty thousand pistoles."

"I have shot at no such game as yet," said Mordaunt.

"Well, all in good time; we cannot weigh till the tide makes. But you are a tight, handsome, active young man. What is to ail you to take a trip

after some of this stuff?" laying his hand on the bag of gold.

"My father talks of my travelling soon," replied Mordaunt, who, born to hold men-of-war's men in great respect, felt flattered by this invitation from one who appeared a thorough-bred seaman.

"I respect him for the thought," said the captain; "and I will visit him before I weigh anchor. I have a consort off these islands, and be cursed to her. She'll find me out somewhere, though she parted company in the bit of a squall, unless she is gone to Davy Jones too.—Well, she was better found than we, and not so deep loaded—she must have weathered it. We'll have a hammock slung for you aboard, and make a sailor and a man of you in the same trip."

"I should like it well enough," said Mordaunt, who eagerly longed to see more of the world than his lonely situation had hitherto permitted; "but then my father must decide."

"Your father? pooh!" said Captain Cleveland;—"but you are very right," he added, checking himself; "Gad, I have lived so long at sea, that I cannot think anybody has a right to think except the captain and the master. But you are very right. I will go up to the old gentleman this instant, and speak to him myself. He lives in that handsome, modern-looking building, I suppose, that I see a quarter of a mile off?"

"In that old half-ruined house," said Mordaunt, "he does indeed live; but he will see no visitors."

"Then you must drive the point yourself, for I can't stay in this latitude. Since your father is no magistrate, I must go to see this same Magnus—how call you him?—who is not justice of peace, but something else that will do the turn as well. These fellows have got two or three things that I must and will have back—let them keep the rest, and be d—d to them! Will you give me a letter to him, just by way of commission?"

"It is scarce needful," said Mordaunt. "It is enough that you are shipwrecked, and need his help;—but yet I may as well furnish you with a letter of introduction."

"There," said the sailor, producing a writing-case from his chest, "are your writing-tools.—Meantime, since bulk has been broken, I will nail down the hatches, and make sure of the cargo."

While Mordaunt, accordingly, was engaged in writing to Magnus Troil a letter, setting forth the circumstances in which Captain Cleveland had been thrown upon their coast, the captain, having first selected and laid aside some wearing apparel and necessaries enough to fill a knapsack, took in hand hammer and nails, employed himself in securing the lid of his sea-chest, by fastening it down in a workmanlike manner, and then added the corroborating security of a cord, twisted and knotted with nautical dexterity. "I leave this in your charge," he said, "all except this," showing the bag of gold, "and these," pointing to a cutlass and pistols, "which may prevent all further risk of my parting company with my Portugueses."

"You will find no occasion for weapons in this country, Captain Cleveland," replied Mordaunt; "a child might travel with a purse of gold from

Sumburgh-head to the Scaw of Unst, and no soul would injure him."

"And that's pretty boldly said, young gentleman, considering what is going on without doors at this moment."

"O," replied Mordaunt, a little confused, "what comes on land with the tide, they reckon their lawful property. One would think they had studied under Sir Arthegal, who pronounces—

For equal right in equal things doth stand,
And what the mighty sea hath once possess'd,
And plucked quite from all possessors' hands,
Or else by wrecks that wretches have distress'd,
He may dispose, by his resistless might,
As things at random left, to whom he list."

"I shall think the better of plays and ballads as long as I live, for these very words," said Captain Cleveland; "and yet I have loved them well enough in my day. But this is good doctrine, and more men than one may trim their sails to such a breeze. What the sea sends is ours, that's sure enough. However, in case that your good folks should think the land as well as the sea may present them with waifs and strays, I will make bold to take my cutlass and pistols.—Will you cause my chest to be secured in your own house till you hear from me, and use your influence to procure me a guide to show me the way, and to carry my kitt?"

"Will you go by sea or land?" said Mordaunt, in reply.

"By sea!" exclaimed Cleveland. "What—in one of these cockle-shells, and a cracked cockle-shell, to boot! No, no,—land, land, unless I knew my crew, my vessel, and my voyage."

They parted accordingly, Captain Cleveland being supplied with a guide to conduct him to Burgh-Westra, and his chest being carefully removed to the mansion-house at Jarlshof.

CHAPTER IX.

This is a gentle trader, and a prudent.
He's no Autolycus to blear your eye
With quips of worldly gauds and gamesomeness;
But seasons all his glittering merchandize
With wholesome doctrines suited to the use,
As men sauce goose with sage and rosemary.

Old Play.

ON the subsequent morning, Mordaunt, in answer to his father's inquiries, began to give him some account of the shipwrecked mariner, whom he had rescued from the waves. But he had not proceeded far in recapitulating the particulars which Cleveland had communicated, when Mr Mertoun's looks became disturbed—he arose hastily, and, after pacing twice or thrice across the room, he retired into the inner chamber, to which he usually confined himself, while under the influence of his mental malady. In the evening he re-appeared, without any traces of his disorder; but it may be easily supposed that his son avoided recurring to the subject which had affected him.

Mordaunt Mertoun was thus left without assistance, to form at his leisure his own opinion respecting the new acquaintance which the sea had

sent him; and, upon the whole, he was himself surprised to find the result less favourable to the stranger than he could well account for. There seemed to Mordaunt to be a sort of repelling influence about the man. True, he was a handsome man, of a frank and prepossessing manner, but there was an assumption of superiority about him, which Mordaunt did not quite so much like. Although he was so keen a sportsman as to be delighted with his acquisition of the Spanish-barreled gun, and accordingly mounted and dismounted it with great interest, paying the utmost attention to the most minute parts about the lock and ornaments, yet he was, upon the whole, inclined to have some scruples about the mode in which he had acquired it.

"I should not have accepted it," he thought; "perhaps Captain Cleveland might give it me as a sort of payment for the trifling service I did him; and yet it would have been churlish to refuse it in the way it was offered. I wish he had looked more like a man whom one would have chosen to be obliged to."

But a successful day's shooting reconciled him with his gun, and he became assured, like most young sportsmen in similar circumstances, that all other pieces were but pop-guns in comparison. But then, to be doomed to shoot gulls and seals, when there were Frenchmen and Spaniards to be come at—when there were ships to be boarded, and steersmen to be marked off, seemed but a dull and contemptible destiny. His father had mentioned his leaving these islands, and no other mode of occupation occurred to his inexperience, save that of the sea, with which he had been conversant from his infancy. His ambition had formerly aimed no higher than at sharing the fatigues and dangers of a Greenland fishing expedition; for it was in that scene that the Zetlanders laid most of their perilous adventures. But of late, that war was again raging, the history of Sir Francis Drake, Captain Morgan, and other bold adventurers, whose exploits he had purchased from Bryce Snailsfoot, had made much impression on his mind, and the offer of Captain Cleveland to take him to sea frequently recurred to him, although the pleasure of such a project was somewhat damped by a doubt, whether, in the long run, he should not find many objections to his proposed commander. Thus much he already saw, that he was opinionative, and might probably prove arbitrary; and that, since even his kindness was mingled with assumption of superiority, his occasional displeasure might contain a great deal more of that disagreeable ingredient than could be palatable to those who sailed under him. And yet, after counting all risks, could his father's consent but be obtained, with what pleasure, he thought, would he embark in quest of new scenes and strange adventures, in which he proposed to himself to achieve such deeds as should be the theme of many a tale to the lovely sisters of Burgh-Westra—tales at which Minna should weep, and Brenda should smile, and both should marvel. And this was to be the reward of his labours and his dangers; for the hearth of Magnus Troil had a magnetic influence over his thoughts, and however they might traverse amid his day-dreams, it was the point where they finally settled.

There were times when Mordaunt thought of mentioning to his father the conversation he had held with Captain Cleveland, and the seaman's proposal to him; but the very short and general account which he had given of that person's history, upon the morning after his departure from the hamlet, had produced a sinister effect upon Mr Mertoun's mind, and discouraged him from speaking farther on any subject connected with it. It would be time enough, he thought, to mention Captain Cleveland's proposal, when his consort should arrive, and when he should repeat his offer in a more formal manner; and these he supposed events likely very soon to happen.

But days grew to weeks, and weeks were numbered into months, and he heard nothing from Cleveland; and only learned by an occasional visit from Bryce Snailsfoot, that the captain was residing at Burgh-Westra, as one of the family. Mordaunt was somewhat surprised at this, although the unlimited hospitality of the islands, which Magnus Troil, both from fortune and disposition, carried to the utmost extent, made it almost a matter of course that he should remain in the family until he disposed of himself otherwise. Still it seemed strange he had not gone to some of the northern isles to inquire after his consort; or that he did not rather chuse to make his residence at Lerwick, where fishing vessels often brought news from the coasts and ports of Scotland and Holland. Again, why did he not send for the chest he had deposited at Jarlshof? and still farther, Mordaunt thought it would have been but polite if the stranger had sent him some sort of message in token of remembrance.

These subjects of reflection were connected with another still more unpleasant, and more difficult to account for. Until the arrival of this person, scarce a week had passed without bringing him some kind greeting, or token of recollection, from Burgh-Westra; and pretences were scarce ever wanting for maintaining a constant intercourse. Minna wanted the words of a Norse ballad; or desired to have, for her various collections, feathers, or eggs, or shells, or specimens of the rarer sea-weeds; or Brenda sent a riddle to be resolved, or a song to be learned; or the honest old udaller,—in a rude manuscript, which might have passed for an ancient Runic inscription,—sent his hearty greetings to his good young friend, with a present of something to make good cheer, and an earnest request he would come to Burgh-Westra as soon, and stay there as long, as possible. These kindly tokens of remembrance were often sent by special message; besides which, there was never passenger or traveller, who crossed from the one mansion to the other, that did not bring to Mordaunt some friendly greeting from the udaller and his family. Of late, this intercourse had become more and more infrequent; and no messenger from Burgh-Westra had visited Jarlshof for several weeks. Mordaunt both observed and felt this alteration, and it dwelt on his mind, while he questioned Bryce as closely as pride and prudence would permit, to ascertain, if possible, the cause of the change. Yet he endeavoured to assume an indifferent air while he asked the jagger whether there were no news in the country.

"Great news," the jagger replied; "and a gay mony of them. That crack-brained carle, the new factor, is for making a change in the bismars and the lipsunds;* and our worthy fowd, Magnus Troil, has sworn, that, sooner than change them for the still-yard, or aught else, he'll fling Factor Yellowley from Brassa-craig."

"Is that all?" said Mordaunt, very little interested.

"All? and eneugh, I think," replied the pedlar. "How are folks to buy and sell, if the weights are changed on them?"

"Very true," replied Mordaunt; "but have you heard of no strange vessels on the coast?"

"Six Dutch doggers off Brassa; and, as I hear, a high-quartered galliot thing, with a gaff main-sail, lying in Scalloway Bay. She will be from Norway."

"No ships of war, or sloops?"

"None," replied the pedlar, "since the Kite Tender sailed with the impress men. If it was His will, and our men were out of her, I wish the deep sea had her."

"Were there no news at Burgh-Westra?—Were the family all well?"

"A' weel, and weel to do—out-takin', it may be, something ower muckle daffing and laughing—dancing ilk night, they say, wi' the stranger captain that's living there—him that was ashore on Sumburgh-head the tother day,—less daffing served him then."

"Daffing! dancing every night!" said Mordaunt, not particularly well satisfied.—"Whom does Captain Cleveland dance with?"

"Onybody he likes, I fancy," said the jagger; "at ony rate, he gars a' body yonder dance after his fiddle. But I ken little about it, for I am no free in conscience to look upon thae flinging fancies. Folk should mind that life is made but of rotten yarn."

"I fancy that it is to keep them in mind of that wholesome truth, that you deal in such tender wares, Bryce," replied Mordaunt, dissatisfied as well with the tenor of the reply, as with the affected scruples of the respondent.

"That's as muckle as to say, that I suld hae minded you was a flinger and a fiddler yoursell, Maister Mordaunt; but I am an auld man, and maun unburthen my conscience. But ye will be for the dance, I sall warrant, that's to be at Burgh-Westra, on John's Even (*Saunt John's*, as the blinded creatures ca' him); and nae doubt ye will be for some warldly braws—hose, waistcoats, or sic like. I hae pieces frae Flanders"—With that he placed his moveable warehouse on the table, and began to unlock it.

"Dance!" repeated Mordaunt—"Dance on St John's Even?—Were you desired to bid me to it, Bryce?"

"Na—but ye ken weel eneugh ye wad be welcome, bidden or no bidden. This captain—how ca' ye him—is to be skudler as they ca't—the first of the gang, like."

"The devil take him!" said Mordaunt, in impatient surprise.

* These are weights of Norwegian origin, still used in Zetland.

"A' in gude time," replied the jagger; "hurry no man's cattle—the devil will hae his due, I warrant ye, or it winna be for lack of seeking. But it's true I'm telling you, for a' ye stare like a wild-cat; and this same captain—I wat na his name—bought ane of the very waistcoats that I am ganging to show ye—purple, wi' a gowd binding, and bonnily broi-dered; and I have a piece for you, the neighbour of it, wi' a green grund; and if ye mean to streak yoursell up beside him, ye maun e'en buy it, for it's gowd that glances in the lasses' een now-a-days. See, look till't," he added, displaying the pattern in various points of view; "look till it through the light, and till the light through it—wi' the grain, and against the grain—it shows ony gate—cam frae Antwerp a' the gate—four dollars is the price; and yon captain was sae weel pleased that he flang down a twenty-shilling jacobus, and bade me keep the change and be damned!—poor silly profane creature, I pity him."

Without inquiring whether the pedlar bestowed his compassion on the worldly imprudence or the religious deficiencies of Captain Cleveland, Mordaunt turned from him, folded his arms, and paced the apartment, muttering to himself, "Not asked—A stranger to be king of the feast!"—Words which he repeated so earnestly, that Bryce caught a part of their import.

"As for asking, I am almaist bauld to say, that ye will be asked, Maister Mordaunt."

"Did they mention my name then?" said Mordaunt.

"I canna preceesely say that," said Bryce Snails-foot; "but ye needna turn away your head sae sourly, like a sealgh when he leaves the shore; for, do you see, I heard distinctly that a' the revelers about are to be there; and is 't to be thought they would leave out you, an auld kenn'd freend, and the lightest foot at sic frolics (Heaven send you a better praise in His ain gude time!), that ever flang at a fiddle-squeak, between this and Unst? Sae I consider ye altogether the same as invited—and ye had best provide yourself wi' a waistcoat, for brave and brisk will every man be that's there—the Lord pity them!"

He thus continued to follow with his green glazen eyes, the motions of young Mordaunt Mertoun, who continued to pace the room in a very pensive manner, which the jagger probably misinterpreted; as he thought, like Claudio, that if a man is sad, it must needs be because he lacks money. Bryce, therefore, after another pause, thus accosted him. "Ye needna be sad about the matter, Maister Mordaunt; for although I got the just price of the article from the captain-man, yet I maun deal freendly wi' you, as a kenn'd freend and customer, and bring the price, as they say, within your purse-mouth—or it's the same to me to let it lie ower till Martinmas, or e'en to Candlemas. I am decent in the warld, Maister Mordaunt. Forbid that I should hurry onybody, far mair a freend that has paid me siller afore now. Or I wad be content to swap the garment for the value in feathers or sea-otters' skins, or ony kind of peltrie—nane kens better than yoursell how to come by sic ware—and I am sure I hae furnished you wi' the primest o' powder. I dinna ken if I tell'd ye it was

out o' the kist of Captain Plunket, that perished on the Scaw of Unst, wi' the armed brig Mary, sax years syne. He was a prime fowler himself, and luck it was that the kist came ashore dry. I sell that to nane but gude marksmen. And so, I was saying, if ye had ony wares ye liked to coup for the waistcoat, I wad be ready to trock wi' you; for assuredly ye will be wanted at Burgh-Westra on Saint John's Even; and ye wadna like to look waur than the captain—that wadna be setting."

"I will be there, at least, whether wanted or not," said Mordaunt, stopping short in his walk, and taking the waistcoat-piece hastily out of the pedlar's hand; "and, as you say, will not disgrace them."

"Haud a care—haud a care, Maister Mordaunt," exclaimed the pedlar; "ye handle it as it were a bale of coarse wadmaal—ye'll fray't to bits—ye might weel say my ware is tender—and ye'll mind the price is four dollars—Sall I put ye in my book for it?"

"No," said Mordaunt, hastily; and, taking out his purse, he flung down the money.

"Grace to ye to wear the garment," said the joyous pedlar, "and to me to guide the siller; and protect us from earthly vanities, and earthly covetousness; and send you the white linen raiment, whilk is mair to be desired than the muslins, and cambrics, and lawns, and silks of this world; and send me the talents which avail more than much fine Spanish gold, or Dutch dollars either—and—but, God guide the callant, what for are ye wrapping the silk up that gate, like a wisp of hay?"

At this moment, old Swertha, the housekeeper, entered, to whom, as if eager to get rid of the subject, Mordaunt threw his purchase, with something like careless disdain; and, telling her to put it aside, snatched his gun, which stood in the corner, threw his shooting accoutrements about him, and without noticing Bryce's attempt to enter into conversation upon the "braw seal-skin, as saft as doe-leather," which made the sling and cover of his fowling-piece, he left the apartment abruptly.

The jagger, with those green, goggling, and gain-describing kind of optics, which we have already described, continued gazing for an instant after the customer, who treated his wares with such irreverence.

Swertha also looked after him with some surprise. "The callant's in a creel," quoth she.

"In a creel!" echoed the pedlar; "he will be as wowf as ever his father was. To guide in that gate a bargain that cost him four dollars—very, very Fifish, as the east-country fisher folks say."

"Four dollars for that green rag!" said Swertha, catching at the words which the jagger had unwarily suffered to escape—"that was a bargain indeed! I wonder whether he is the greater fule, or you the mair rogue, Bryce Snailsfoot."

"I didna say it cost him preceesely four dollars," said Snailsfoot; "but if it had, the lad's siller's his ain, I hope; and he is auld enough to make his ain bargains. Mair by token, the gudes are weel worth the money, and mair."

"Mair by token," said Swertha, coolly, "I will see what his father thinks about it."

"Ye'll no be sae ill-natured, Mrs Swertha," said

the jagger; "that will be but cauld thanks for the bonnie owerlay that I hae brought you a' the way frae Lerwick."

"And a bonnie price ye'll be setting on't," said Swertha; "for that's the gate your good deeds end."

"Ye sall hae the fixing of the price yoursell; or it may lie ower till ye're buying something for the house, or for your master, and it can make a' ae count."

"Troth and that's true, Bryce Snailsfoot; I am thinking we'll want some napery sune—for it's no to be thought we can spin, and the like, as if there was a mistress in the house; and sae we make nane at hame."

"And that's what I ca' walking by the word," said the jagger. "'Go unto those that buy and sell; there's muckle profit in that text.'"

"There is a pleasure in dealing wi' a discreet man, that can make profit of onything," said Swertha; "and now that I can take another look at that daft callant's waistcoat-piece, I think it is honestly worth four dollars."

CHAPTER X.

I have possessed the regulation of the weather and the distribution of the seasons. The sun has listened to my dictates, and passed from tropic to tropic by my direction; the clouds, at my command, have poured forth their waters.—

Rasselas.

ANY sudden cause for anxious and mortifying reflection, which, in advanced age, occasions sullen and pensive inactivity, stimulates youth to eager and active exertion; as if, like the hurt deer, they endeavoured to drown the pain of the shaft by the rapidity of motion. When Mordaunt caught up his gun, and rushed out of the house of Jarlshof, he walked on with great activity over waste and wild, without any determined purpose, except that of escaping, if possible, from the smart of his own irritation. His pride was effectually mortified by the report of the jagger, which coincided exactly with some doubts he had been led to entertain, by the long and unkind silence of his friends at Burgh-Westra.

If the fortunes of Cæsar had doomed him, as the poet suggests, to have been

But the best wrestler on the green,

it is nevertheless to be presumed, that a foil from a rival, in that rustic exercise, would have mortified him as much as a defeat from his rival, when he was struggling for the empery of the world. And even so Mordaunt Mertoun, degraded in his own eyes from the height which he had occupied as the chief amongst the youth of the island, felt vexed and irritated, as well as humbled. The two beautiful sisters also, whose smiles all were so desirous of acquiring, with whom he had lived on terms of such familiar affection, that, with the same ease and innocence, there was unconsciously mixed a shade of deeper though undefined tenderness than characterizes fraternal love,—they also seemed to have

forgotten him. He could not be ignorant, that, in the universal opinion of all Dunrossness, nay, of the whole Main-land, he might have had every chance of being the favoured lover of either; and now at once, and without any failure on his part, he was become so little to them, that he had lost even the consequence of an ordinary acquaintance. The old udaller too, whose hearty and sincere character should have made him more constant in his friendships, seemed to have been as fickle as his daughters, and poor Mordaunt had at once lost the smiles of the fair, and the favour of the powerful. These were uncomfortable reflections, and he doubled his pace, that he might outstrip them if possible.

Without exactly reflecting upon the route which he pursued, Mordaunt walked briskly on through a country where neither hedge, wall, nor enclosure of any kind, interrupts the steps of the wanderer, until he reached a very solitary spot, where, embosomed among steep heathy hills, which sunk suddenly down on the verge of the water, lay one of those small fresh-water lakes which are common in the Zetland isles, whose outlets form the sources of the small brooks and rivulets by which the country is watered, and serve to drive the little mills which manufacture their grain.

It was a mild summer day; the beams of the sun, as is not uncommon in Zetland, were moderated and shaded by a silvery haze, which filled the atmosphere, and, destroying the strong contrast of light and shade, gave even to noon the sober livery of the evening twilight. The little lake, not three quarters of a mile in circuit, lay in profound quiet; its surface undimpled, save when one of the numerous water-fowl, which glided on its surface, dived for an instant under it. The depth of the water gave the whole that cerulean tint of bluish green, which occasioned its being called the Green Loch; and at present, it formed so perfect a mirror to the bleak hills by which it was surrounded, and which lay reflected on its bosom, that it was difficult to distinguish the water from the land; nay, in the shadowy uncertainty occasioned by the thin haze, a stranger could scarce have been sensible that a sheet of water lay before him. A scene of more complete solitude, having all its peculiarities heightened by the extreme serenity of the weather, the quiet grey composed tone of the atmosphere, and the perfect silence of the elements, could hardly be imagined. The very aquatic birds, which frequented the spot in great numbers, forbore their usual flight and screams, and floated in profound tranquillity upon the silent water.

Without taking any determined aim—without having any determined purpose—without almost thinking what he was about, Mordaunt presented his fowling-piece, and fired across the lake. The large swan-shot dimpled its surface like a partial shower of hail—the hills took up the noise of the report, and repeated it again, and again, and again, to all their echoes; the water-fowl took to wing in eddying and confused wheel, answering the echoes with a thousand varying screams, from the deep note of the swabie or swartback, to the querulous cry of the the tirraeke and kitty-wake.

Mordaunt looked on the clamorous crowd with a

feeling of resentment, which he felt disposed at the moment to apply to all nature, and all her objects, animate or inanimate, however little concerned with the cause of his internal mortification.

“Ay, ay,” he said, “wheel, dive, scream, and clamour as you will, and all because you have seen a strange sight, and heard an unusual sound. There is many a one like you in this round world. But you, at least, shall learn,” he added, as he reloaded his gun, “that strange sights and strange sounds, ay, and strange acquaintances to boot, have sometimes a little shade of danger connected with them.—But why should I wreak my own vexation on these harmless sea-gulls?” he subjoined, after a moment’s pause; “they have nothing to do with the friends that have forgotten me.—I loved them all so well,—and to be so soon given up for the first stranger whom chance threw on the coast!”

As he stood resting upon his gun, and abandoning his mind to the course of these unpleasant reflections, his meditations were unexpectedly interrupted by some one touching his shoulder. He looked around, and saw Norna of the Fitful-head, wrapped in her dark and ample mantle. She had seen him from the brow of the hill, and had descended to the lake, through a small ravine, which concealed her, until she came with noiseless step so close to him that he turned round at her touch.

Mordaunt Mertoun was by nature neither timorous nor credulous, and a course of reading more extensive than usual had, in some degree, fortified his mind against the attacks of superstition; but he would have been an actual prodigy, if, living in Zetland in the end of the seventeenth century, he had possessed the philosophy which did not exist in Scotland generally, until at least two generations later. He doubted in his own mind the extent, nay, the very existence, of Norna’s supernatural attributes, which was a high flight of incredulity in the country where they were universally received; but still his incredulity went no farther than doubts. She was unquestionably an extraordinary woman, gifted with an energy above others, acting upon motives peculiar to herself, and apparently independent on mere earthly considerations. Impressed with these ideas, which he had imbibed from his youth, it was not without something like alarm, that he beheld this mysterious female standing of a sudden so close beside him, and looking upon him with such sad and severe eyes, as those with which the Fatal Virgins, who, according to northern mythology, were called the Valkyriur, or “chusers of the slain,” were supposed to regard the young champions whom they selected to share the banquet of Odin.

It was, indeed, reckoned unlucky, to say the least, to meet with Norna suddenly alone, and in a place remote from witnesses; and she was supposed, on such occasions, to have been usually a prophetess of evil, as well as an omen of misfortune, to those who had such a rencontre. There were few or none of the islanders, however familiarized with her occasional appearance in society, that would not have trembled to meet her on the solitary banks of the Green Loch.

“I bring you no evil, Mordaunt Mertoun,” she

said, reading perhaps something of this superstitious feeling in the looks of the young man. "Evil from me you never felt, and never will."

"Nor do I fear any," said Mordaunt, exerting himself to throw aside an apprehension which he felt to be unmanly. "Why should I, mother? You have been ever my friend."

"Yet, Mordaunt, thou art not of our region; but to none of Zetland blood, no, not even to those who sit around the hearth-stone of Magnus Troil, the noble descendants of the ancient Jarls of Orkney, am I more a well-wisher, than I am to thee, thou kind and brave-hearted boy. When I hung around thy neck that gifted chain, which all in our isles know was wrought by no earthly artist, but by the drows, * in the secret recesses of their caverns, thou wert then but fifteen years old; yet thy foot had been on the Maiden-skерrie of Northmaven, known before but to the webbed sole of the swartback, and thy skiff had been in the deepest cavern of Brinnastir, where the haaf-fish † had before slumbered in dark obscurity. Therefore I gave thee that noble gift; and well thou knowest, that since that day, every eye in these isles has looked on thee as a son, or as a brother, endowed beyond other youths, and the favoured of those whose hour of power is when the night meets with the day."

"Alas! mother," said Mordaunt, "your kind gift may have given me favour, but it has not been able to keep it for me, or I have not been able to keep it for myself.—What matters it? I shall learn to set as little by others, as they do by me. My father says that I shall soon leave these islands, and therefore, Mother Norna, I will return to you your fairy gift, that it may bring more lasting luck to some other than it has done to me."

"Despise not the gift of the nameless race," said Norna, frowning; then suddenly changing her tone of displeasure to that of mournful solemnity, she added,—"*Despise them not, but, O Mordaunt, court them not! Sit down on that grey stone—thou art the son of my adoption, and I will doff, as far as I may, those attributes that sever me from the common mass of humanity, and speak with you as a parent with a child.*"

There was a tremulous tone of grief which mingled with the loftiness of her language and carriage, and was calculated to excite sympathy, as well as to attract attention. Mordaunt sate down on the rock which she pointed out, a fragment which, with many

* The drows, or trows, the legitimate successors of the northern *dueryar*, and somewhat allied to the fairies, reside, like them, in the interior of green hills and caverns, and are most powerful at midnight. They are curious artificers in iron, as well as in the precious metals, and are sometimes propitious to mortals, but more frequently capricious and malevolent. Among the common people of Zetland, their existence still forms an article of universal belief. In the neighbouring isles of Feroe, they are called *Foddenskencand*, or subterranean people; and Lucas Jacobson Debes, well acquainted with their nature, assures us that they inhabit those places which are polluted with the effusion of blood, or the practice of any crying sin. They have a government, which seems to be monarchical.

† The larger seal, or sea-calf, which seeks the most solitary recess for its abode. See Dr Edmonstone's *Zetland*, vol. II, p. 294.

others that lay scattered around, had been torn by some winter storm from the precipice at the foot of which it lay, upon the very verge of the water. Norna took her seat on a stone at about three feet distance, adjusted her mantle so that little more than her forehead, her eyes, and a single lock of her grey hair, were seen from beneath the shade of her dark wadmaal cloak, and then proceeded in a tone in which the imaginary consequence and importance so often assumed by lunacy, seemed to contend against the deep workings of some extraordinary and deeply-rooted mental affliction.

"I was not always," she said, "that which I now am. I was not always the wise, the powerful, the commanding, before whom the young stand abashed, and the old uncover their grey heads. There was a time when my appearance did not silence mirth, when I sympathized with human passion, and had my own share in human joy and sorrow. It was a time of helplessness—it was a time of folly—it was a time of idle and unfruitful laughter—it was a time of causeless and senseless tears;—and yet, with its follies, and its sorrows, and its weaknesses, what would Norna of Fitful-head give to be again the unmarked and happy maiden that she was in her early days! Hear me, Mordaunt, and bear with me; for you hear me utter complaints which have never sounded in mortal ears, and which in mortal ears shall never sound again. I will be what I ought," she continued, starting up and extending her lean and withered arm, "the queen and protectress of these wild and neglected isles,—I will be her whose foot the wave wets not, save by her permission; ay, even though its rage be at its wildest madness—whose robe the whirlwind respects, when it rends the house-rigging from the roof-tree. Bear me witness, Mordaunt Mertoun,—you heard my words at Harfra—you saw the tempest sink before them—Speak, bear me witness!"

To have contradicted her in this strain of heightened enthusiasm, would have been cruel and unavailing, even had Mordaunt been more decidedly convinced than he was, that an insane woman, not one of supernatural power, stood before him.

"I heard you sing," he replied, "and I saw the tempest abate."

"Abate?" exclaimed Norna, striking the ground impatiently with her staff of black oak; "thou speakest it but half—it sunk at once—sunk in shorter space than the child that is hushed to silence by the nurse.—Enough, you know my power—but you know not—mortal man knows not, and never shall know, the price which I paid to attain it. No, Mordaunt, never for the widest sway that the ancient Norsemen boasted, when their banners waved victorious from Bergen to Palestine—never, for all that the round world contains, do thou barter thy peace of mind for such greatness as Norna's." She resumed her seat upon the rock, drew the mantle over her face, rested her head upon her hands, and by the convulsive motion which agitated her bosom, appeared to be weeping bitterly.

"Good Norna," said Mordaunt, and paused, scarce knowing what to say that might console the unhappy woman—"Good Norna," he again re-

sumed, "if there be aught in your mind that troubles it, were you not best to go to the worthy minister at Dunrossness? Men say you have not for many years been in a christian congregation—that cannot be well, or right. You are yourself well known as a healer of bodily disease; but when the mind is sick, we should draw to the physician of our souls."

Norna had raised her person slowly from the stooping posture in which she sat; but at length she started up on her feet, threw back her mantle, extended her arm, and while her lip foamed, and her eyes sparkled, exclaimed in a tone resembling a scream,—“Me did you speak—me did you bid seek out a priest!—Would you kill the good man with horror?—Me in a christian congregation!—Would you have the roof to fall on the sackless assembly, and mingle their blood with their worship? I—I seek to the good physician!—Would you have the fiend claim his prey openly before God and man?”

The extreme agitation of the unhappy speaker naturally led Mordaunt to the conclusion, which was generally adopted and accredited in that superstitious country and period. “Wretched woman,” he said, “if indeed thou hast leagued thyself with the Powers of Evil, why should you not seek even yet for repentance? But do as thou wilt, I cannot, dare not, as a christian, abide longer with you; and take again your gift,” he said, offering back the chain. “Good can never come of it, if indeed evil hath not come already.”

“Be still and hear me, thou foolish boy,” said Norna, calmly, as if she had been restored to reason by the alarm and horror which she perceived in Mordaunt’s countenance; “hear me, I say. I am not of those who have leagued themselves with the enemy of mankind, or derive skill or power from his ministry. And although the unearthly powers *were* propitiated by a sacrifice which human tongue can never utter, yet, God knows, my guilt in that offering was no more than that of the blind man who falls from the precipice which he could neither see nor shun. O, leave me not—shun me not in this hour of weakness! Remain with me till the temptation be passed, or I will plunge myself into that lake, and rid myself at once of my power and my wretchedness!”

Mordaunt, who had always looked up to this singular woman with a sort of affection, occasioned no doubt by the early kindness and distinction which she had shown to him, was readily induced to reassume his seat, and listen to what she had farther to say, in hopes that she would gradually overcome the violence of her agitation. It was not long ere she seemed to have gained the victory her companion expected, for she addressed him in her usual steady and authoritative manner.

“It was not of myself, Mordaunt, that I purposed to speak, when I beheld you from the summit of yonder grey rock, and came down the path to meet with you. My fortunes are fixed beyond change, be it for weal or for woe. For myself, I have ceased to feel much; but for those whom she loves, Norna of the Fitful-head has still those feelings which link her to her kind. Mark me. There is an eagle, the noblest that builds in these airy precipices, and into

that eagle’s nest there has crept an adder—wilt thou lend thy aid to crush the reptile, and to save the noble brood of the lord of the north sky?”

“You must speak more plainly, Norna,” said Mordaunt, “if you would have me understand or answer you. I am no guesser of riddles.”

“In plain language, then, you know well the family of Burgh-Westra—the lovely daughters of the generous old udaller, Magnus Troil,—Minna and Brenda, I mean. You know them, and you love them.”

“I have known them, mother,” replied Mordaunt, “and I have loved them—none knows it better than yourself.”

“To know them once,” said Norna, emphatically, “is to know them always. To love them once, is to love them for ever.”

“To have loved them once, is to wish them well for ever,” replied the youth; “but it is nothing more. To be plain with you, Norna, the family at Burgh-Westra have of late totally neglected me. But show me the means of serving them, I will convince you how much I have remembered old kindness, how little I resent late coldness.”

“It is well spoken, and I will put your purpose to the proof,” replied Norna. “Magnus Troil has taken a serpent into his bosom—his lovely daughters are delivered up to the machinations of a villain.”

“You mean the stranger, Cleveland?” said Mordaunt.

“The stranger who so calls himself,” replied Norna—“the same whom we found flung ashore, like a waste heap of sea-weed, at the foot of the Sumburgh Cape. I felt that within me, that would have prompted me to let him lie till the tide floated him off, as it had floated him on shore. I repent me I gave not way to it.”

“But,” said Mordaunt, “I cannot repent that I did my duty as a christian man. And what right have I to wish otherwise? If Minna, Brenda, Magnus, and the rest, like that stranger better than me, I have no title to be offended; nay, I might well be laughed at for bringing myself into comparison.”

“It is well, and I trust they merit thy unselfish friendship.”

“But I cannot perceive,” said Mordaunt, “in what you can propose that I should serve them. I have but just learned by Bryce the jagger, that this Captain Cleveland is all in all with the ladies at Burgh-Westra, and with the udaller himself. I would like ill to intrude myself where I am not welcome, or to place my home-bred merit in comparison with Captain Cleveland’s. He can tell them of battles, when I can only speak of birds’ nests—can speak of shooting Frenchmen, when I can only tell of shooting seals—he wears gay clothes, and bears a brave countenance; I am plainly dressed, and plainly nurtured. Such gay gallants as he can noose the hearts of those he lives with, as the fowler nooses the guillemot with his rod and line.”

“You do wrong to yourself,” replied Norna, “wrong to yourself, and greater wrong to Minna and Brenda. And trust not to the reports of Bryce—he is like the greedy chaffer-whale, that will change his course and dive for the most petty coin which a fisher can cast at him. Certain it is, that if

you have been lessened in the opinion of Magnus Troil, that sordid fellow hath had some share in it. But let him count his vantage, for my eye is upon him."

"And why, mother," said Mordaunt, "do you not tell to Magnus what you have told to me?"

"Because," replied Norna, "they who wax wise in their own conceit must be taught a bitter lesson by experience. It was but yesterday that I spoke with Magnus, and what was his reply?—'Good Norna, you grow old.' And this was spoken by one bounden to me by so many and such close ties—by the descendant of the ancient Norse earls—this was from Magnus Troil to me; and it was said in behalf of one, whom the sea flung forth as wreck-weed! Since he despises the counsel of the aged, he shall be taught by that of the young; and well that he is not left to his own folly. Go, therefore, to Burgh-Westra as usual upon the Baptist's festival."

"I have had no invitation," said Mordaunt; "I am not wanted, not wished for, not thought of—perhaps I shall not be acknowledged if I go thither; and yet, mother, to confess the truth, thither I had thought to go."

"It was a good thought, and to be cherished," replied Norna; "we seek our friends when they are sick in health, why not when they are sick in mind, and surfeited with prosperity? Do not fail to go—it may be, we shall meet there. Meanwhile our roads lie different. Farewell, and speak not of this meeting."

They parted, and Mordaunt remained standing by the lake, with his eyes fixed on Norna, until her tall dark form became invisible among the windings of the valley down which she wandered, and Mordaunt returned to his father's mansion, determined to follow counsel which coincided so well with his own wishes.

CHAPTER XI.

— All your ancient customs,
And long descended usages, I'll change.
Ye shall not eat, nor drink, nor speak, nor move,
Think, look, or walk, as ye were wont to do;
Even your marriage-beds shall know mutation;
The bride shall have the stock, the groom the wall;
For all old practice will I turn and change,
And call it reformation—marry, will I!

'Tis Even that we're at Odds.

THE festal day approached, and still no invitation arrived for that guest without whom, but a little space since, no feast could have been held in the island; while, on the other hand, such reports as reached them on every side spoke highly of the favour which Captain Cleveland enjoyed in the family of the old Udaller of Burgh-Westra. Swertha and the old ranzelman shook their heads at these mutations, and reminded Mordaunt, by many a half hint and inuendo, that he had incurred this eclipse by being so imprudently active to secure the safety of the stranger when he lay at the mercy of the next wave beneath the cliffs of Sumburgh-head. "It is best to let saut water take its gate," said Swertha; "luck never came of crossing it."

"In troth," said the ranzelman, "they are wise folks that let wave and withy haud their ain—luck never came of a half-drowned man, or a half-hanged ane either. Who was't shot Will Paterson off the Noss?—the Dutchman that he saved from sinking, I trow. To fling a drowning man a plank or a tow, may be the part of a christian; but I say keep hands aff him, if ye wad live and thrive free frae his danger."

"Ye are a wise man, ranzelman, and a worthy," echoed Swertha, with a groan, "and ken how and whan to help a neighbour, as weel as ony man that ever drew a net."

"In troth, I have seen length of days," answered the ranzelman, "and I have heard what the auld folk said to each other anent sic matters; and nae man in Zetland shall go farther than I will in any christian service to a man on firm land; but if he cry help out of the saut waves, that's another story."

"And yet, to think of this lad Cleveland standing in our Maister Mordaunt's light," said Swertha, "and with Magnus Troil, that thought him the flower of the island but on Whitsunday last, and Magnus, too, that's both held (when he's fresh, honest man) the wisest and wealthiest of Zetland!"

"He canna win by it," said the ranzelman, with a look of the deepest sagacity. "There's whiles, Swertha, that the wisest of us (as I am sure I humbly confess mysell) may be little better than gulls, and can no more win by doing deeds of folly than I can step over Sumburgh-head. It has been my own case once or twice in my life. But we will see soon what ill is to come of all this, for good there cannot come."

And Swertha answered, with the same tone of prophetic wisdom, "Na, na, gude can never come on it, and that is ower truly said."

These doleful predictions, repeated from time to time, had some effect upon Mordaunt. He did not indeed suppose, that the charitable action of relieving a drowning man had subjected him, as a necessary and fatal consequence, to the unpleasant circumstances in which he was placed; yet he felt as if a sort of spell were drawn around him, of which he neither understood the nature nor the extent;—that some power, in short, beyond his own control, was acting upon his destiny, and, as it seemed, with no friendly influence. His curiosity, as well as his anxiety, was highly excited, and he continued determined, at all events, to make his personal appearance at the approaching festival, when he was impressed with the belief that something uncommon was necessarily to take place, which should determine his future views and prospects in life.

As the elder Mertoun was at this time in his ordinary state of health, it became necessary that his son should intimate to him his intended visit to Burgh-Westra. He did so, and his father desired to know the especial reason of his going thither at this particular time.

"It is a time of merry-making," replied the youth; "and all the country are assembled."

"And you are doubtless impatient to add another fool to the number.—Go—but beware how you walk in the path which you are about to tread—a fall from the cliffs of Foula were not more fatal."

"May I ask the reason of your caution, sir?" replied Mordaunt, breaking through the reserve which ordinarily subsisted betwixt him and his singular parent.

"Magnus Troil," said the elder Mertoun, "has two daughters—you are of the age when men look upon such gauds with eyes of affection, that they may afterwards learn to curse the day that first opened their eyes upon heaven. I bid you beware of them; for, as sure as that death and sin came into the world by women, so sure are their soft words, and softer looks, the utter destruction and ruin of all who put faith in them."

Mordaunt had sometimes observed his father's marked dislike to the female sex, but had never before heard him give vent to it in terms so determined and precise. He replied, that the daughters of Magnus Troil were no more to him than any females in the islands; "they were even of less importance," he said, "for they had broken off their friendship with him, without assigning any cause."

"And you go to seek the renewal of it?" answered his father. "Silly moth, that hast once escaped the taper without singeing thy wings, are you not contented with the safe obscurity of these wilds, but must hasten back to the flame, which is sure at length to consume thee? But why should I waste arguments in deterring thee from thy inevitable fate?—Go where thy destiny calls thee."

On the succeeding day, which was the eve of the great festival, Mordaunt set forth on his road to Burgh-Westra, pondering alternately on the injunctions of Norna—on the ominous words of his father—on the inauspicious auguries of Swertha and the ranzelman of Jarlshof—and not without experiencing that gloom with which so many concurring circumstances of ill omen combined to oppress his mind.

"It bodes me but a cold reception at Burgh-Westra," said he; "but my stay shall be the shorter. I will but find out whether they have been deceived by this seafaring stranger, or whether they have acted out of pure caprice of temper, and love of change of company. If the first be the case, I will vindicate my character, and let Captain Cleveland look to himself;—if the latter, why then, good night to Burgh Westra and all its inmates."

As he mentally meditated this last alternative, hurt pride, and a return of fondness for those to whom he supposed he was bidding farewell for ever, brought a tear into his eye, which he dashed off hastily and indignantly, as, mending his pace, he continued on his journey.

The weather being now serene and undisturbed, Mordaunt made his way with an ease that formed a striking contrast to the difficulties which he had encountered when he last travelled the same route; yet there was a less pleasing subject for comparison, within his own mind.

"My breast," he said to himself, "was then against the wind, but my heart within was serene and happy. I would I had now the same careless feelings, were they to be bought by battling with the severest storm that ever blew across these lonely hills."

With such thoughts, he arrived about noon at Harfra, the habitation, as the reader may remember,

of the ingenious Mr Yellowley. Our traveller had, upon the present occasion, taken care to be quite independent of the niggardly hospitality of this mansion, which was now become infamous on that account through the whole island, by bringing with him, in his small knapsack, such provisions as might have sufficed for a longer journey. In courtesy, however, or rather, perhaps, to get rid of his own disquieting thoughts, Mordaunt did not fail to call at the mansion, which he found in singular commotion. Triptolemus himself, invested with a pair of large jack-boots, went clattering up and down stairs, screaming out questions to his sister and his serving-woman Tronda, who replied with shriller and more complicated screeches. At length, Mrs Babie herself made her appearance, her venerable person endued with what was then called a joseph, an ample garment, which had once been green, but now, betwixt stains and patches, had become like the vesture of the patriarch whose name it bore—a garment of divers colours. A steeple-crowned hat, the purchase of some long past moment, in which vanity had got the better of avarice, with a feather which had stood as much wind and rain as if it had been part of a seamew's wing, made up her equipment, save that in her hand she held a silver-mounted whip of antique fashion. This attire, as well as an air of determined bustle in the gait and appearance of Mrs Barbara Yellowley, seemed to bespeak that she was prepared to take a journey, and cared not, as the saying goes, who knew that such was her determination.

She was the first that observed Mordaunt on his arrival, and she greeted him with a degree of mingled emotion. "Be good to us!" she exclaimed, "if here is not the canty callant that wears yon thing about his neck, and that snapped up our goose as light as if it had been a sandy-laverock!" The admiration of the gold chain, which had formerly made so deep an impression on her mind, was marked in the first part of her speech, the recollection of the untimely fate of the smoked goose was commemorated in the second clause. "I will lay the burthen of my life," she instantly added, "that he is ganging our gate."

"I am bound for Burgh-Westra, Mrs Yellowley," said Mordaunt.

"And blithe will we be of your company," she added—"it's early day to eat; but if you liked a barley scone and a drink of bland—natheless, it is ill travelling on a full stomach, besides quelling your appetite for the feast that is biding you this day; for all sort of prodigality there will doubtless be."

Mordaunt produced his own stores, and, explaining that he did not love to be burthensome to them on this second occasion, invited them to partake of the provisions he had to offer. Poor Triptolemus, who seldom saw half so good a dinner as his guest's luncheon, threw himself upon the good cheer, like Sancho on the scum of Camacho's kettle, and even the lady herself could not resist the temptation, though she gave way to it with more moderation, and with something like a sense of shame. "She had let the fire out," she said, "for it was a pity wasting fuel in so cold a country, and so she had

not thought of getting anything ready, as they were to set out so soon; and so she could not but say, that the young gentleman's *nacket* looked very good; and besides, she had some curiosity to see whether the folks in that country cured their beef in the same way they did in the north of Scotland." Under which combined considerations, Dame Babie made a hearty experiment on the refreshments which thus unexpectedly presented themselves.

When their extemporary repast was finished, the factor became solicitous to take the road; and now Mordaunt discovered, that the alacrity with which he had been received by Mistress Babie was not altogether disinterested. Neither she nor the learned Triptolemus felt much disposed to commit themselves to the wilds of Zetland, without the assistance of a guide; and although they could have commanded the assistance of one of their own labouring folks, yet the cautious agriculturist observed, that it would be losing at least one day's work; and his sister multiplied his apprehensions by echoing back, "One day's work?—ye may weel say twenty—for, set ane of their noses within the smell of a kale-pot, and their lugs within the sound of a fiddle, and whistle them back if ye can."

Now the fortunate arrival of Mordaunt, in the very nick of time, not to mention the good cheer which he brought with him, made him as welcome as any one could possibly be, to a threshold which on all ordinary occasions abhorred the passage of a guest; nor was Mr Yellowley altogether insensible of the pleasure he promised himself in detailing his plans of improvement to his young companion, and enjoying what his fate seldom assigned him—the company of a patient and admiring listener.

As the factor and his sister were to prosecute their journey on horseback, it only remained to mount their guide and companion; a thing easily accomplished, where there are such numbers of shaggy, long-backed, short-legged ponies running wild upon the extensive moors, which are the common pasturage for the cattle of every township, where shelties, geese, swine, goats, sheep, and little Zetland cows, are turned out promiscuously, and often in numbers which can obtain but precarious subsistence from the niggard vegetation. There is, indeed, a right of individual property in all these animals, which are branded or tattooed by each owner with his own peculiar mark; but when any passenger has occasional use for a pony, he never scruples to lay hold of the first which he can catch, puts on a halter, and, having rode him as far as he finds convenient, turns the animal loose to find his way back again as he best can—a matter in which the ponies are sufficiently sagacious.

Although this general exercise of property was one of the enormities which in due time the factor intended to abolish, yet, like a wise man, he scrupled not, in the meantime, to avail himself of so general a practice, which, he condescended to allow, was particularly convenient for those who (as chanced to be his own present case), had no ponies of their own on which their neighbours could retaliate. Three shelties, therefore, were procured from the hill—little shagged animals, more resembling wild-bears than anything of the horse tribe, yet

possessed of no small degree of strength and spirit, and able to endure as much fatigue and indifferent usage as any creatures in the world.

Two of these horses were already provided and fully accoutred for the journey. One of them, destined to bear the fair person of Mistress Babie, was decorated with a huge side-saddle of venerable antiquity—a mass, as it were, of cushion and padding, from which depended, on all sides, a housing of ancient tapestry, which, having been originally intended for a horse of ordinary size, covered up the diminutive palfrey over which it was spread, from the ears to the tail, and from the shoulder to the fetlock, leaving nothing visible but its head, which looked fiercely out from these enfoldments, like the heraldic representation of a lion looking out of a bush. Mordaunt gallantly lifted up the fair Mistress Yellowley, and, at the expense of very slight exertion, placed her upon the summit of her mountainous saddle. It is probable, that, on feeling herself thus squired and attended upon, and experiencing the long unwonted consciousness that she was attired in her best array, some thoughts dawned upon Mistress Babie's mind, which chequered, for an instant, those habitual ideas about thrift, that formed the daily and all-engrossing occupation of her soul. She glanced her eye upon her faded Joseph, and on the long housings of her saddle, as she observed, with a smile, to Mordaunt, that "traveling was a pleasant thing in fine weather and agreeable company, if," she added, glancing a look at a place where the embroidery was somewhat frayed and tattered, "it was not sae wasteful to ane's horse-furniture."

Meanwhile, her brother stepped stoutly to his steed; and as he chose, notwithstanding the serenity of the weather, to throw a long red cloak over his other garments, his pony was even more completely enveloped in drapery than that of his sister. It happened, moreover, to be an animal of an high and contumacious spirit, bouncing and curvetting occasionally under the weight of Triptolemus, with a vivacity which, notwithstanding his Yorkshire descent, rather deranged him in the saddle;—gambols which, as the palfrey itself was not visible, except upon the strictest inspection, had, at a little distance, an effect as if they were the voluntary movements of the cloaked cavalier, without the assistance of any other legs than those with which nature had provided him; and, to any who had viewed Triptolemus under such a persuasion, the gravity, and even distress, announced in his countenance, must have made a ridiculous contrast to the vivacious caprioles with which he piaffed along the moor.

Mordaunt kept up with this worthy couple, mounted, according to the simplicity of the time and country, on the first and readiest pony which they had been able to press into the service, with no other accoutrement of any kind than the halter which served to guide him; while Mr Yellowley, seeing with pleasure his guide thus readily provided with a steed, privately resolved, that this rude custom of helping travellers to horses, without leave of the proprietor, should not be abated in Zetland, until he came to possess a herd of ponies belonging in

property to himself, and exposed to suffer in the way of retaliation.

But to other uses or abuses of the country, Triptolemus Yellowley showed himself less tolerant. Long and wearisome were the discourses he held with Mordaunt, or (to speak much more correctly), the harangues which he inflicted upon him, concerning the changes which his own advent in these isles was about to occasion. Unskilled as he was in the modern arts by which an estate may be improved to such a high degree that it shall altogether slip through the proprietor's fingers, Triptolemus had at least the zeal, if not the knowledge, of a whole agricultural society in his own person; nor was he surpassed by any who has followed him, in that noble spirit which scorns to balance profit against outlay, but holds the glory of effecting a great change on the face of the land, to be, like virtue, in a great degree its own reward.

No part of the wild and mountainous region over which Mordaunt guided him, but what suggested to his active imagination some scheme of improvement and alteration. He would make a road through yon scarce passable glen, where at present nothing but the surefooted creatures on which they were mounted could tread with any safety. He would substitute better houses for the skeoes, or sheds built of dry stones, in which the inhabitants cured or manufactured their fish—they should brew good ale instead of bland—they should plant forests where tree never grew, and find mines of treasure where a Danish skilling was accounted a coin of the most respectable denomination. All these mutations, with many others, did the worthy factor resolve upon, speaking at the same time with the utmost confidence of the countenance and assistance which he was to receive from the higher classes, and especially from Magnus Troil.

"I will impart some of my ideas to the poor man," he said, "before we are both many hours older; and you will mark how grateful he will be to the instructor who brings him knowledge, which is better than wealth."

"I would not have you build too strongly on that," said Mordaunt, by way of caution; "Magnus Troil's boat is kittle to trim—he likes his own ways, and his country-ways, and you will as soon teach your sheltie to dive like a sealgh, as bring Magnus to take a Scottish fashion in the place of a Norse one; and yet, if he is steady to his old customs, he may perhaps be as changeable as another in his old friendships."

"*Heus, tu inepte!*" said the scholar of Saint Andrews, "steady or unsteady, what can it matter?—am not I here in point of trust, and in point of power? and shall a fowd, by which barbarous appellative this Magnus Troil still calls himself, presume to measure judgment and weigh reasons with me, who represent the full dignity of the Chamberlain of the islands of Orkney and Zetland?"

"Still," said Mordaunt, "I would advise you not to advance too rashly upon his prejudices. Magnus Troil, from the hour of his birth to this day, never saw a greater man than himself, and it is difficult to bridle an old horse for the first time. Besides, he has at no time in his life been a patient listener to

long explanations, so it is possible that he may quarrel with your proposed reformation, before you can convince him of its advantages."

"How mean you, young man?" said the factor. "Is there one who dwells in these islands, who is so wretchedly blind as not to be sensible of their deplorable defects? Can a man," he added, rising into enthusiasm as he spoke, "or even a beast, look at that thing there, which they have the impudence to call a corn-mill, without trembling to think that corn should be intrusted to such a miserable molen-dinary? The wretches are obliged to have at least fifty in each parish, each trundling away upon its paltry mill-stone, under the thatch of a roof no bigger than a bee-skep, instead of a noble and seemly baron's mill, that you would hear the clack of through the haille country; and that casts the meal through the mill-eye by forpits at a time."

"Ay, ay, brother," said his sister, "that's spoken like your wise sell. The mair cost the mair honour—that's your word ever mair. Can it no creep into your wise head, man, that ilka body grinds their ain nievefu' of meal in this country, without plaguing themsells about baron's mills, and thirls, and sucken, and the like trade? How mony a time have I heard you bell-the-cat with auld Edie Happer, the miller at Grindieburn, and wi' his very knave too, about in-town and out-town multures—lock, gowpen, and knaveship, and a' the lave o't; and now naething less will serve you than to bring in the very same fashery on a wheen puir bodies, that big ilk aue a mill for themselves, sic as it is?"

"Dinna tell me of gowpen and knaveship!" exclaimed the indignant agriculturist; "better pay the half of the grist to the miller, to have the rest grund in a christian manner, than put good grain into a bairn's whirligig. Look at it for a moment, Babie—Bide still, ye cursed imp!" This interjection was applied to his pony, which began to be extremely impatient, while its rider interrupted his journey, to point out all the weak points of the Zetland mill—"look at it, I say,—its just one degree better than a hand-quern—it has neither wheel nor trindle—neither cog nor happer—Bide still, there's a canny beast—it canna grind a bickerfu' of meal in a quarter of an hour, and that will be mair like a mash for horse than a meltith for man's use—Wherefore—Bide still, I say—wherefore—wherefore—The deil's in the beast, and nae good, I think!"

As he uttered the last words, the sheltie, which had pranced and curvetted for some time with much impatience, at length got its head betwixt its legs, and at once canted its rider into the little rivulet, which served to drive the depreciated engine he was surveying; then emancipating itself from the folds of the cloak, fled back towards its own wilderness, neighing in scorn, and flinging out its heels at every five yards.

Laughing heartily at his disaster, Mordaunt helped the old man to arise; while his sister sarcastically congratulated him on having fallen rather into the shallows of a Zetland rivulet than the depths of a Scottish mill-pond. Disdaining to reply to this sarcasm, Triptolemus, so soon as he had recovered his legs, shaken his ears, and found that the folds of his cloak had saved him from being much wet in the

scanty streamlet, exclaimed aloud, "I will have cussers from Lanarkshire—brood mares from Ayrshire—I will not have one of these cursed abortions left on the islands, to break honest folks' necks—I say, Babie, I will rid the land of them."

"Ye had better wring your ain cloak, Triptolemus," answered Babie.

Mordaunt meanwhile was employed in catching another pony, from a herd which strayed at some distance; and, having made a halter out of twisted rushes, he seated the dismayed agriculturist in safety upon a more quiet, though less active steed than that which he had at first bestrode.

But Mr Yellowley's fall had operated as a considerable sedative upon his spirits, and, for the full space of five miles' travel, he said scarce a word, leaving full course to the melancholy aspirations and lamentations which his sister Babie bestowed on the old bridle, which the pony had carried off in its flight, and which, she observed, after having lasted for eighteen years come Martinmas, might now be considered as a cast-away thing. Finding she had thus the field to herself, the old lady launched forth into a lecture upon economy, according to her own idea of that virtue, which seemed to include a system of privations, which, though observed with the sole purpose of saving money, might, if undertaken upon other principles, have ranked high in the history of a religious ascetic.

She was but little interrupted by Mordaunt, who, conscious he was now on the eve of approaching Burgh-Westra, employed himself rather in the task of anticipating the nature of the reception he was about to meet with there from two beautiful young women, than with the prosing of an old one, however wisely she might prove that small-beer was more wholesome than strong ale, and that if her brother had bruised his ankle-bone in his tumble, cumfrey and butter was better to bring him round again than all the doctor's drugs in the world.

But now the dreary moorlands, over which their path had hitherto lain, were exchanged for a more pleasant prospect, opening on a salt-water lake, or arm of the sea, which ran up far inland, and was surrounded by flat and fertile ground, producing crops better than the experienced eye of Triptolemus Yellowley had as yet witnessed in Zetland. In the midst of this Goshen stood the mansion of Burgh-Westra, screened from the north and east by a ridge of heathy hills which lay behind it, and commanding an interesting prospect of the lake and its parent ocean, as well as the islands, and more distant mountains. From the mansion itself, as well as from almost every cottage in the adjacent hamlet, arose such a rich cloud of vapoury smoke, as showed, that the preparations for the festival were not confined to the principal residence of Magnus himself, but extended through the whole vicinage.

"My certie," said Mrs Babie Yellowley, "ane wad think the haill town was on fire! The very hill-side smells of their wastefulness, and a hungry heart wad scarce seek better kitchen to a barley scone, than just to waft it in the reek that's rising out of yon lums."

CHAPTER XII.

—Thou hast described

A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony.

There are no tricks in plain and simple faith.

Julius Cæsar.

IF the smell which was wafted from the chimneys of Burgh-Westra up to the barren hills by which the mansion was surrounded, could, as Mistress Barbara opined, have refreshed the hungry, the noise which proceeded from thence might have given hearing to the deaf. It was a medley of all sounds, and all connected with jollity and kind welcome. Nor were the sights associated with them less animating.

Troops of friends were seen in the act of arriving—their dispersed ponies flying to the moors in every direction, to recover their own pastures in the best way they could;—such, as we have already said, being the usual mode of discharging the cavalry which had been levied for a day's service. At a small but commodious harbour, connected with the house and hamlet, those visitors were landing from their boats, who, living in distant islands, and along the coast, had preferred making their journey by sea. Mordaunt and his companions might see each party pausing frequently to greet each other, and strolling on successively to the house, whose ever open gate received them alternately in such numbers, that it seemed the extent of the mansion, though suited to the opulence and hospitality of the owner, was scarce, on this occasion, sufficient for the guests.

Among the confused sounds of mirth and welcome which arose at the entrance of each new company, Mordaunt thought he could distinguish the loud laugh and hearty salutation of the sire of the mansion, and began to feel more deeply than before, the anxious doubt, whether that cordial reception, which was distributed so freely to all others, would be on this occasion extended to him. As they came on, they heard the voluntary scrapings and bravura effusions of the gallant fiddlers, who impatiently flung already from their bows those sounds with which they were to animate the evening. The clamour of the cook's assistants, and the loud scolding tones of the cook himself, were also to be heard—sounds of dissonance at any other time, but which, subdued with others, and by certain happy associations, form no disagreeable part of the full chorus which always precedes a rural feast.

Meanwhile, the guests advanced, full each of their own thoughts. Mordaunt's we have already noticed. Babie was wrapt up in the melancholy grief and surprise excited by the positive conviction, that so much victuals had been cooked at once as were necessary to feed all the mouths which were clamouring around her—an enormity of expense, which, though she was no way concerned in bearing it, affected her nerves, as the beholding a massacre would touch those of the most indifferent spectator, however well assured of his own personal

safety. She sickened, in short, at the sight of so much extravagance, like Abyssinian Bruce, when he saw the luckless minstrels of Gondar hacked to pieces by the order of Ras Michael. As for her brother, they being now arrived where the rude and antique instruments of Zetland agriculture lay scattered in the usual confusion of a Scottish barn-yard, his thoughts were at once engrossed in the deficiencies of the one-stilted plough—of the *twiscar*, with which they dig peats—of the sledges, on which they transport commodities—of ail and everything, in short, in which the usages of the islands differed from those of the main-land of Scotland. The sight of these imperfect instruments stirred the blood of Triptolemus Yellowley, as that of the bold warrior rises at seeing the arms and insignia of the enemy he is about to combat; and, faithful to his high emprise, he thought less of the hunger which his journey had occasioned, although about to be satisfied by such a dinner as rarely fell to his lot, than upon the task which he had undertaken, of civilizing the manners, and improving the cultivation of Zetland.

"*Jacta est alea*," he muttered to himself; "this very day shall prove whether the Zetlanders are worthy of our labours, or whether their minds are as incapable of cultivation as their peat-mosses. Yet let us be cautious, and watch the soft time of speech. I feel, by my own experience, that it were best to let the body, in its present state, take the place of the mind. A mouthful of that same roast beef, which smells so delicately, will form an apt introduction to my grand plan for improving the breed of stock."

By this time the visitors had reached the low but ample front of Magnus Troil's residence, which seemed of various dates, with large and ill-contrived additions, hastily adapted to the original building, as the increasing estate, or enlarged family, of successive proprietors, appeared to each to demand. Beneath a low, broad, and large porch, supported by two huge carved posts, once the head-ornaments of vessels which had found shipwreck upon the coast, stood Magnus himself, intent on the hospitable toil of receiving and welcoming the numerous guests who successively approached. His strong portly figure was well adapted to the dress which he wore—a blue coat of an antique cut, lined with scarlet, and laced and looped with gold down the seams and button-holes, and along the ample cuffs. Strong and masculine features, rendered ruddy and brown by frequent exposure to severe weather—a quantity of most venerable silver hair, which fell in unshorn profusion from under his gold-laced hat, and was carelessly tied with a ribbon behind, expressed at once his advanced age, his hasty, yet well-conditioned temper, and his robust constitution. As our travellers approached him, a shade of displeasure seemed to cross his brow, and to interrupt for an instant the honest and hearty burst of hilarity with which he had been in the act of greeting all prior arrivals. When he approached Triptolemus Yellowley, he drew himself up, so as to mix, as it were, some share of the stately importance of the opulent udaller with the welcome afforded by the frank and hospitable landlord.

"You are welcome, Mr Yellowley," was his address to the factor; "you are welcome to Westra—the wind has blown you on a rough coast, and we that are the natives must be kind to you as we can. This, I believe, is your sister—Mistress Barbara Yellowley, permit me the honour of a neighbourly salute."—And so saying, with a daring and self-devoted courtesy, which would find no equal in our degenerate days, he actually ventured to salute the withered cheek of the spinstress, who relaxed so much of her usual peevishness of expression, as to receive the courtesy with something which approached to a smile. He then looked full at Mordaunt Mertoun, and, without offering his hand, said, in a tone somewhat broken by suppressed agitation, "You too are welcome, Master Mordaunt."

"Did I not think so," said Mordaunt, naturally offended by the coldness of his host's manner, "I had not been here—and it is not too late to turn back."

"Young man," replied Magnus, "you know better than most, that from these doors no man can turn, without an offence to their owner. I pray you, disturb not my guests by your ill-timed scruples. When Magnus Troil says welcome, all are welcome who are within hearing of his voice, and it is an indifferent loud one.—Walk on, my worthy guests, and let us see what cheer my lasses can make you within doors."

So saying, and taking care to make his manner so general to the whole party, that Mordaunt should not be able to appropriate any particular portion of the welcome to himself, nor yet to complain of being excluded from all share in it, the udaller ushered the guests into his house, where two large outer rooms, which, on the present occasion, served the purpose of a modern saloon, were already crowded with guests of every description.

The furniture was sufficiently simple, and had a character peculiar to the situation of these stormy islands. Magnus Troil was, indeed, like most of the higher class of Zetland proprietors, a friend to the distressed traveller, whether by sea or land, and had repeatedly exerted his whole authority in protecting the property and persons of shipwrecked mariners; yet so frequent were wrecks upon that tremendous coast, and so many unappropriated articles were constantly flung ashore, that the interior of the house bore sufficient witness to the ravages of the ocean, and to the exercise of those rights which the lawyers term *flotsome* and *jetsome*. The chairs, which were arranged around the walls, were such as are used in cabins, and many of them were of foreign construction; the mirrors and cabinets, which were placed against the walls for ornament or convenience, had, it was plain from their form, been constructed for ship-board, and one or two of the latter were of strange and unknown wood. Even the partition which separated the two apartments, seemed constructed out of the bulk-heads of some large vessel, clumsily adapted to the service which it at present performed, by the labour of some native joiner. To a stranger, these evident marks and tokens of human misery might, at the first glance, form a contrast with the scene of mirth with which they were now associated; but the association was so familiar

to the natives, that it did not for a moment interrupt the course of their glee.

To the younger part of these revelers, the presence of Mordaunt was like a fresh charm of enjoyment. All came around him to marvel at his absence, and all, by their repeated inquiries, plainly showed that they conceived it had been entirely voluntary on his side. The youth felt that this general acceptance relieved his anxiety on one painful point. Whatever prejudice the family of Burgh-Westra might have adopted respecting him, it must be of a private nature; and at least he had not the additional pain of finding that he was depreciated in the eyes of society at large; and his vindication, when he found opportunity to make one, would not require to be extended beyond the circle of a single family. This was consoling; though his heart still throbbed with anxiety at the thought of meeting with his estranged, but still beloved friends. Laying the excuse of his absence on his father's state of health, he made his way through the various groups of friends and guests, each of whom seemed willing to detain him as long as possible, and having got rid of his travelling companions, who at first stuck fast as burs, by presenting them to one or two families of consequence, he reached at length the door of a small apartment, which, opening from one of the larger exterior rooms we have mentioned, Minna and Brenda had been permitted to fit up after their own taste, and to call their peculiar property.

Mordaunt had contributed no small share of the invention and mechanical execution employed in fitting up this favourite apartment, and in disposing its ornaments. It was, indeed, during his last residence at Burgh-Westra, as free to his entrance and occupation, as to its proper mistresses. But now, so much were times altered, that he remained with his finger on the latch, uncertain whether he should take the freedom to draw it, until Brenda's voice pronounced the words, "Come in then," in the tone of one who is interrupted by an unwelcome disturber, who is to be heard and dispatched with all the speed possible.

At this signal, Mertoun entered the fanciful cabinet of the sisters, which, by the addition of many ornaments, including some articles of considerable value, had been fitted up for the approaching festival. The daughters of Magnus, at the moment of Mordaunt's entrance, were seated in deep consultation with the stranger Cleveland, and with a little slight-made old man, whose eye retained all the vivacity of spirit, which had supported him under the thousand vicissitudes of a changeful and precarious life, and which, accompanying him in his old age, rendered his grey hairs less awfully reverend perhaps, but not less beloved, than would a more grave and less imaginative expression of countenance and character. There was even a penetrating shrewdness mingled in the look of curiosity, with which, as he stepped for an instant aside, he seemed to watch the meeting of Mordaunt with the two lovely sisters.

The reception the youth met with resembled, in general character, that which he had experienced from Magnus himself; but the maidens could not so well cover their sense of the change of circumstances

under which they met. Both blushed, as rising, and without extending the hand, far less offering the cheek, as the fashion of the times permitted, and almost exacted, they paid to Mordaunt the salutation due to an ordinary acquaintance. But the blush of the elder was one of those transient evidences of flitting emotion, that vanish as fast as the passing thought which excites them. In an instant she stood before Mordaunt calm and cold, returning, with guarded and cautious courtesy, the usual civilities, which, with a faltering voice, Mordaunt endeavoured to present to her. The emotion of Brenda bore, externally at least, a deeper and more agitating character. Her blush extended over every part of her beautiful skin which her dress permitted to be visible, including her slender neck, and the upper region of a finely formed bosom. Neither did she even attempt to reply to what share of his confused compliment Mordaunt addressed to her in particular, but regarded him with eyes, in which displeasure was evidently mingled with feelings of regret, and recollections of former times. Mordaunt felt, as it were, assured upon the instant, that the regard of Minna was extinguished, but that it might be yet possible to recover that of the milder Brenda; and such is the waywardness of human fancy, that though he had never hitherto made any distinct difference betwixt these two beautiful and interesting girls, the favour of her, which seemed most absolutely withdrawn, became at the moment the most interesting in his eyes.

He was disturbed in these hasty reflections by Cleveland, who advanced, with military frankness, to pay his compliments to his preserver, having only delayed long enough to permit the exchange of the ordinary salutation betwixt the visitor and the ladies of the family. He made his approach with so good a grace, that it was impossible for Mordaunt, although he dated his loss of favour at Burgh-Westra from this stranger's appearance on the coast, and domestication in the family, to do less than return his advances as courtesy demanded, accept his thanks with an appearance of satisfaction, and hope that his time had passed pleasantly since their last meeting.

Cleveland was about to answer, when he was anticipated by the little old man, formerly noticed, who now thrusting himself forward, and seizing Mordaunt's hand, kissed him on the forehead; and then at the same time echoed and answered his question—"How passes time at Burgh-Westra? Was it you that asked it, my prince of the cliff and of the scaur? How should it pass, but with all the wings that beauty and joy can add to help its flight?"

"And wit and song too, my good old friend," said Mordaunt, half-serious, half-jesting, as he shook the old man cordially by the hand.—"These cannot be wanting, where Claud Halcro comes!"

"Jeer me not, Mordaunt, my good lad," replied the old man; "When your foot is as slow as mine, your wit frozen, and your song out of tune"—

"How can you belie yourself, my good master?" answered Mordaunt, who was not unwilling to avail himself of his old friend's peculiarities to introduce something like conversation, break the awkwardness of this singular meeting, and gain time for observa-

tion, ere requiring an explanation of the change of conduct which the family seemed to have adopted towards him. "Say not so," he continued. "Time, my old friend, lays his hand lightly on the bard. Have I not heard you say, the poet partakes the immortality of his song? and surely the great English poet, you used to tell us of, was older than yourself when he pulled the bow-oar among all the wits of London."

This alluded to a story which was, as the French term it, Halcro's *cheval de bataille*, and any allusion to which was certain at once to place him in the saddle, and to push his hobby-horse into full career.

His laughing eye kindled with a sort of enthusiasm, which the ordinary folks of this world might have called crazed, while he dashed into the subject which he best loved to talk upon. "Alas, alas! my dear Mordaunt Mertoun—silver is silver, and waxes not dim by use, and pewter is pewter, and grows the duller the longer. It is not for poor Claud Halcro to name himself in the same twelvemonth with the immortal John Dryden. True it is, as I may have told you before, that I have seen that great man, nay, I have been in the Wits' Coffee-house, as it was then called, and had once a pinch out of his own very snuff-box. I must have told you all how it happened, but here is Captain Cleveland who never heard it.—I lodged, you must know, in Russel-street—I question not but you know Russel-street, Covent-garden, Captain Cleveland?"

"I should know its latitude pretty well, Mr Halcro," said the captain, smiling; "but I believe you mentioned the circumstance yesterday, and besides we have the day's duty in hand—you must play us this song which we are to study."

"It will not serve the turn now," said Halcro, "we must think of something that will take in our dear Mordaunt, the first voice in the island, whether for a part or solo; I will never be he will touch a string to you, unless Mordaunt Mertoun is to help us out.—What say you, my fairest Night?—what think you, my sweet Dawn of Day?" he added, addressing the young women, upon whom, as we have said elsewhere, he had long before bestowed these allegorical names.

"Mr Mordaunt Mertoun," said Minna, "has come too late to be of our band on this occasion—it is our misfortune, but it cannot be helped."

"How? what?" said Halcro, hastily—"too late—and you have practised together all your lives?—take my word, my bonnie lasses, that old tunes are sweetest, and old friends surest. Mr Cleveland has a fine bass, that must be allowed; but I would have you trust for the first effect to one of the twenty fine airs you can sing where Mordaunt's tenor joins so well with your own witchery—here is my lovely Day approves of the change in her heart."

"You were never in your life more mistaken, father Halcro," said Brenda, her cheeks again reddening, more with displeasure, it seemed, than with shame.

"Nay, but how is this?" said the old man, pausing, and looking at them alternately. "What have we got here?—a cloudy night and a red morning?—that betokens rough weather.—What means all this, young women?—where lies the offence?—In

me, I fear; for the blame is always laid upon the oldest when young folks like you go by the ears."

"The blame is not with you, father Halcro," said Minna, rising, and taking her sister by the arm, "if indeed there be blame anywhere."

"I should fear then," Minna, said Mordaunt, endeavouring to soften his tone into one of indifferent pleasantry, "that the new comer has brought the offence along with him."

"When no offence is taken," replied Minna, with her usual gravity, "it matters not by whom such may have been offered."

"Is it possible, Minna!" exclaimed Mordaunt; "and is it you who speak thus to me?—And you, too, Brenda, can you too judge so hardly of me, yet without permitting me one moment of honest and frank explanation?"

"Those who should know best," answered Brenda, in a low but decisive tone of voice, "have told us their pleasure, and it must be done.—Sister, I think we have staid too long here, and will be wanted elsewhere—Mr Mertoun will excuse us on so busy a day."

The sisters linked their arms together. Halcro in vain endeavoured to stop them, making, at the same time, a theatrical gesture, and exclaiming,

"Now, Day, and Night, but this is wondrous strange!"

Then turned to Mordaunt Mertoun, and added, "The girls are possessed with the spirit of mutability, showing, as our master Spenser well saith, that

Among all living creatures, more or lesse,
Change still doth reign, and keep the greater sway.

Captain Cleveland," he continued, "know you anything that has happened to put these two juvenile Graces out of tune?"

"He will lose his reckoning," answered Cleveland, "that spends time in inquiring why the wind shifts a point, or why a woman changes her mind. Were I Mr Mordaunt, I would not ask the proud wenches another question on such a subject."

"It is a friendly advice, Captain Cleveland," replied Mordaunt, "and I will not hold it the less so that it has been given unasked. Allow me to inquire if you are yourself as indifferent to the opinion of your female friends, as it seems you would have me to be?"

"Who, I?" said the Captain, with an air of frank indifference, "I never thought twice upon such a subject. I never saw a woman worth thinking twice about after the anchor was a-peak—on shore it is another thing; and I will laugh, sing, dance, and love, if they like it, with twenty girls, were they but half so pretty as those who have left us, and make them heartily welcome to change their course in the sound of a boatswain's whistle. It will be odds but I wear as fast as they can."

A patient is seldom pleased with that sort of consolation which is founded on holding light the malady of which he complains; and Mordaunt felt disposed to be offended with Captain Cleveland, both for taking notice of his embarrassment, and intruding upon him his own opinion; and he replied, therefore, somewhat sharply, "that Captain Cleveland's sentiments were only suited to such as had the art

to become universal favourites wherever chance happened to throw them, and who could not lose in one place more than their merit was sure to gain for them in another."

This was spoken ironically; but there was, to confess the truth, a superior knowledge of the world, and a consciousness of external merit at least, about the man, which rendered his interference doubly disagreeable. As Sir Lucius O'Trigger says, there was an air of success about Captain Cleveland, which was mighty provoking. Young, handsome, and well assured, his air of nautical bluntness sate naturally and easily upon him, and was perhaps particularly well fitted to the simple manners of the remote country in which he found himself; and where, even in the best families, a greater degree of refinement might have rendered his conversation rather less acceptable. He was contented, in the present instance, to smile good-humouredly at the obvious discontent of Mordaunt Mertoun, and replied, "You are angry with me, my good friend, but you cannot make me angry with you. The fair hands of all the pretty women I ever saw in my life would never have fished me up out of the Roost of Sumburgh. So pray, do not quarrel with me; for here is Mr Halcro witness that I have struck both jack and topsail, and should you fire a broadside into me, cannot return a single shot."

"Ay, ay," said Halcro, "you must be friends with Captain Cleveland, Mordaunt. Never quarrel with your friend, because a woman is whimsical. Why, man, if they kept one humour, how the devil could we make so many songs on them as we do? Even old Dryden himself, glorious old John, could have said little about a girl that was always of one mind—as well write verses upon a mill-pond. It is your tides and your roosts, and your currents and eddies, that come and go, and ebb and flow (by Heaven! I run into rhyme when I so much as think upon them), that smile one day, rage the next, flatter and devour, delight and ruin us, and so forth—it is these that give the real soul of poetry. Did you never hear my Adieu to the Lass of Northmaven—that was poor Bet Stimbister, whom I call Mary for the sound's sake, as I call myself Haco after my great ancestor Haco Goldemund, or Haco with the golden mouth, who came to the island with Harold Harfager, and was his chief scald?—Well, but where was I?—O ay—poor Bet Stimbister, she (and partly some debt) was the cause of my leaving the isles of Hialtland (better so called than Shetland, or Zetland even), and taking to the broad world. I have had a tramp of it since that time—I have battled my way through the world, captain, as a man of mold may, that has a light head, a light purse, and a heart as light as them both—fought my way, and paid my way—that is, either with money or wit—have seen kings changed and deposed, as you would turn a tenant out of a scathold—knew all the wits of the age, and especially the glorious John Dryden—what man in the islands can say as much, barring lying?—I had a pinch out of his own snuff-box—I will tell you how I came by such promotion."

"But the song, Mr Halcro," said Captain Cleveland.

"The song?" answered Halcro, seizing the cap-

tain by the button,—for he was too much accustomed to have his audience escape from him during recitation, not to put in practice all the usual means of prevention—"The song?—Why, I gave a copy of it, with fifteen others, to the immortal John. You shall hear it—you shall hear them all, if you will but stand still a moment; and you too, my dear boy, Mordaunt Mertoun, I have scarce heard a word from your mouth these six months, and now you are running away from me." So saying, he secured him with his other hand.

"Nay, now he has got us both in tow," said the seaman, "there is nothing for it but hearing him out, though he spins as tough a yarn as ever an old man-of-war's man twisted on the watch at midnight."

"Nay, now, be silent, be silent, and let one of us speak at once," said the poet, imperatively; while Cleveland and Mordaunt, looking at each other with a ludicrous expression of resignation to their fate, waited in submission for the well-known and inevitable tale. "I will tell you all about it," continued Halcro. "I was knocked about the world like other young fellows, doing this, that, and t'other, for a livelihood; for, thank God, I could turn my hand to anything—but loving still the Muses as much as if the ungrateful jades had found me, like so many blockheads, in my own coach and six. However, I held out till my cousin, old Lawrence Linkletter, died, and left me the bit of an island yonder; although, by the way, Cultmalindie was as near to him as I was; but Lawrence loved wit, though he had little of his own. Well, he left me the wee bit island—it is as barren as Parnassus itself. What then?—I have a penny to spend, a penny to keep my purse, a penny to give to the poor—ay, and a bed and a bottle for a friend, as you shall know, boys, if you will go back with me when this merriment is over.—But where was I in my story?"

"Near port, I hope," answered Cleveland; but Halcro was too determined a narrator to be interrupted by the broadest hint.

"O ay," he resumed, with the self-satisfied air of one who has recovered the thread of a story, "I was in my old lodgings in Russel-street, with old Timothy Thimblethwaite, the master fashioner, then the best-known man about town. He made for all the wits, and for the dull boobies of fortune besides, and made the one pay for the other. He never denied a wit credit, save in jest, or for the sake of getting a repartee; and he was in correspondence with all that was worth knowing about town. He had letters from Crowne, and Tate, and Prior, and Tom Brown, and all the famous fellows of the time, with such pellets of wit, that there was no reading them without laughing ready to die, and all ending with craving a further term for payment."

"I should have thought the tailor would have found that jest rather serious," said Mordaunt.

"Not a bit—not a bit—Tim Thimblethwaite (he was a Cumberland-man by birth)," replied his eulogist, "had the soul of a prince—ay, and died with the fortune of one; for woe betide the custard-gorged alderman that came under Tim's goose, after he had got one of these letters—egad, he was

sure to pay the kain. Why, Thimblethwaite was thought to be the original of little Tom Bibber, in glorious John's comedy of the Wild Gallant; and I know that he has trusted, ay, and lent John money to boot out of his own pocket, at a time when all his fine court friends blew cold enough. He trusted me too, and I have been two months on the score at a time for my upper-room. To be sure, I was obliging in his way—not that I exactly could shape or sew, nor would that have been decorous for a gentleman of good descent; but I—eh,—eh—I drew bills—summed up the books”——

“Carried home the clothes of the wits and aldermen, and got lodging for your labour,” interrupted Cleveland.

“No, no—damn it, no,” replied Halcro; “no such thing—you put me out in my story—where was I?”

“Nay, the devil help you to the latitude,” said the captain, extricating his button from the gripe of the unmerciful bard's finger and thumb, “for I have no time to take an observation.” So saying, he bolted from the room.

“A silly, ill-bred, conceited fool,” said Halcro, looking after him; “with as little manners as wit in his empty coxcomb. I wonder what Magnus and these silly wenches can see in him—he tells such damnable long-winded stories, too, about his adventures and sea-fights—every second word a lie, I doubt not. Mordaunt, my dear boy, take example by that man—that is, take warning by him—never tell long stories about yourself. You are sometimes given to talk too much about your own exploits on crags and skerries, and the like, which only breaks conversation, and prevents other folks from being heard. Now I see you are impatient to hear out what I was saying—Stop, whereabouts was I?”

“I fear we must put it off, Mr Halcro, until after dinner,” said Mordaunt, who also meditated his escape, though desirous of effecting it with more delicacy towards his old acquaintance than Captain Cleveland had thought it necessary to use.

“Nay, my dear boy,” said Halcro, seeing himself about to be utterly deserted, “do not you leave me too—never take so bad an example as to set light by old acquaintance, Mordaunt. I have wandered many a weary step in my day; but they were always lightened when I could get hold of the arm of an old friend like yourself.”

So saying, he quitted the youth's coat, and, sliding his hand gently under his arm, grappled him more effectually: to which Mordaunt submitted, a little moved by the poet's observation upon the unkindness of old acquaintances, under which he himself was an immediate sufferer. But when Halcro renewed his formidable question, “Whereabouts was I?” Mordaunt, preferring his poetry to his prose, reminded him of the song which he said he had written upon his first leaving Zetland,—a song to which, indeed, the inquirer was no stranger, but which, as it must be new to the reader, we shall here insert as a favourable specimen of the poetical powers of this tuneful descendant of Haco the Golden-mouthed; for in the opinion of many tolerable judges, he held a respectable rank among the inditers of madrigals of the period, and was as

well qualified to give immortality to his Nancies of the hills or dales, as many a gentle sonneteer of wit and pleasure about town. He was something of a musician also, and on the present occasion seized upon a sort of lute, and, quitting his victim, prepared the instrument for an accompaniment, speaking all the while that he might lose no time.

“I learned the lute,” he said, “from the same man who taught honest Shadwell—plump Tom, as they used to call him—somewhat roughly treated by the glorious John, you remember—Mordaunt, you remember—

Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail;
At thy well sharpen'd thumb, from shore to shore,
The trebles squeak for fear, the bases roar.

Come, I am indifferently in tune now—what was it to be?—ay, I remember—nay, the Lass of Northmaven is the ditty—poor Bet Stimbister! I have called her Mary in the verses. Betsy does well for an English song; but Mary is more natural here.” So saying, after a short prelude, he sung, with a tolerable voice and some taste, the following verses:—

MARY.

Farewell to Northmaven,
Grey Hillswicke, farewell!
To the calms of thy haven,
The storms on thy fell—
To each breeze that can vary
The mood of thy main,
And to thee, bonnie Mary!
We meet not again.

Farewell the wild ferry,
Which Hacon could brave,
When the peaks of the Skerry
Were white in the wave.
There's a maid may look over
These wild waves in vain,
For the skiff of her lover—
He comes not again.

The vows thou hast broke,
On the wild currents fling them;
On the quicksand and rock
Let the mermaiden sing them.
New sweetness they'll give her
Bewildering strain;
But there's one who will never
Believe them again.

O were there an island,
Though ever so wild,
Where woman could smile, and
No man be beguiled—
Too tempting a snare
To poor mortals were given,
And the hope would fix there,
That should anchor on Heaven.

“I see you are softened, my young friend,” said Halcro, when he had finished his song; “so are most who hear that same ditty. Words and music both mine own; and, without saying much of the wit of it, there is a sort of eh—eh—simplicity and truth about it, which gets its way to most folks' heart. Even your father cannot resist it—and he has a heart as

impenetrable to poetry and song as Apollo himself could draw an arrow against. But then he has had some ill luck in his time with the women-folks, as is plain from his owing them such a grudge—Ay, ay, there the charm lies—none of us but has felt the same sore in our day. But come, my dear boy, they are mustering in the hall, men and women both—plagues as they are, we should get on ill without them—but before we go, only mark the last turn—

‘And the hope would fix there,’—

that is, in the supposed island—a place which neither was nor will be—

‘That should anchor on Heaven.’

Now you see, my good young man, there are here none of your heathenish rants, which Rochester, Etheridge, and these wild fellows, used to string together. A parson might sing the song, and his clerk bear the burthen—but there is the confounded bell—we must go now—but never mind—we’ll get into a quiet corner at night, and I’ll tell you all about it.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Full in the midst the polish'd table shines,
And the bright goblets, rich with generous wines;
Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
Portions the food, and each the portion shares;
Nor till the rage of thirst and hunger ceased,
To the high host approached the sagacious guest.

Odyssey.

THE hospitable profusion of Magnus Troil's board, the number of guests who feasted in the hall, the much greater number of retainers, attendants, humble friends, and domestics of every possible description, who reveled without, with the multitude of the still poorer, and less honoured assistants, who came from every hamlet or township within twenty miles round, to share the bounty of the munificent udaller, were such as altogether astonished Triptolemus Yellowley, and made him internally doubt whether it would be prudent in him at this time, and amid the full glow of his hospitality, to propose to the host who presided over such a splendid banquet, a radical change in the whole customs and usages of his country.

True, the sagacious Triptolemus felt conscious that he possessed in his own person wisdom far superior to that of all the assembled feasters, to say nothing of the landlord, against whose prudence the very extent of his hospitality formed, in Yellowley's opinion, sufficient evidence. But yet the Amphitryon with whom one dines holds, for the time at least, an influence over the minds of his most distinguished guests; and if the dinner be in good style, and the wines of the right quality, it is humbling to see that neither art nor wisdom, scarce external rank itself, can assume their natural and wonted superiority over the distributor of these good things, until coffee has been brought in. Triptolemus felt the full weight of this temporary superiority, yet he was desirous to do something that might vindicate the vaunts he had made to his sister and his fellow-tra-

veller, and he stole a look at them from time to time, to mark whether he was not sinking in their esteem from postponing his promised lecture on the enormities of Zetland.

But Mrs Barbara was busily engaged in noting and registering the waste incurred in such an entertainment as she had probably never before looked upon, and in admiring the host's indifference to, and the guests' absolute negligence of, those rules of civility in which her youth had been brought up. The feasters desired to be helped from a dish which was unbroken, and might have figured at supper, with as much freedom as if it had undergone the ravages of half-a-dozen guests; and no one seemed to care—the landlord himself least of all—whether those dishes only were consumed, which, from their nature, were incapable of re-appearance, or whether the assault was extended to the substantial rounds of beef, pasties, and so forth, which, by the rules of good housewifery, were destined to stand two attacks, and which, therefore, according to Mrs Barbara's ideas of politeness, ought not to have been annihilated by the guests upon the first onset, but spared, like Outis in the cave of Polyphemus, to be devoured the last. Lost in the meditations to which these breaches of convivial discipline gave rise, and in the contemplation of an ideal larder of cold meat which she could have saved out of the wreck of roast, boiled, and baked, sufficient to have supplied her cupboard for at least a twelvemonth, Mrs Barbara cared very little whether or not her brother supported in its extent the character which he had calculated upon assuming.

Mordaunt Mertoun also was conversant with far other thoughts than those which regarded the proposed reformer of Zetland enormities. His seat was betwixt two blithe maidens of Thule, who, not taking scorn that he had upon other occasions given preference to the daughters of the udaller, were glad of the chance which assigned to them the attentions of so distinguished a gallant, who, as being their squire at the feast, might in all probability become their partner in the subsequent dance. But, whilst rendering to his fair neighbours all the usual attentions which society required, Mordaunt kept up a covert, but accurate and close observation, upon his estranged friends, Minna and Brenda. The udaller himself had a share of his attention; but in him he could remark nothing, except the usual tone of hearty and somewhat boisterous hospitality, with which he was accustomed to animate the banquet upon all such occasions of general festivity. But in the differing mien of the two maidens there was much more room for painful remark.

Captain Cleveland sate betwixt the sisters, was sedulous in his attentions to both, and Mordaunt was so placed, that he could observe all, and hear a great deal, of what passed between them. But Cleveland's peculiar regard seemed devoted to the elder sister. Of this the younger was perhaps conscious, for more than once her eye glanced towards Mordaunt, and, as he thought, with something in it which resembled regret for the interruption of their intercourse, and a sad remembrance of former and more friendly times; while Minna was exclusively engrossed by the attentions of her neighbour; and

that it should be so, filled Mordaunt with surprise and resentment.

Minna, the serious, the prudent, the reserved, whose countenance and manners indicated so much elevation of character—Minna, the lover of solitude, and of those paths of knowledge in which men walk best without company—the enemy of light mirth, the friend of musing melancholy, and the frequenter of fountain-heads and pathless glens—she, whose character seemed, in short, the very reverse of that which might be captivated by the bold, coarse, and daring gallantry of such a man as this Captain Cleveland, gave, nevertheless, her eye and ear to him, as he sate beside her at table, with an interest and a graciousness of attention, which, to Mordaunt, who well knew how to judge of her feelings by her manner, intimated a degree of the highest favour. He observed this, and his heart rose against the favourite by whom he had been thus superseded, as well as against Minna's indiscreet departure from her own character.

"What is there about the man," he said within himself, "more than the bold and daring assumption of importance which is derived from success in petty enterprises, and the exercise of despotism over a ship's crew?—His very language is more professional than is used by the superior officers of the British navy; and the wit which has excited so many smiles, seems to me such as Minna would not formerly have endured for an instant. Even Brenda seems less taken with his gallantry than Minna, whom it should have suited so little."

Mordaunt was doubly mistaken in these his angry speculations. In the first place, with an eye which was, in some respects, that of a rival, he criticized far too severely the manners and behaviour of Captain Cleveland. They were unpolished, certainly; which was of the less consequence in a country inhabited by so plain and simple a race as the ancient Zetlanders. On the other hand, there was an open, naval frankness in Cleveland's manners—much natural shrewdness—some appropriate humour—an undoubted confidence in himself—and that enterprising hardihood of disposition, which, without any other recommendable quality, very often leads to success with the fair sex. But Mordaunt was farther mistaken, in supposing that Cleveland was likely to be disagreeable to Minna Troil, on account of the opposition of their characters in so many material particulars. Had his knowledge of the world been a little more extensive, he might have observed, that as unions are often formed betwixt couples differing in complexion and stature, they take place still more frequently betwixt persons totally differing in feelings, in taste, in pursuits, and in understanding; and it would not be saying, perhaps, too much, to aver, that two-thirds of the marriages around us have been contracted betwixt persons, who, judging *a priori*, we should have thought had scarce any charms for each other.

A moral and primary cause might be easily assigned for these anomalies, in the wise dispensations of Providence, that the general balance of wit, wisdom, and amiable qualities of all kinds, should be kept up through society at large. For, what a world were it, if the wise were to intermarry only with the

wise, the learned with the learned, the amiable with the amiable, nay, even the handsome with the handsome! and, is it not evident, that the degraded castes of the foolish, the ignorant, the brutal, and the deformed (comprehending, by the way, far the greater portion of mankind), must, when condemned to exclusive intercourse with each other, become gradually as much brutalized in person and disposition as so many ourang-outangs? When, therefore, we see the "gentle joined to the rude," we may lament the fate of the suffering individual, but we must not the less admire the mysterious disposition of that wise Providence which thus balances the moral good and evil of life;—which secures for a family, unhappy in the dispositions of one parent, a share of better and sweeter blood, transmitted from the other, and preserves to the offspring the affectionate care and protection of at least one of those from whom it is naturally due. Without the frequent occurrence of such alliances and unions—mis-sorted as they seem at first sight—the world could not be that for which Eternal Wisdom has designed it—a place of mixed good and evil—a place of trial at once, and of suffering, where even the worst ills are chequered with something that renders them tolerable to humble and patient minds, and where the best blessings carry with them a necessary alloy of embittering depreciation.

When, indeed, we look a little closer on the causes of those unexpected and ill-suited attachments, we have occasion to acknowledge, that the means by which they are produced do not infer that complete departure from, or inconsistency with, the character of the parties, which we might expect when the result alone is contemplated. The wise purposes which Providence appears to have had in view, by permitting such intermixture of dispositions, tempers, and understandings, in the married state, are not accomplished by any mysterious impulse by which, in contradiction to the ordinary laws of nature, men or women are urged to an union with those whom the world see to be unsuitable to them. The freedom of will is permitted to us in the occurrences of ordinary life, as in our moral conduct; and in the former as well as the latter case, is often the means of misguiding those who possess it. Thus it usually happens, more especially to the enthusiastic and imaginative, that, having formed a picture of admiration in their own mind, they too often deceive themselves by some faint resemblance in some existing being, whom their fancy, as speedily as gratuitously, invests with all the attributes necessary to complete the *beau idéal* of mental perfection. No one, perhaps, even in the happiest marriage, with an object really beloved, ever found all the qualities he expected to possess; but in far too many cases, he finds he has practised a much higher degree of mental deception, and has erected his airy castle of felicity upon some rainbow, which owed its very existence only to the peculiar state of the atmosphere.

Thus Mordaunt, if better acquainted with life, and with the course of human things, would have been little surprised that such a man as Cleveland, handsome, bold, and animated,—a man who had obviously lived in danger, and who spoke of it as

sport, should have been invested, by a girl of Minna's fanciful character, with an extensive share of those qualities, which, in her active imagination, were held to fill up the accomplishments of a heroic character. The plain bluntness of his manner, if remote from courtesy, appeared at least as widely different from deceit; and, unfashioned as he seemed by forms, he had enough both of natural sense, and natural good-breeding, to support the delusion he had created, at least as far as externals were concerned. It is scarce necessary to add, that these observations apply exclusively to what are called love-matches; for when either party fix their attachment upon the substantial comforts of a rental, or a jointure, they cannot be disappointed in the acquisition, although they may be cruelly so in their over-estimation of the happiness it was to afford, or in having too slightly anticipated the disadvantages with which it was to be attended.

Having a certain partiality for the dark beauty whom we have described, we have willingly dedicated this digression, in order to account for a line of conduct which we allow to seem absolutely unnatural in such a narrative as the present, though the most common event in ordinary life; namely, in Minna's appearing to have over-estimated the taste, talent, and ability of a handsome young man, who was dedicating to her his whole time and attention, and whose homage rendered her the envy of almost all the other young women of that numerous party. Perhaps, if our fair readers will take the trouble to consult their own bosoms, they will be disposed to allow, that the distinguished good taste exhibited by any individual, who, when his attentions would be agreeable to a whole circle of rivals, selects *one* as their individual object, entitles him, on the footing of reciprocity, if on no other, to a large share of that one's favourable, and even partial, esteem. At any rate, if the character shall, after all, be deemed inconsistent and unnatural, it concerns not us, who record the facts as we find them, and pretend no privilege for bringing closer to nature those incidents which may seem to diverge from it; or for reducing to consistence that most inconsistent of all created things—the heart of a beautiful and admired female.

Necessity, which teaches all the liberal arts, can render us also adepts in dissimulation; and Mordaunt, though a novice, failed not to profit in her school. It was manifest, that, in order to observe the demeanour of those on whom his attention was fixed, he must needs put constraint on his own, and appear, at least, so much engaged with the damsels betwixt whom he sate, that Minna and Brenda should suppose him indifferent to what was passing around him. The ready cheerfulness of Maddie and Clara Groatsettars, who were esteemed considerable fortunes in the island, and were at this moment too happy in feeling themselves seated somewhat beyond the sphere of vigilance influenced by their aunt, the good old Lady Glowrowrum, met and requited the attempts which Mordaunt made to be lively and entertaining; and they were soon engaged in a gay conversation, to which, as usual on such occasions, the gentleman contributed wit, or what passes for such, and the ladies their prompt laughter and liberal applause. But, amidst this seeming mirth, Mor-

daunt failed not, from time to time, as covertly as he might, to observe the conduct of the two daughters of Magnus; and still it appeared as if the elder, wrapt up in the conversation of Cleveland, did not cast away a thought on the rest of the company; and as if Brenda, more openly, as she conceived his attention withdrawn from her, looked with an expression both anxious and melancholy towards the group of which he himself formed a part. He was much moved by the diffidence, as well as the trouble, which her looks seemed to convey, and tacitly formed the resolution of seeking a more full explanation with her in the course of the evening. Norna, he remembered, had stated that these two amiable young women were in danger, the nature of which she left unexplained, but which he suspected to arise out of their mistaking the character of this daring and all-engrossing stranger; and he secretly resolved that, if possible, he would be the means of detecting Cleveland, and of saving his early friends.

As he revolved these thoughts, his attention to the Miss Groatsettars gradually diminished, and perhaps he might altogether have forgotten the necessity of his appearing an uninterested spectator of what was passing, had not the signal been given for the ladies retiring from table. Minna, with a native grace, and somewhat of stateliness in her manner, bent her head to the company in general, with a kinder and more particular expression as her eye reached Cleveland. Brenda, with the blush which attended her slightest personal exertion when exposed to the eye of others, hurried through the same departing salutation with an embarrassment which almost amounted to awkwardness, but which her youth and timidity rendered at once natural and interesting. Again Mordaunt thought that her eye distinguished him amidst the numerous company. For the first time he ventured to encounter and to return the glance; and the consciousness that he had done so, doubled the glow of Brenda's countenance, while something resembling displeasure was blended with her emotion.

When the ladies had retired, the men betook themselves to the deep and serious drinking, which, according to the fashion of the times, preceded the evening exercise of the dance. Old Magnus himself, by precept and example, exhorted them "to make the best use of their time, since the ladies would soon summon them to shake their feet," at the same time giving the signal to a grey-headed domestic, who stood behind him in the dress of a Dantzic skipper, and who added to many other occupations that of butler, "Eric Scambester," he said, "has the good ship, the Jolly Mariner of Canton got her cargo on board?"

"Choke-full loaded," answered the Ganymede of Burgh-Westra, "with good Nantz, Jamaica sugar, Portugal lemons, not to mention nutmeg and toast and water taken in from the Shellicoat spring."

Loud and long laughed the guests at this stated and regular jest betwixt the udaller and his butler, which always served as a preface to the introduction of a punch-bowl of enormous size, the gift of the captain of one of the Honourable East India Company's vessels, which, bound for China homeward, had been driven north-about by stress of

weather into Lerwick-bay, and had there contrived to get rid of part of the cargo, without very scrupulously reckoning for the king's duties.

Magnus Troil, having been a large customer, besides otherwise obliging Captain Coolie, had been remunerated, on the departure of the ship, with this splendid vehicle of conviviality, at the very sight of which, as old Eric Scambester bent under its weight, a murmur of applause ran through the company.

Those nearest this capacious Mediterranean of punch, were accommodated by the udaller with their portions, dispensed in huge rummer glasses by his own hospitable hand, whilst they who sat at a greater distance replenished their cups by means of a rich silver flagon, facetiously called the pinnace; which, filled occasionally at the bowl, served to dispense its liquid treasures to the more remote parts of the table, and occasioned many facetious jests on its frequent voyages. The commerce of the Zetlanders with foreign vessels, and homeward-bound West Indiamen, had early served to introduce among them the general use of the generous beverage, with which the Jolly Mariner of Canton was loaded; nor was there a man in the Archipelago of Thule more skilled in combining its rich ingredients, than old Eric Scambester, who indeed was known far and wide through the isles by the name of the Punch-maker, after the fashion of the ancient Norwegians, who conferred on Rollo the Walker, and other heroes of their strain, epithets expressive of the feats of strength or dexterity in which they excelled all other men.

The good liquor was not slow in performing its office of exhilaration, and, as the revel advanced, some ancient Norse drinking-songs were sung with great effect by the guests, tending to show, that if from want of exercise the martial virtues of their ancestors had decayed among the Zetlanders, they could still actively and intensely enjoy so much of the pleasures of Valhalla as consisted in quaffing the oceans of mead and brown ale, which were promised by Odin to those who should share his Scandinavian paradise. At length, excited by the cup and song, the diffident grew bold, and the modest loquacious—all became desirous of talking, and none were willing to listen—each man mounted his own special hobby-horse, and began eagerly to call on his neighbours to witness his agility. Amongst others, the little bard, who had now got next to our friend Mordaunt Mertoun, evinced a positive determination to commence and conclude, in all its longitude and latitude, the story of his introduction to glorious John Dryden; and Triptolemus Yellowley, as his spirits arose, shaking off a feeling of involuntary awe, with which he was impressed by the opulence indicated in all he saw around him, as well as by the respect paid to Magnus Troil by the assembled guests, began to broach, to the astonished and somewhat offended udaller, some of those projects for ameliorating the islands, which he had boasted of to his fellow-travellers upon their journey of the morning.

But the innovations which he suggested, and the reception which they met with at the hand of Magnus Troil, must be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

We 'll keep our customs—what is law itself,
But old establish'd custom? What religion
(I mean with one half of the men that use it),
Save the good use and wont that carries them
To worship how and where their fathers worshipp'd?
All things resolve in custom—we 'll keep ours.

Old Play.

WE left the company of Magnus Troil engaged in high wassail and revelry. Mordaunt, who, like his father, shunned the festive cup, did not partake in the cheerfulness which the ship diffused among the guests as they unloaded it, and the pinnace, as it circumnavigated the table. But, in low spirits as he seemed, he was the more meet prey for the story-telling Halcro, who had fixed upon him, as in a favourable state to play the part of listener, with something of the same instinct that directs the hooded crow to the sick sheep, which will most patiently suffer itself to be made a prey of. Joyfully did the poet avail himself of the advantages afforded by Mordaunt's absence of mind, and unwillingness to exert himself in measures of active defence. With the unfailing dexterity peculiar to prosers, he contrived to dribble out his tale to double its usual length, by the exercise of the privilege of unlimited digressions; so that the story, like a horse on the *grand pas*, seemed to be advancing with rapidity, while, in reality, it scarce was progressive at the rate of a yard in the quarter of an hour. At length, however, he had discussed, in all its various bearings and relations, the history of his friendly landlord, the master fashioner in Russel-street, including a short sketch of five of his relations, and anecdotes of three of his principal rivals, together with some general observations upon the dress and fashion of the period; and having marched thus far through the environs and outworks of his story, he arrived at the body of the place, for so the Wits' Coffee-house might be termed. He paused on the threshold, however, to explain the nature of his landlord's right occasionally to intrude himself into this well-known temple of the Muses.

"It consisted," said Halcro, "in the two principal points, of bearing and forbearing; for my friend Thimblethwaite was a person of wit himself, and never quarreled with any jest which the wags who frequented that house were flinging about, like squibs and crackers on a rejoicing night; and then, though some of the wits—ay, and I dare say the greater number, might have had some dealings with him in the way of trade, he never was the person to put any man of genius in unpleasant remembrance of such trifles. And though, my dear young Master Mordaunt, you may think this is but ordinary civility, because in this country it happens seldom that there is either much borrowing or lending, and because, praised be Heaven, there are neither bailiffs nor sheriff-officers to take a poor fellow by the neck, and because there are no prisons to put him into when they have done so, yet, let me tell you, that such a lamb-like forbearance as that of my poor, dear, deceased landlord, Thimblethwaite, is truly uncommon within the London bills of mortality. I could

tell you of such things that have happened even to myself, as well as others, with these cursed London tradesmen, as would make your hair stand on end.—But what the devil has put old Magnus into such note? he shouts as if he were trying his voice against a north-west gale of wind.”

Loud indeed was the roar of the old udaller, as, worn out of patience by the schemes of improvement which the factor was now undauntedly pressing upon his consideration, he answered him (to use an Ossianic phrase), like a wave upon a rock.—

“Trees, Sir Factor—talk not to me of trees! I care not though there never be one on the island tall enough to hang a coxcomb upon. We will have no trees but those that rise in our havens—the good trees that have yards for boughs, and standing-rigging for leaves.”

“But touching the draining of the lake of Braebaster, whereof I spoke to you, Master Magnus Troil,” answered the persevering agriculturist, “whilk I opine would be of so much consequence, there are two ways—down the Linklater glen, or by the Scalmeister burn. Now, having leveled both”—

“There is a third way, Master Yellowley,” answered the landlord.

“I profess I can see none,” replied Triptolemus, with as much good faith as a joker could desire in the subject of his wit, “in respect that the hill called Braebaster on the south, and ane high bank on the north, of whilk I cannot carry the name rightly in my head”—

“Do not tell us of hills and banks, Master Yellowley—there is a third way of draining the loch, and it is the only way that shall be tried in my day. You say my lord chamberlain and I are the joint proprietors—so be it—let each of us start an equal proportion of brandy, lime-juice, and sugar, into the loch—a ship’s cargo or two will do the job—let us assemble all the jolly udallers of the country, and in twenty-four hours you shall see dry ground where the loch of Braebaster now is.”

A loud laugh of applause, which for a time actually silenced Triptolemus, attended a jest so very well suited to time and place—a jolly toast was given—a merry song was sung—the ship unloaded her sweets—the pinnace made its genial rounds—the duet betwixt Magnus and Triptolemus, which had attracted the attention of the whole company from its superior vehemence, now once more sunk, and merged into the general hum of the convivial table, and the poet Halcro again resumed his usurped possession of the ear of Mordaunt Mertoun.

“Whereabouts was I?” he said, with a tone which expressed to his weary listener more plainly than words could, how much of his desultory tale yet remained to be told. “O, I remember—we were just at the door of the Wits’ Coffee-house—it was set up by one”—

“Nay, but, my dear Master Halcro,” said his hearer, somewhat impatiently, “I am desirous to hear of your meeting with Dryden.”

“What, with glorious John?—true—ay—where was I? At the Wits’ Coffee-house—Well, in at the door we got—the waiters, and so forth, staring at me; for as to Thimblethwaite, honest fellow, his

was a well-known face.—I can tell you a story about that”—

“Nay, but John Dryden?” said Mordaunt, in a tone which deprecated further digression.

“Ay, ay, glorious John—where was I?—Well, as we stood close by the bar, where one fellow sat grinding of coffee, and another putting up tobacco into penny parcels—a pipe and a dish cost just a penny—then and there it was that I had the first peep of him. One Dennis sat near him, who”—

“Nay, but John Dryden—what like was he?” demanded Mordaunt.

“Like a little fat old man, with his own grey hair, and in a full-trimmed black suit, that sat close as a glove. Honest Thimblethwaite let no one but himself shape for glorious John, and he had a slashing hand at a sleeve, I promise you.—But there is no getting a mouthful of common sense spoken here—d—n that Scotchman, he and old Magnus are at it again!”

It was very true; and although the interruption did not resemble a thunder-clap to which the former stentorian exclamation of the udaller might have been likened, it was a close and clamorous dispute, maintained by question, answer, retort, and repartee, as closely huddled upon each other as the sounds which announce from a distance a close and sustained fire of musketry.

“Hear reason, sir!” said the udaller; “we will hear reason, and speak reason too; and if reason fall short, you shall have rhyme to boot.—Ha, my little friend Halcro!”

Though cut off in the middle of his best story (if that could be said to have a middle, which had neither beginning nor end), the bard bristled up at the summons, like a corps of light infantry, when ordered up to the support of the grenadiers, looked smart, slapped the table with his hand, and denoted his becoming readiness to back his hospitable landlord, as becomes a well-entertained guest. Triptolemus was a little daunted at this reinforcement of his adversary; he paused, like a cautious general, in the sweeping attack which he had commenced on the peculiar usages of Zetland, and spoke not again until the udaller poked him with the insulting query, “Where is your reason now, Master Yellowley, that you were deafening me with a moment since?”

“Be but patient, worthy sir,” replied the agriculturist; “what on earth can you or any other man say in defence of that thing you call a plough, in this blinded country? Why, even the savage Highlandmen, in Caithness and Sutherland, can make more work, and better, with their gascromb, or whatever they call it.”

“But what ails you at it, sir?” said the udaller; “let me hear your objections to it. It tills our land, and what would ye more?”

“It hath but one handle or stilt,” replied Triptolemus.

“And who the devil,” said the poet, aiming at something smart, “would wish to need a pair of stilts, if he can manage to walk with a single one?”

“Or tell me,” said Magnus Troil, “how it were possible for Neil of Lupness, that lost one arm by his fall from the crag of Nebraekkan, to manage a plough with two handles?”

"The harness is of raw seal-skin," said Triptolemus.

"It will save dressed leather," answered Magnus Troil.

"It is drawn by four wretched bullocks," said the agriculturist, "that are yoked breast-fashion; and two women must follow this unhappy instrument, and complete the furrows with a couple of shovels."

"Drink about, Master Yellowley," said the udaller; "and, as you say in Scotland, 'never fash your thumb.' Our cattle are too high-spirited to let one go before the other; our men are too gentle and well-nurtured to take the working-field without the women's company; our ploughs till our land—our land bears us barley; we brew our ale, eat our bread, and make strangers welcome to their share of it. Here's to you, Master Yellowley."

This was said in a tone meant to be decisive of the question; and, accordingly, Halcro whispered to Mordaunt, "that has settled the matter, and now we will get on with glorious John.—There he sat in his suit of full-trimmed black; two years due was the bill, as mine honest landlord afterwards told me,—and such an eye in his head!—none of your burning, blighting, falcon eyes, which we poets are apt to make a rout about,—but a soft, full, thoughtful, yet penetrating glance—never saw the like of it in my life, unless it were little Stephen Cleancogg's, the fiddler, at Papastons, who"—

"Nay, but John Dryden?" said Mordaunt, who, for want of better amusement, had begun to take a sort of pleasure in keeping the old gentleman to his narrative, as men herd in a restive sheep, when they wish to catch him. He returned to his theme, with his usual phrase of "Ay, true—glorious John—Well, sir, he cast his eye, such as I have described it, on mine landlord, and 'Honest Tim,' said he, 'what hast thou got here?' and all the wits, and lords, and gentlemen, that used to crowd round him, like the wenches round a pedlar at a fair, they made way for us, and up we came to the fire-side, where he had his own established chair,—I have heard it was carried to the balcony in summer, but it was by the fire-side when I saw it,—so up came Tim Thimblethwaite, through the midst of them, as bold as a lion, and I followed with a small parcel under my arm, which I had taken up partly to oblige my landlord, as the shop porter was not in the way, and partly that I might be thought to have something to do there, for you are to think there was no admittance at Will's for strangers who had no business there.—I have heard that Sir Charles Sedley said a good thing about that"—

"Nay, but you forget glorious John," said Mordaunt.

"Ay, glorious you may well call him. They talk of their Blackmore, and Shadwell, and such like,—not fit to tie the latches of John's shoes—"Well," he said to my landlord, 'what have you got there?' and he, bowing, I warrant, lower than he would to a duke, said he had made bold to come and show him the stuff which Lady Elizabeth had chose for her night-gown.—'And which of your geese is that, Tim, who has got it tucked under his wing?'—'He is an Orkney goose, if it please you, Mr Dryden,' said Tim, who had wit at will, 'and he hath brought

you a copy of verses for your honour to look at.'—'Is he amphibious?' said glorious John, taking the paper; and methought I could rather have faced a battery of cannon than the crackle it gave as it opened, though he did not speak in a way to dash one neither;—and then he looked at the verses, and he was pleased to say, in a very encouraging way indeed, with a sort of good-humoured smile on his face, and certainly for a fat elderly gentleman,—for I would not compare it to Minna's smile, or Brenda's,—he had the pleasantest smile I ever saw,—'Why, Tim,' he said, 'this goose of yours will prove a swan on your hands.' With that he smiled a little, and they all laughed, and none louder than those who stood too far off to hear the jest; for every one knew when he smiled there was something worth laughing at, and so took it upon trust; and the word passed through among the young Templars, and the wits, and the smarts, and there was nothing but question on question who we were; and one French fellow was trying to tell them it was only Monsieur Thimblethwaite; but he made such work with his Dumbletate and Timbletate, that I thought his explanation would have lasted"—

"As long as your own story," thought Mordaunt; but the narrative was at length finally cut short, by the strong and decided voice of the udaller.

"I will hear no more on it, Mr Factor," he exclaimed.

"At least let me say something about the breed of horses," said Yellowley, in rather a cry-mercy tone of voice. "Your horses, my dear sir, resemble cats in size, and tigers in devilry!"

"For their size," said Magnus, "they are the easier for us to get off and on them (as Triptolemus experienced this morning, thought Mordaunt to himself)—and, as for their devilry, let no one mount them that cannot manage them."

A twinge of self-conviction, on the part of the agriculturist, prevented him from reply. He darted a deprecatory glance at Mordaunt, as if for the purpose of imploring secrecy respecting his tumble; and the udaller, who saw his advantage, although he was not aware of the cause, pursued it with the high and stern tone proper to one who had all his life been unaccustomed to meet with, and unapt to endure, opposition.

"By the blood of Saint Magnus the martyr," he said, "but you are a fine fellow, Master Factor Yellowley! You come to us from a strange land, understanding neither our laws, nor our manners, nor our language, and you propose to become governor of the country, and that we should all be your slaves!"

"My pupils, worthy sir, my pupils!" said Yellowley, "and that only for your own proper advantage."

"We are too old to go to school," said the Zetlander. "I tell you once more, we will sow and reap our grain as our fathers did—we will eat what God sends us, with our doors open to the stranger, even as theirs were open. If there is aught imperfect in our practice, we will amend it in time and season; but the blessed Baptist's holiday was made for light hearts and quick heels. He that speaks a word more of reason, as you call it, or anything that looks like it, shall swallow a pint of sea-water—he

shall, by this hand—and so fill up the good ship, the Jolly Mariner of Canton, once more, for the benefit of those that will stick by her; and let the rest have a fling with the fiddlers, who have been summoning us this hour. I will warrant every wench is on tiptoe by this time. Come, Mr Yellowley, no unkindness, man—why, man, thou feelest the rolling of the Jolly Mariner still—for, in truth, honest Triptolemus showed a little unsteadiness of motion, as he rose to attend his host—but never mind, we shall have thee find thy land-legs to reel it with yonder bonnie belles. Come along, Triptolemus—let me grapple thee fast, lest thou *trip*, old Triptolemus—ha, ha, ha!”

So saying, the portly though weather-beaten hulk of the udaller sailed off like a man-of-war that had braved a hundred gales, having his guest in tow like a recent prize. The greater part of the revelers followed their leader with loud jubilee, although there were several staunch toppers, who, taking the option left them by the udaller, remained behind to relieve the Jolly Mariner of a fresh cargo, amidst many a pledge to the health of their absent landlord, and to the prosperity of his roof-tree, with whatsoever other wishes of kindness could be devised, as an apology for another pint-bumper of noble punch.

The rest soon thronged the dancing-room, an apartment which partook of the simplicity of the time and of the country. Drawing-rooms and saloons were then unknown in Scotland, save in the houses of the nobility, and of course absolutely so in Zetland; but a long, low, anomalous store-room, sometimes used for the deposition of merchandize, sometimes for putting aside lumber, and a thousand other purposes, was well known to all the youth of Dunrossness, and of many a department besides, as the scene of the merry dance, which was sustained with so much glee when Magnus Troil gave his frequent feasts.

The first appearance of this ball-room might have shocked a fashionable party, assembled for the quadrille or the waltz. Low as we have stated the apartment to be, it was but imperfectly illuminated by lamps, candles, ship-lanterns, and a variety of other *candelabra*, which served to throw a dusky light upon the floor, and upon the heaps of merchandize and miscellaneous articles which were piled around; some of them stores for the winter; some, goods destined for exportation; some, the tribute of Neptune, paid at the expense of shipwrecked vessels, whose owners were unknown; some, articles of barter received by the proprietor, who, like most others at the period, was somewhat of a merchant as well as a landholder, in exchange for the fish, and other articles, the produce of his estate. All these, with the chests, boxes, casks, &c. which contained them, had been drawn aside, and piled one above the other, in order to give room for the dancers, who, light and lively as if they had occupied the most splendid saloon in the parish of St James's, executed their national dances with equal grace and activity.

The group of old men who looked on, bore no inconsiderable resemblance to a party of aged tritons, engaged in beholding the sports of the sea-nymphs; such a hard look had most of them acquired by

contending with the elements, and so much did the shaggy hair and beards, which many of them cultivated after the ancient Norwegian fashion, give their heads the character of those supposed natives of the deep. The young people, on the other hand, were uncommonly handsome, tall, well-made, and shapely; the men with long fair hair, and, until broken by the weather, a fresh ruddy complexion, which, in the females, was softened into a bloom of infinite delicacy. Their natural good ear for music qualified them to second to the utmost the exertions of a band, whose strains were by no means contemptible; while the elders, who stood around, or sat quiet upon the old sea-chests, which served for chairs, criticized the dancers, as they compared their execution with their own exertions in former days; or, warmed by the cup and flagon, which continued to circulate among them, snapped their fingers, and beat time with their feet to the music.

Mordaunt looked upon this scene of universal mirth with the painful recollection, that he, thrust aside from his pre-eminence, no longer exercised the important duties of chief of the dancers, or office of leader of the revels, which had been assigned to the stranger Cleveland. Anxious, however, to suppress the feelings of his own disappointment, which he felt it was neither wise to entertain nor manly to display, he approached his fair neighbours, to whom he had been so acceptable at table, with the purpose of inviting one of them to become his partner in the dance. But the awfully ancient old lady, even the Lady Glowrowrum, who had only tolerated the exuberance of her nieces' mirth during the time of dinner, because her situation rendered it then impossible for her to interfere, was not disposed to permit the apprehended renewal of the intimacy implied in Mertoun's invitation. She therefore took upon herself, in the name of her two nieces, who sat pouting beside her in displeased silence, to inform Mordaunt, after thanking him for his civility, that the hands of her nieces were engaged for that evening; and, as he continued to watch the party at a little distance, he had an opportunity of being convinced that the alleged engagement was a mere apology to get rid of him, when he saw the two good-humoured sisters join the dance, under the auspices of the next young men who asked their hands. Incensed at so marked a slight, and unwilling to expose himself to another, Mordaunt Mertoun drew back from the circle of dancers, shrouded himself amongst the mass of inferior persons who crowded into the bottom of the room as spectators, and there, concealed from the observation of others, digested his own mortification as well as he could—that is to say, very ill—and with all the philosophy of his age—that is to say, with none at all.

CHAPTER XV.

A torch for me—let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the useless rushes with their heels;
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase—
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on.

Romeo and Juliet.

THE youth, says the moralist Johnson, cares not for the boy's hobby-horse, nor the man for the youth's

mistress; and therefore the distress of Mordaunt Mertoun, when excluded from the merry dance, may seem trifling to many of my readers, who would, nevertheless, think they did well to be angry if deposed from their usual place in an assembly of a different kind. There lacked not amusement, however, for those whom the dance did not suit, or who were not happy enough to find partners to their liking. Halcro, now completely in his element, had assembled round him an audience, to whom he was declaiming his poetry with all the enthusiasm of glorious John himself, and receiving in return the usual degree of applause allowed to minstrels who recite their own rhymes—so long at least as the author is within hearing of the criticism. Halcro's poetry might indeed have interested the antiquary as well as the admirer of the Muses, for several of his pieces were translations or imitations from the scaldic sagas, which continued to be sung by the fishermen of these islands even until a very late period; insomuch, that when Gray's poems first found their way to Orkney, the old people recognized at once, in the ode of the "Fatal Sisters," the Runic rhymes which had amused or terrified their infancy under the title of the "Magicians," and which the fishers of North Ronaldsha, and other remote isles, used still to sing when asked for a Norse ditty.

Half-listening, half-lost in his own reflections, Mordaunt Mertoun stood near the door of the apartment, and in the outer ring of the little circle formed around old Halcro, while the bard chaunted to a low, wild, monotonous air, varied only by the efforts of the singer to give interest and emphasis to particular passages, the following imitation of a northern war-song.

THE SONG OF HAROLD HARFAGER.

The sun is rising dimly red,
The wind is wailing low and dread;
From the cliff the eagle sallies;
Leaves the wolf his darksome valleys;
In the mist the ravens hover,
Peep the wild dogs from the cover,
Screaming, croaking, baying, yelling,
Each in his wild accents telling,
"Soon we feast on dead and dying,
Fair-hair'd Harold's flag is flying."

Many a crest in air is streaming,
Many a helmet darkly gleaming,
Many an arm the axe uprears,
Doom'd to hew the wood of spears.
All along the crowded ranks,
Horses neigh and armour clanks;
Chiefs are shouting, clarions ringing,
Louder still the bard is singing,
"Gather, footmen,—gather, horsemen,
To the field, ye valiant Norsemen!"

"Halt ye not for food or slumber,
View not vantage, count not number;
Jolly reapers, forward still;
Grow the crop on vale or hill,
Thick or scatter'd, stiff or lithe,
It shall down before the scythe.
Forward with your sickles bright,
Reap the harvest of the fight—

Onward, footmen,—onward, horsemen,
To the charge, ye gallant Norsemen!"

"Fatal chuser of the slaughter,
O'er you hovers Odin's daughter;
Hear the voice she spreads before ye,—
Victory, and wealth, and glory;
Or old Valhalla's roaring hail,
Her ever-circling mead and ale,
Where for eternity unite
The joys of wassail and of fight.
Headlong forward, foot and horsemen,
Charge, and fight, and die like Norsemen!"—

"The poor unhappy blinded heathens!" said Triptolemus, with a sigh deep enough for a groan; "they speak of their eternal cups of ale, and I question if they kenn'd how to manage a croft land of grain!"

"The cleverer fellows they, neighbour Yellowley," answered the poet, "if they made ale without barley."

"Barley!—alack-a-day!" replied the more accurate agriculturist, "who ever heard of barley in these parts? Bear, my dearest friend, bear is all they have, and wonderment it is to me that they ever see an awn of it. Ye scart the land with a bit thing ye ca' a pleugh—ye might as weel give it a ritt with the teeth of a redding-kame. O, to see the sock, and the heel, and the sole-clout of a real steady Scottish pleugh, with a chield like a Samson between the stilts, laying a weight on them would keep down a mountain; twa stately owsen, and as many broad-breasted horse in the traces, going through soil and till, and leaving a fur in the ground would carry off water like a causeyed syver! They that have seen a sight like that, have seen something to crack about in another sort, than those unhappy auld-warld stories of war and slaughter, of which the land has seen even but too mickle, for a' your singing and souging awa' in praise of such blood-thirsty doings, Maister Claud Halcro."

"It is a heresy," said the animated little poet, bridling and drawing himself up, as if the whole defence of the Orcadian Archipelago rested on his single arm—"It is a heresy so much as to name one's native country, if a man is not prepared when and how to defend himself—ay, and to annoy another. The time has been, that if we made not good ale and aquavitæ, we knew well enough where to find that which was ready made to our hand; but now the descendants of sea-kings and champions, and Berserkars, are become as incapable of using their swords, as if they were so many women. Ye may praise them for a strong pull on an oar, or a sure foot on a skerry; but what else could glorious John himself say of ye, my good Hialtlanders, that any man would listen to?"

"Spoken like an angel, most noble poet!" said Cleveland, who, during an interval of the dance, stood near the party in which this conversation was held. "The old champions you talked to us about yesternight, were the men to make a harp ring—gallant fellows, that were friends to the sea, and enemies to all that sailed on it. Their ships, I suppose, were clumsy enough; but if it is true that they went upon the account as far as the Levant, I scarce

believe that ever better fellows unloosed a top-sail."

"Ay," replied Halcro, "there you spoke them right. In those days none could call their life and means of living their own, unless they dwelt twenty miles out of sight of the blue sea. Why, they had public prayers put up in every church in Europe, for deliverance from the ire of the Norsemen. In France and England, ay, and in Scotland too, for as high as they hold their heads now-a-days, there was not a bay or a haven, but it was freer to our forefathers than to the poor devils of natives; and now we cannot, forsooth, so much as grow our own barley without Scottish help—(here he darted a sarcastic glance at the factor)—I would I saw the time we were to measure arms with them again!"

"Spoken like a hero once more!" said Cleveland.

"Ah!" continued the little bard, "I would it were possible to see our barks, once the water-dragons of the world, swimming with the black raven standard waving at the topmast, and their decks glimmering with arms, instead of being heaped up with stock-fish—winning with our fearless hands what the niggard soil denies—paying back all old scorn and modern injury—reaping where we never sowed, and felling what we never planted—living and laughing through the world, and smiling when we were summoned to quit it!"

So spoke Claud Halcro, in no serious, or at least most certainly in no sober mood, his brain (never the most stable) whizzing under the influence of fifty well-remembered sagas, besides five bumpers of usquebaugh and brandy; and Cleveland, between jest and earnest, clapped him on the shoulder, and again repeated, "Spoken like a hero!"

"Spoken like a fool, I think," said Magnus Troil, whose attention had been also attracted by the vehemence of the little bard—"Where would you cruize upon, or against whom?—we are all subjects of one realm, I trow, and I would have you to remember, that your voyage may bring up at Execution-dock.—I like not the Scots—no offence, Mr Yellowley—that is, I would like them well enough if they would stay quiet in their own land, and leave us at peace with our own people, and manners, and fashions; and if they would but abide there till I went to harry them like a mad old Berserker, I would leave them in peace till the day of judgment. With what the sea sends us, and the land lends us, as the proverb says, and a set of honest neighbourly folks to help us to consume it, so help me Saint Magnus, as I think we are even but too happy!"

"I know what war is," said an old man, "and I would as soon sail through Sumburgh-roost in a cockle-shell, or in a worse loom, as I would venture there again."

"And, pray, what wars knew your valour?" said Halcro, who, though forbearing to contradict his landlord from a sense of respect, was not a whit inclined to abandon his argument.

"I was pressed," answered the old triton, "to serve under Montrose, when he came here about the sixteen hundred and fifty one, and carried a sort of us off, will ye mill ye, to get our throats cut in the wilds of Strathnaver—I shall never forget it—we had been hard put to it for victuals—what would

I have given for a luncheon of Burgh-Westra beef—ay, or a mess of sour sillocks?—When our Highlandmen brought in a dainty drove of kyloes, much ceremony there was not, for we shot and felled, and flayed, and roasted, and broiled, as it came to every man's hand; till, just as our beards were at the greasiest, we heard—God preserve us—a tramp of horse, then twa or three drapping shots,—then came a full salvo,—and then, when the officers were crying on us to stand, and maist of us looking which way we might run away, down they broke, horse and foot, with old John Urry, or Hurry, or whatever they called him—he hurried us that day, and worried us to boot—and we began to fall as thick as the stots that we were felling five minutes before."

"And Montrose," said the soft voice of the graceful Minna; "what became of Montrose, or how looked he?"

"Like a lion with the hunters before him," answered the old gentleman; "but I looked not twice his way, for my own lay right over the hill."

"And so you left him?" said Minna, in a tone of the deepest contempt.

"It was no fault of mine, Mistress Minna," answered the old man, somewhat out of countenance; "but I was there with no choice of my own; and, besides, what good could I have done?—all the rest were running like sheep, and why should I have staid?"

"You might have died with him," said Minna.

"And lived with him to all eternity, in immortal verse!" added Claud Halcro.

"I thank you, Mistress Minna," replied the plain-dealing Zetlander; "and I thank you, my old friend Claud;—but I would rather drink both your healths in this good bicker of ale, like a living man as I am, than that you should be making songs in mine honour, for having died forty or fifty years ago. But what signified it?—run or fight, 'twas all one;—they took Montrose, poor fellow, for all his doughty deeds, and they took me that did no doughty deeds at all; and they hanged him, poor man, and as for me"——

"I trust in Heaven they flogged and pickled you," said Cleveland, worn out of patience with the dull narrative of the peaceful Zetlander's poltroonery, of which he seemed so wondrous little ashamed.

"Flog horses, and pickle beef," said Magnus. "Why, you have not the vanity to think, that, with all your quarter-deck airs, you will make poor old neighbour Haagan ashamed that he was not killed some scores of years since? You have looked on death yourself, my doughty young friend, but it was with the eyes of a young man who wishes to be thought of; but we are a peaceful people,—peaceful, that is, as long as any one should be peaceful, and that is till some one has the impudence to wrong us, or our neighbours; and then, perhaps, they may not find our northern blood much cooler in our veins than was that of the old Scandinavians that gave us our names and lineage.—Get ye along, get ye along to the sword-dance, that the strangers that are amongst us may see that our hands and our weapons are not altogether unacquainted even yet."

A dozen cutlasses, selected hastily from an old arm-chest, and whose rusted hue bespoke how sel-

dom they left the sheath, armed the same number of young Zetlanders, with whom mingled six maidens, led by Minna Troil; and the minstrelsy instantly commenced a tune appropriate to an ancient Norwegian war-dance, the evolutions of which are perhaps still practised in these remote islands.

The first movement was graceful and majestic, the youths holding their swords erect, and without much gesture; but the tune, and the corresponding motions of the dancers, became gradually more and more rapid,—they clashed their swords together, in measured time, with a spirit which gave the exercise a dangerous appearance in the eye of the spectator, though the firmness, justice, and accuracy, with which the dancers kept time with the stroke of their weapons, did, in truth, insure its safety. The most singular part of the exhibition was the courage exhibited by the female performers, who now, surrounded by the swordsmen, seemed like the Sabine maidens in the hands of their Roman lovers; now moving under the arch of steel which the young men had formed, by crossing their weapons over the heads of their fair partners, resembled the band of Amazons when they first joined in the Pyrrhic dance with the followers of Theseus. But by far the most striking and appropriate figure was that of Minna Troil, whom Halcro had long since entitled the queen of swords, and who, indeed, moved amidst the swordsmen with an air, which seemed to hold all the drawn blades as the proper accompaniments of her person, and the implements of her pleasure. And when the mazes of the dance became more intricate, when the close and continuous clash of the weapons made some of her companions shrink, and show signs of fear, her cheek, her lip, and her eye, seemed rather to announce, that, at the moment when the weapons flashed fastest, and rung sharpest around her, she was most completely self-possessed, and in her own element. Last of all, when the music had ceased, and she remained for an instant upon the floor by herself, as the rule of the dance required, the swordsmen and maidens, who departed from around her, seemed the guards and the train of some princess, who, dismissed by her signal, were leaving her for a time to solitude. Her own look and attitude, wrapped, as she probably was, in some vision of the imagination, corresponded admirably with the ideal dignity which the spectators ascribed to her; but, almost immediately recollecting herself, she blushed, as if conscious she had been, though but for an instant, the object of undivided attention, and gave her hand gracefully to Cleveland, who, though he had not joined in the dance, assumed the duty of conducting her to her seat.

As they passed, Mordaunt Mertoun might observe that Cleveland whispered into Minna's ear, and that her brief reply was accompanied with even more discomposure of countenance than she had manifested when encountering the gaze of the whole assembly. Mordaunt's suspicions were strongly awakened by what he observed, for he knew Minna's character well, and with what equanimity and indifference she was in the custom of receiving the usual compliments and gallantries with which her beauty and her situation rendered her sufficiently familiar.

"Can it be possible she really loves this stranger?" was the unpleasant thought that instantly shot across Mordaunt's mind;—"And if she does, what is my interest in the matter?" was the second; and which was quickly followed by the reflection, that though he claimed no interest at any time but as a friend, and though that interest was now withdrawn, he was still, in consideration of their former intimacy, entitled both to be sorry and angry at her for throwing away her affections on one he judged unworthy of her. In this process of reasoning, it is probable that a little mortified vanity, or some indescribable shade of selfish regret, might be endeavouring to assume the disguise of disinterested generosity; but there is so much of base alloy in our very best (unassisted) thoughts, that it is melaucholy work to criticize too closely the motives of our most worthy actions; at least we would recommend to every one to let those of his neighbours pass current, however narrowly he may examine the purity of his own.

The sword-dance was succeeded by various other specimens of the same exercise, and by songs, to which the singers lent their whole soul, while the audience were sure, as occasion offered, to unite in some favourite chorus. It is upon such occasions that music, though of a simple and even rude character, finds its natural empire over the general bosom, and produces that strong excitement which cannot be attained by the most learned compositions of the first masters, which are caviare to the common ear, although, doubtless, they afford a delight, exquisite in its kind, to those whose natural capacity and education have enabled them to comprehend and relish those difficult and complicated combinations of harmony.

It was about midnight when a knocking at the door of the mansion, with the sound of the glee and the langspiel, announced, by their tinkling chime, the arrival of fresh revelers, to whom according to the hospitable custom of the country, the apartments were instantly thrown open.

CHAPTER XVI.

My mind misgives,
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels.

Romeo and Juliet.

THE new comers were, according to the frequent custom of such frolickers all over the world, disguised in a sort of masquing habits, and designed to represent the tritons and mermaids, with whom ancient tradition and popular belief have peopled the northern seas. The former, called by Zetlanders of that time, shoupeltins, were represented by young men grotesquely habited, with false hair, and beards made of flax, and chaplets composed of sea-ware interwoven with shells, and other marine productions, with which also were decorated their light-blue or greenish mantles of wadmaal, repeatedly before-mentioned. They had fish-spears, and other emblems of their assumed quality, amongst which the classical taste of Claud Halcro, by whom the masque was arranged, had not forgotten the conch-shells,

which were stoutly and hoarsely winded, from time to time, by one or two of the aquatic deities, to the great annoyance of all who stood near them.

The nereids and water-nymphs who attended on this occasion, displayed, as usual, a little more taste and ornament than was to be seen amongst their male attendants. Fantastic garments of green silk, and other materials of superior cost and fashion, had been contrived, so as to imitate their idea of the inhabitants of the waters, and, at the same time, to show the shape and features of the fair wearers to the best advantage. The bracelets and shells, which adorned the neck, arms, and ankles of the pretty mermaidens, were, in some cases, intermixed with real pearls; and the appearance, upon the whole, was such as might have done no discredit to the court of Amphitrite, especially when the long bright locks, blue eyes, fair complexions, and pleasing features of the maidens of Thule, were taken into consideration. We do not indeed pretend to aver, that any of these seeming mermaids had so accurately imitated the real syren, as commentators have supposed those attendant on Cleopatra did, who, adopting the fish's train of their original, were able, nevertheless, to make their "bends," or "ends" (said commentators cannot tell which), "adornings."* Indeed, had they not left their extremities in their natural state, it would have been impossible for the Zetland syrens to have executed the very pretty dance with which they rewarded the company, for the ready admission which had been granted to them.

It was soon discovered that these masquers were no strangers, but a part of the guests, who, stealing out a little time before, had thus disguised themselves, in order to give variety to the mirth of the evening. The muse of Claud Halcro, always active on such occasions, had supplied them with an appropriate song, of which we may give the following specimen. The song was alternate betwixt a nereid or mermaid, and a merman or triton—the males and females on either part forming a semi-chorus, which accompanied and bore burthen to the principal singer.

1.

MERMAID.

Fathoms deep beneath the wave,
Stringing beads of glistening pearl,
Singing the achievements brave
Of many an old Norwegian earl;
Dwelling where the tempest raving
Falls as light upon our ear,
As the sigh of lover, craving
Pity from his lady dear,
Children of wild Thule, we,
From the deep caves of the sea,
As the lark springs from the lea,
Hither come to share your glee.

2.

MERMAN.

From reining of the water-horse,
That bounded till the waves were foaming,

Watching the infant tempest's course,
Chasing the sea-snake in his roaming;
From winding charge-notes on the shell,
When the huge whale and sword-fish duel,
Or tolling shroudless seamen's knell,
When the winds and waves are cruel;
Children of wild Thule, we
Have plough'd such furrows on the sea,
As the steer draws on the lea,
And hither we come to share your glee.

3.

MERMAIDS AND MERMEN.

We heard you in our twilight caves,
A hundred fathom deep below,
For notes of joy can pierce the waves,
That drown each sound of war and woe.
Those who dwell beneath the sea
Love the sons of Thule well;
Thus, to aid your mirth, bring we
Dance, and song, and sounding shell.
Children of dark Thule, know,
Those who dwell by haaf and voe,
Where your daring shallows row,
Come to share the festal show.

The final chorus was borne by the whole voices, excepting those carrying the conch-shells, who had been trained to blow them in a sort of rude accompaniment, which had a good effect. The poetry, as well as the performance of the masquers, received great applause from all who pretended to be judges of such matters; but above all, from Triptolemus Yellowley, who, his ear having caught the agricultural sounds of plough and furrow, and his brain being so well drenched, that it could only construe the words in their most literal acceptation, declared roundly, and called Mordaunt to bear witness, that, though it was a shame to waste so much good lint as went to form the tritons' beards and periwigs, the song contained the only words of common sense which he had heard all that long day.

But Mordaunt had no time to answer the appeal, being engaged in attending with the utmost vigilance to the motions of one of the female masquers, who had given him a private signal as they entered, which induced him, though uncertain who she might prove to be, to expect some communication from her of importance. The syren who had so boldly touched his arm, and had accompanied the gesture with an expression of eye which bespoke his attention, was disguised with a good deal more care than her sister-masquers, her mantle being loose, and wide enough to conceal her shape completely, and her face hidden beneath a silk masque. He observed that she gradually detached herself from the rest of the masquers, and at length placed herself, as if for the advantage of the air, near the door of a chamber which remained open, looked earnestly at him again, and then taking an opportunity, when the attention of the company was fixed upon the rest of her party, she left the apartment.

Mordaunt did not hesitate instantly to follow his mysterious guide, for such we may term the masquer, as she paused to let him see the direction she was about to take, and then walked swiftly towards the shore of the voe, or salt-water lake, now lying full

* See some admirable discussion on this passage, in the *Variorum Shakspeare*.

before them, its small summer-waves glistening and rippling under the influence of a broad moon-light, which, added to the strong twilight of these regions during the summer solstice, left no reason to regret the absence of the sun, the path of whose setting was still visible on the waves of the west, while the horizon on the east side was already beginning to glimmer with the lights of dawn.

Mordaunt had therefore no difficulty in keeping sight of his disguised guide, as she tripped it over height and hollow to the sea-side, and, winding among the rocks, led the way to the spot where his own labours, during the time of his former intimacy at Burgh-Westra, had constructed a sheltered and solitary seat, where the daughters of Magnus were accustomed to spend, when the weather was suitable, a good deal of their time. Here, then, was to be the place of explanation; for the masquer stopped, and, after a moment's hesitation, sat down on the rustic settle. But from the lips of whom was he to receive it? Norna had first occurred to him, but her tall figure and slow majestic step were entirely different from the size and gait of the more fairy-formed syren, who had preceded him with as light a trip as if she had been a real nereid, who, having remained too late upon the shore, was, under the dread of Amphitrite's displeasure, hastening to regain her native element. Since it was not Norna, it could be only, he thought, Brenda, who thus singled him out; and when she had seated herself upon the bench, and taken the masque from her face, Brenda it accordingly proved to be. Mordaunt had certainly done nothing to make him dread her presence; and yet, such is the influence of bashfulness over the ingenuous youth of both sexes, that he experienced all the embarrassment of one who finds himself unexpectedly placed before a person who is justly offended with him. Brenda felt no less embarrassment; but as she had courted this interview, and was sensible it must be a brief one, she was compelled, in spite of herself, to begin the conversation.

"Mordaunt," she said, with a hesitating voice; then correcting herself, she proceeded—"You must be surprised, Mr Mertoun, that I should have taken this uncommon freedom."

"It was not till this morning, Brenda," replied Mordaunt, "that any mark of friendship or intimacy from you or from your sister could have surprised me. I am far more astonished that you should shun me without reason for so many hours, than that you should now allow me an interview. In the name of Heaven, Brenda, in what have I offended you? or why are we on these unusual terms?"

"May it not be enough to say," replied Brenda, looking downward, "that it is my father's pleasure?"

"No, it is not enough," returned Mertoun. "Your father cannot have so suddenly altered his whole thoughts of me, and his whole actions towards me, without acting under the influence of some strong delusion. I ask you but to explain of what nature it is; for I will be contented to be lower in your esteem than the meanest hind in these islands, if I cannot show that his change of opinion is only grounded upon some infamous deception, or some extraordinary mistake."

"It may be so," said Brenda—"I hope it is so—that I do hope it is so, my desire to see you thus in private may well prove to you. But it is difficult—in short, it is impossible for me to explain to you the cause of my father's resentment. Norna has spoken with him concerning it boldly, and I fear they parted in displeasure; and you well know no light matter could cause that."

"I have observed," said Mordaunt, "that your father is most attentive to Norna's counsel, and more complaisant to her peculiarities than to those of others—this I have observed, though he is no willing believer in the supernatural qualities to which she lays claim."

"They are related distantly," answered Brenda, "and were friends in youth—nay, as I have heard, it was once supposed they would have been married; but Norna's peculiarities showed themselves immediately on her father's death, and there was an end of that matter, if ever there was anything in it. But it is certain my father regards her with much interest; and it is, I fear, a sign how deeply his prejudices respecting you must be rooted, since they have in some degree quarreled on your account."

"Now, blessings upon you, Brenda, that you have called them prejudices," said Mertoun, warmly and hastily—"a thousand blessings on you! You were ever gentle-hearted—you could not have maintained even the show of unkindness long."

"It was indeed but a show," said Brenda, softening gradually into the familiar tone in which they had conversed from infancy; "I could never think, Mordaunt—never, that is, seriously believe, that you could say aught unkind of Minna or of me."

"And who dares to say I have?" said Mordaunt, giving way to the natural impetuosity of his disposition—"Who dares to say that I have, and ventures at the same time to hope that I will suffer his tongue to remain in safety betwixt his jaws? By Saint Magnus the martyr, I will feed the hawks with it!"

"Nay, now," said Brenda, "your anger only terrifies me, and will force me to leave you."

"Leave me," said he, "without telling me either the calumny, or the name of the villanous calumniator!"

"O, there are more than one," answered Brenda, "that have possessed my father with an opinion—which I cannot myself tell you—but there are more than one who say"—

"Were they hundreds, Brenda, I will do no less to them than I have said—Sacred martyr!—to accuse me of speaking unkindly of those whom I most respected and valued under heaven—I will back to the apartment this instant, and your father shall do me right before all the world."

"Do not go, for the love of Heaven!" said Brenda; "do not go, as you would not render me the most unhappy wretch in the world!"

"Tell me then, at least, if I guess aright," said Mordaunt, "when I name this Cleveland for one of those who have slandered me?"

"No, no," said Brenda, vehemently, "you run from one error into another more dangerous. You say you are my friend;—I am willing to be yours:—be but still for a moment, and hear what I have to

say;—our interview has lasted but too long already, and every additional moment brings additional danger with it.”

“Tell me then,” said Mertoun, much softened by the poor girl’s extreme apprehension and distress, “what it is that you require of me, and believe me, it is impossible for you to ask aught that I will not do my very uttermost to comply with.”

“Well then,—this captain,” said Brenda, “this Cleveland”——

“I knew it, by Heaven!” said Mordaunt; “my mind assured me that that fellow was, in one way or other, at the bottom of all this mischief and misunderstanding.”

“If you cannot be silent, and patient, for an instant,” replied Brenda, “I must instantly quit you; what I meant to say had no relation to you, but to another,—in one word, to my sister Minna. I have nothing to say concerning her dislike to you, but an anxious tale to tell concerning his attention to her.”

“It is obvious, striking, and marked,” said Mordaunt; “and, unless my eyes deceive me, it is received as welcome, if, indeed, it is not returned.”

“That is the very cause of my fear,” said Brenda. “I, too, was struck with the external appearance, frank manners, and romantic conversation of this man.”

“His appearance!” said Mordaunt; “he is stout and well-featured enough, to be sure; but, as old Sinclair of Quendale said to the Spanish admiral, ‘Farcie on his face! I have seen many a fairer hang on the Borough-moor.’—By his manners, he might be captain of a privateer; and by his conversation, the trumpeter to his own puppet-show; for he speaks of little else than his own exploits.”

“You are mistaken,” answered Brenda; “he speaks but too well on all that he has seen and learned; besides, he has really been in many distant countries, and in many gallant actions, and he can tell them with as much spirit as modesty. You would think you saw the flash and heard the report of the guns. And he has other tones of talking too—about the delightful trees and fruits of distant climates; and how the people wear no dress, through the whole year, half so warm as our summer gowns, and, indeed, put on little save cambrics and muslins.”

“Upon my word, Brenda, he does seem to understand the business of amusing young ladies,” replied Mordaunt.

“He does, indeed,” said Brenda, with great simplicity. “I assure you that, at first, I liked him better than Minna did; and yet, though she is so much cleverer than I am, I know more of the world than she does; for I have seen more of cities, having been once at Kirkwall; besides that I was thrice at Lerwick, when the Dutch ships were there, and so I should not be very easily deceived in people.”

“And pray, Brenda,” said Mertoun, “what was it that made you think less favourably of this young fellow, who seems to be so captivating?”

“Why, at first,” said Brenda, after a moment’s reflection, “he was much livelier; and the stories he told were not quite so melancholy, or so terrible; and he laughed and danced more.”

VOL. III.

“And, perhaps, at that time, danced oftener with Brenda than with her sister?” added Mordaunt.

“No,—I am not sure of that,” said Brenda; “and yet, to speak plain, I could have no suspicion of him at all while he was attending quite equally to us both; for you know that then he could have been no more to us than yourself, Mordaunt Mertoun, or young Swaraster, or any other young man in the islands.”

“But why then,” said Mordaunt, “should you not see him, with patience, become acquainted with your sister?—He is wealthy, or seems to be so at least. You say he is accomplished and pleasant;—what else would you desire in a lover for Minna?”

“Mordaunt, you forget who we are,” said the maiden, assuming an air of consequence, which sat as gracefully upon her simplicity, as did the different tone in which she had spoken hitherto. “This is a little world of ours this Zetland, and perhaps inferior, at least so strangers say, to other parts of the earth; but it is our own little world, and we, the daughters of Magnus Troil, hold a first rank in it. It would, I think, little become us, who are descended from sea-kings and Jarls, to throw ourselves away upon a stranger, who comes to our coast, like the eider-duck in spring, from we know not whence, and may leave it, in autumn, to go we know not where.”

“And who may nevertheless entice a Zetland golden-eye to accompany his migration,” said Mertoun.

“I will hear nothing light on such a subject,” replied Brenda, indignantly; “Minna, like myself, is the daughter of Magnus Troil, the friend of strangers, but the Father of Hialtland. He gives them the hospitality they need; but let not the proudest of them think that they can, at their pleasure, ally with his house.”

She said this in a tone of considerable warmth, which she instantly softened, as she added, “No, Mordaunt, do not suppose that Minna Troil is capable of so far forgetting what she owes to her father and her father’s blood, as to think of marrying this Cleveland; but she may lend an ear to him so long as to destroy her future happiness. She has that sort of mind, into which some feelings sink deeply;—you remember how Ulla Storlson used to go, day by day, to the top of Vossdalehead, to look for her lover’s ship that was never to return? When I think of her slow step, her pale cheek, her eye, that grew dimmer and dimmer, like the lamp that is half extinguished for lack of oil,—when I remember the fluttered look, of something like hope, with which she ascended the cliff at morning, and the deep dead despair which sat on her forehead when she returned,—when I think on all this, can you wonder that I fear for Minna, whose heart is formed to entertain, with such deep-rooted fidelity, any affection that may be implanted in it?”

“I do not wonder,” said Mordaunt, eagerly sympathizing with the poor girl; for, besides the tremulous expression of her voice, the light could almost show him the tear which trembled in her eye, as she drew the picture to which her fancy had assimilated her sister,—“I do not wonder that you should feel and fear whatever the purest affection can dictate; and if you can but point out to me in what I can

serve your sisterly love, you shall find me as ready to venture my life, if necessary, as I have been to go out on the crag to get you the eggs of the guillemot; and, believe me, that whatever has been told to your father, or yourself, of my entertaining the slightest thoughts of disrespect or unkindness, is as false as a fiend could devise."

"I believe it," said Brenda, giving him her hand; "I believe it, and my bosom is lighter, now I have renewed my confidence in so old a friend. How you can aid us, I know not; but it was by the advice, I may say by the commands, of Norna, that I ventured to make this communication; and I almost wonder," she added, as she looked around her, "that I have had courage to carry me through it. At present you know all that I can tell you of the risk in which my sister stands. Look after this Cleveland—beware how you quarrel with him, since you must so surely come by the worst with an experienced soldier."

"I do not exactly understand," said the youth, "how that should so surely be. This I know, that with the good limbs and good heart that God hath given me, ay, and with a good cause to boot—I am little afraid of any quarrel which Cleveland can fix upon me."

"Then, if not for your own sake, for Minna's sake," said Brenda—"for my father's—for mine—for all our sakes, avoid any strife with him, but be contented to watch him, and, if possible, to discover who he is, and what are his intentions towards us. He has talked of going to Orkney, to inquire after the consort with whom he sailed; but day by day, and week by week passes, and he goes not; and while he keeps my father company over the bottle, and tells Minna romantic stories of foreign people, and distant wars, in wild and unknown regions, the time glides on, and the stranger, of whom we know nothing save that he is one, becomes gradually closer and more inseparably intimate in our society.—And now, farewell. Norna hopes to make your peace with my father, and entreats you not to leave Burgh-Westra to-morrow, however cold he and my sister may appear towards you. I too," she said, stretching her hand towards him, "must wear a face of cold friendship towards the unwelcome visitor, but at heart we are still Brenda and Mordaunt. And now separate quickly, for we must not be seen together."

She stretched her hand to him, but withdrew it in some slight confusion, laughing and blushing, when, by a natural impulse, he was about to press it to his lips. He endeavoured for a moment to detain her, for the interview had for him a degree of fascination, which, as often as he had formerly been alone with Brenda, he had never experienced. But she extricated herself from him, and again signing an adieu, and pointing out to him a path different from that which she was herself about to take, tripped towards the house, and was soon hidden from his view by the acclivity.

Mordaunt stood gazing after her in a state of mind, to which, as yet, he had been a stranger. The dubious neutral ground between love and friendship may be long and safely trodden, until he who stands upon it is suddenly called upon to recognize the authority of the one or the other power; and then it most frequently happens, that he who for years sup-

posed himself only to be a friend, finds himself at once transformed into a lover. That such a change in Mordaunt's feelings should take place from this date, although he himself was unable exactly to distinguish its nature, was to be expected. He found himself at once received, with the most unsuspicious frankness, into the confidence of a beautiful and fascinating young woman, by whom he had, so short a time before, imagined himself despised and disliked; and, if anything could make a change, in itself so surprising and so pleasing, yet more intoxicating, it was the guileless and open-hearted simplicity of Brenda, that cast an enchantment over everything which she did or said. The scene, too, might have had its effect, though there was little occasion for its aid. But a fair face looks yet fairer under the light of the moon, and a sweet voice sounds yet sweeter among the whispering sounds of a summer night. Mordaunt, therefore, who was by this time returned to the house, was disposed to listen with unusual patience and complacency to the enthusiastic declamation pronounced upon moonlight by Claud Halcro, whose ecstasies had been awakened on the subject by a short turn in the open air, undertaken to qualify the vapours of the good liquor, which he had not spared during the festival.

"The sun, my boy," he said, "is every wretched labourer's day-lantern—it comes glaring yonder, out of the east, to summon up a whole world to labour and to misery; whereas the merry moon lights all of us to mirth and to love."

"And to madness, or she is much belied," said Mordaunt, by way of saying something.

"Let it be so," answered Halcro, "so she does not turn us melancholy-mad.—My dear young friends, the folks of this pains-taking world are far too anxious about possessing all their wits, or having them, as they say, about them. At least I know I have been often called half-witted, and I am sure I have gone through the world as well as if I had double the quantity. But stop—where was I? O, touching and concerning the moon—why, man, she is the very soul of love and poetry. I question if there was ever a true lover in existence who had not got at least as far as 'O thou,' in a sonnet in her praise."

"The moon," said the factor, who was now beginning to speak very thick, "ripens corn, at least the old folk said so—and she fills nuts also, whilk is of less matter—*sparge nuces, pueri*."

"A fine, a fine," said the udaller, who was now in his altitudes; "the factor speaks Greek—by the bones of my holy name-sake, Saint Magnus, he shall drink off the yawl full of punch, unless he gives us a song on the spot!"

"Too much water drowned the miller," answered Triptolemus. "My brain has more need of draining than of being drenched with more liquor."

"Sing then," said the despotic landlord, "for no one shall speak any other language here, save honest Norse, jolly Dutch, or Danske, or broad Scots, at the least of it. So, Eric Scambester, produce the yawl, and fill it to the brim, as a charge for demurrage."

Ere the vessel could reach the agriculturist, he, who saw it under way, and steering towards him by short tacks (for Scambester was by this time not

over steady in his course), made a desperate effort, and began to sing, or rather to croak forth, a Yorkshire harvest-home ballad, which his father used to sing when he was a little mellow, and which went to the tune of "Hey, Dobbin, away with the waggon." The rueful aspect of the singer, and the desperately discordant tones of his voice, formed so delightful a contrast with the jollity of the words and tune, that honest Triptolemus afforded the same sort of amusement which a reveler might give, by appearing on a festival-day in the holiday-coat of his grandfather. The jest concluded the evening, for even the mighty and strong-headed Magnus himself had confessed the influence of the sleepy god. The guests went off as best they might, each to his separate crib and resting-place, and in a short time the mansion, which was of late so noisy, was hushed into perfect silence.

CHAPTER XVII.

They man their boats, and all the young men arm,
With whatsoever might the monsters harm;
Pikes, halberts, spits, and darts, that wound afar,
The tools of peace, and implements of war.
Now was the time for vigorous lads to show
What love or honour could incite them to;—
A goodly theatre, where rocks are round
With reverend age and lovely lasses crown'd.

Battle of the Summer Islands.

THE morning which succeeds such a feast as that of Magnus Troil, usually lacks a little of the zest which seasoned the revels of the preceding day, as the fashionable reader may have observed at a public breakfast during the race-week in a country town; for, in what is called the best society, these lingering moments are usually spent by the company, each apart in their own dressing-rooms. At Burgh-Westra, it will readily be believed, no such space for retirement was afforded; and the lasses, with their paler cheeks, the elder dames, with many a wink and yawn, were compelled to meet with the men (headaches and all) just three hours after they had parted from each other.

Eric Scambester had done all that man could do to supply the full means of diverting the ennui of the morning meal. The board groaned with rounds of hung beef, made after the fashion of Zetland—with pasties—with baked meats—with fish, dressed and cured in all possible manners; nay, with the foreign delicacies of tea, coffee, and chocolate; for, as we have already had occasion to remark, the situation of these islands made them early acquainted with various articles of foreign luxury, which were, as yet, but little known in Scotland, where, at a much later period than that we write of, one pound of green tea was dressed like cabbage, and another converted into a vegetable sauce for salt beef, by the ignorance of the good housewives to whom they had been sent as rare presents.

Besides these preparations, the table exhibited whatever mighty potions are resorted to by *bans vivans*, under the facetious name of a "hair of the dog that bit you." There was the potent Irish usquebaugh—right Nantz—genuine Schiedamm—

aquavitæ from Caithness—and golden wasser from Hamburg; there was rum of formidable antiquity, and cordials from the Leeward Islands. After these details, it were needless to mention the stout home-brewed ale—the German mum, and Schwartz beer—and still more would it be beneath our dignity to dwell upon the innumerable sorts of pottage and flummery, together with the bland, and various preparations of milk, for those who preferred thinner potations.

No wonder that the sight of so much good cheer awakened the appetite and raised the spirits of the fatigued revelers. The young men began immediately to seek out their partners of the preceding evening, and to renew the small talk which had driven the night so merrily away, while Magnus, with his stout old Norse kindred, encouraged, by precept and example, those of elder days and graver mood, to a substantial flirtation with the good things before them. Still, however, there was a long period to be filled up before dinner; for the most protracted breakfast cannot well last above an hour; and it was to be feared that Claud Halcro meditated the occupation of this vacant morning with a formidable recitation of his own verses, besides telling, at its full length, the whole history of his introduction to glorious John Dryden. But fortune relieved the guests of Burgh-Westra from this threatened infliction, by sending them means of amusement peculiarly suited to their taste and habits.

Most of the guests were using their toothpicks, some were beginning to talk of what was to be done next, when, with haste in his step, and fire in his eye, Eric Scambester, a harpoon in his hand, came to announce to the company, that there was a whale on shore, or nearly so, at the throat of the voe. Then you might have seen such a joyous, boisterous, and universal bustle, as only the love of sport, so deeply implanted in our nature, can possibly inspire. A set of country squires, about to beat for the first woodcocks of the season, were a comparison as petty, in respect to the glee, as in regard to the importance of the object; the battue, upon a strong cover in Ettrick Forest, for the destruction of the foxes; the insurrection of the sportsmen of the Lennox, when one of the duke's deer gets out from Inch-Mirran; nay, the joyous rally of the fox-chase itself, with all its blithe accompaniments of bound and horn, fall infinitely short of the animation with which the gallant sons of Thule set off to encounter the monster, whom the sea had sent for their amusement at so opportune a conjuncture.

The multifarious stores of Burgh-Westra were rummaged hastily for all sorts of arms, which could be used on such an occasion. Harpoons, swords, pikes, and halberts, fell to the lot of some; others contented themselves with hay-forks, spits, and whatever else could be found, that was at once long and sharp. Thus hastily equipped, one division, under the command of Captain Cleveland, hastened to man the boats which lay in the little haven, while the rest of the party hurried by land to the scene of action.

Poor Triptolemus was interrupted in a plan, which he too had formed against the patience of the Zetlanders, and which was to have consisted in a lec-

ture upon the agriculture, and the capabilities of that country, by this sudden hubbub, which put an end at once to Halcro's poetry, and to his no less formidable prose. It may be easily imagined, that he took very little interest in the sport which was so suddenly substituted for his lucubrations, and he would not even have deigned to have looked upon the active scene which was about to take place, had he not been stimulated thereto by the exhortations of Mistress Babie. "Pit yoursell forward, man," said that provident person, "pit yoursell forward—wha kens whare a blessing may light?—they say that a' men share and share equals—aquals in the creature's ulzie, and a pint o't wad be worth siller, to light the cruise in the lang dark nights that they speak of. Pit yoursell forward, man—there's a graip to ye—faint heart never wan fair lady—wha kens but what, when it's fresh, it may eat weel enugh and spare butter?"

What zeal was added to Triptolemus's motions, by the prospect of eating fresh train-oil, instead of butter, we know not; but, as better might not be, he brandished the rural implement (a stable-fork) with which he was armed, and went down to wage battle with the whale.

The situation in which the enemy's ill fate had placed him, was particularly favourable to the enterprise of the islanders. A tide of unusual height had carried the animal over a large bar of sand, into the voe or creek in which he was now lying. So soon as he found the water ebbing, he became sensible of his danger, and had made desperate efforts to get over the shallow water, where the waves broke on the bar; but hitherto he had rather injured than mended his condition, having got himself partly aground, and lying therefore particularly exposed to the meditated attack. At this moment the enemy came down upon him. The front ranks consisted of the young and hardy, armed in the miscellaneous manner we have described; while, to witness and animate their efforts, the young women, and the elderly persons of both sexes, took their place among the rocks, which overhung the scene of action.

As the boats had to double a little headland, ere they opened the mouth of the voe, those who came by land to the shores of the inlet, had time to make the necessary reconnoissances upon the force and situation of the enemy, on whom they were about to commence a simultaneous attack by land and sea.

This duty, the stout-hearted and experienced general would entrust to no eyes but his own; and, indeed, his external appearance, and his sage conduct, rendered him alike qualified for the command which he enjoyed. His gold-laced hat was exchanged for a bear-skin cap, his suit of blue broad-cloth, with its scarlet lining, and loops, and frogs of bullion, had given place to a red flannel jacket, with buttons of black horn, over which he wore a seal-skin shirt curiously seamed and plaited on the bosom, such as are used by the Esquimaux, and sometimes by the Greenland whale-fishers. Sea-boots of a formidable size completed his dress, and in his hand he held a large whaling-knife, which he brandished, as if impatient to employ it in the operation of flinching the huge animal which lay before them,—the act of separating, that is, its flesh from its bones. Upon

closer examination, however, he was obliged to confess, that the sport to which he had conducted his friends, however much it corresponded with the magnificent scale of his hospitality, was likely to be attended with its own peculiar dangers and difficulties.

The animal, upwards of sixty feet in length, was lying perfectly still, in a deep part of the voe into which it had weltered, and where it seemed to await the return of tide, of which it was probably assured by instinct. A council of experienced harpooners was instantly called, and it was agreed that an effort should be made to noose the tail of this torpid leviathan, by casting a cable around it, to be made fast by anchors to the shore, and thus to secure against his escape, in case the tide should make before they were able to dispatch him. Three boats were destined to this delicate piece of service, one of which the udaller himself proposed to command, while Cleveland and Mertoun were to direct the two others. This being decided, they sat down on the strand, waiting with impatience, until the naval part of the force should arrive in the voe. It was during this interval, that Triptolemus Yellowley, after measuring with his eyes the extraordinary size of the whale, observed, that in his poor mind, "A wain with six owsen, or with sixty owsen either, if they were the owsen of the country, could not drag siccan a huge creature from the water where it was now lying, to the sea-beach."

Trifling as this remark may seem to the reader, it was connected with a subject which always fired the blood of the old udaller, who, glancing upon Triptolemus a quick and stern look, asked him what the devil it signified, supposing a hundred oxen could not drag the whale upon the beach? Mr Yellowley, though not much liking the tone with which the question was put, felt that his dignity and his profit compelled him to answer as follows:—"Nay, sir—you know yoursell, Maister Magnus Troil, and every one knows that knows anything, that whales of siccan size as may not be masterfully dragged on shore by the instrumentality of one wain with six owsen, are the right and property of the admiral, who is at this time the same noble lord who is moreover chamberlain of these isles."

"And I tell you, Mr Triptolemus Yellowley," said the udaller, "as I would tell your master if he were here, that every man who risks his life to bring that fish ashore, shall have an equal share and partition, according to our ancient and loveable Norse custom and wont; nay, if there is so much as a woman looking on, that will but touch the cable, she shall be partner with us; ay, and more than all that, if she will but say there is a reason for it, we will assign a portion to the babe that is unborn."

The strict principle of equity, which dictated this last arrangement, occasioned laughter among the men, and some slight confusion among the women. The factor, however, thought it shame to be so easily daunted. "*Suum cuique tribuito*," said he; "I will stand for my lord's right and my own."

"Will you?" replied Magnus; "then, by the martyr's bones, you shall have no law of partition but that of God and Saint Olave, which we had before either factor, or treasurer, or admiral, were

heard of—All shall share that lend a hand, and never a one else. So you, Master Factor, shall be busy as well as other folks, and think yourself lucky to share like other folks. Jump into that boat (for the boats had by this time pulled round the head-land), and you, my lads, make way for the factor in the stern-sheets—he shall be the first man this blessed day that shall strike the fish.”

The loud authoritative voice, and the habit of absolute command inferred in the udaller's whole manner, together with the conscious want of favourers and backers amongst the rest of the company, rendered it difficult for Triptolemus to evade compliance, although he was thus about to be placed in a situation equally novel and perilous. He was still, however, hesitating, and attempting an explanation with a voice in which anger was qualified by fear, and both thinly disguised under an attempt to be jocular, and to represent the whole as a jest, when he heard the voice of Babie maundering in his ear,—“Wad he lose his share of the ulzie, and the lang Zetland winter coming on, when the lightest day in December is not so clear as a moonless night in the Mearns?”

This domestic instigation, in addition to those of fear of the udaller, and shame to seem less courageous than others, so inflamed the agriculturist's spirits, that he shook his *grai*p aloft, and entered the boat with the air of Neptune himself, carrying on high his trident.

The three boats destined for this perilous service now approached the dark mass, which lay like an islet in the deepest part of the voe, and suffered them to approach without showing any sign of animation. Silently, and with such precaution as the extreme delicacy of the operation required, the intrepid adventurers, after the failure of their first attempt, and the expenditure of considerable time, succeeded in casting a cable around the body of the torpid monster, and in carrying the ends of it ashore, when an hundred hands were instantly employed in securing them. But ere this was accomplished, the tide began to make fast, and the udaller informed his assistants, that either the fish must be killed, or at least greatly wounded, ere the depth of water on the bar was sufficient to float him; or that he was not unlikely to escape from their joint prowess.

“Wherefore,” said he, “we must set to work, and the factor shall have the honour to make the first throw.”

The valiant Triptolemus caught the word; and it is necessary to say that the patience of the whale, in suffering himself to be noosed without resistance, had abated his terrors, and very much lowered the creature in his opinion. He protested the fish had no more wit, and scarcely more activity, than a black snail; and, influenced by this undue contempt of the adversary, he waited neither for a farther signal, nor a better weapon, nor a more suitable position, but, rising in his energy, hurled his *grai*p with all his force against the unfortunate monster. The boats had not yet retreated from him, to the distance necessary to ensure safety, when this injudicious commencement of the war took place.

Magnus Troil, who had only jested with the factor, and had reserved the launching the first spear

against the whale to some much more skilful hand, had just time to exclaim, “Mind yourselves, lads, or we are all swamped,” when the monster, roused at once from inactivity by the blow of the factor's missile, blew, with a noise resembling the explosion of a steam-engine, a huge shower of water into the air, and at the same time began to lash the waves with its tail in every direction. The boat in which Magnus presided received the shower of brine which the animal spouted aloft; and the adventurous Triptolemus, who had a full share of the immersion, was so much astonished and terrified by the consequences of his own valorous deed, that he tumbled backwards amongst the feet of the people, who, too busy to attend to him, were actively engaged in getting the boat into shoal water, out of the whale's reach. Here he lay for some minutes, trampled on by the feet of the boatmen, until they lay on their oars to bale, when the udaller ordered them to pull to shore, and land this spare hand, who had commenced the fishing so inauspiciously.

While this was doing, the other boats had also pulled off to safer distance, and now, from these as well as from the shore, the unfortunate native of the deep was overwhelmed by all kinds of missiles,—harpoons and spears flew against him on all sides.—guns were fired, and each various means of annoyance plied which could excite him to exhaust his strength in useless rage. When the animal found that he was locked in by shallows on all sides, and became sensible, at the same time, of the strain of the cable on his body, the convulsive efforts which he made to escape, accompanied with sounds resembling deep and loud groans, would have moved the compassion of all but a practised whale-fisher. The repeated showers which he spouted into the air began now to be mingled with blood, and the waves which surrounded him assumed the same crimson appearance. Meantime the attempts of the assailants were redoubled; but Mordaunt Mertoun and Cleveland, in particular, exerted themselves to the uttermost, contending who should display most courage in approaching the monster, so tremendous in its agonies, and should inflict the most deep and deadly wounds upon its huge bulk.

The contest seemed at last pretty well over; for although the animal continued from time to time to make frantic exertions for liberty, yet its strength appeared so much exhausted, that, even with assistance of the tide, which had now risen considerably, it was thought it could scarce extricate itself.

Magnus gave the signal to venture upon the whale more nearly, calling out at the same time, “Close in, lads, she is not half so mad now—Now, Mr Factor, look for a winter's oil for the two lamps at Harfra—Pull close in, lads.”

Ere his orders could be obeyed, the other two boats had anticipated his purpose; and Mordaunt Mertoun, eager to distinguish himself above Cleveland, had with the whole strength he possessed, plunged a half-pike into the body of the animal. But the leviathan, like a nation whose resources appear totally exhausted by previous losses and calamities, collected his whole remaining force for an effort, which proved at once desperate and success-

ful. The wound, last received, had probably reached through his external defences of blubber, and attained some very sensitive part of the system; for he roared aloud, as he sent to the sky a mingled sheet of brine and blood, and, snapping the strong cable like a twig, overset Mertoun's boat with a blow of his tail, shot himself, by a mighty effort, over the bar, upon which the tide had now risen considerably, and made out to sea, carrying with him a whole grove of the implements which had been planted in his body, and leaving behind him, on the waters, a dark-red trace of his course.

"There goes to sea your cruise of oil, Master Yellowley," said Magnus, "and you must consume mutton suet, or go to bed in the dark."

"*Operam et oleum perdidit*," muttered Triptolemus; "but if they catch me whale-fishing again, I will consent that the fish shall swallow me as he did Jonah."

"But where is Mordaunt Mertoun all this while?" exclaimed Claud Halcro; and it was instantly perceived that the youth, who had been stunned when his boat was stove, was unable to swim to shore as the other sailors did, and now floated senseless upon the waves.

We have noticed the strange and inhuman prejudice, which rendered the Zetlanders of that period unwilling to assist those whom they saw in the act of drowning, though that is the calamity to which the islanders are most frequently exposed. Three men, however, soared above this superstition. The first was Claud Halcro, who threw himself from a small rock headlong into the waves, forgetting, as he himself afterwards stated, that he could not swim, and, if possessed of the harp of Arion, had no dolphins in attendance. The first plunge which the poet made in deep water, reminding him of these deficiencies, he was fain to cling to the rock from which he had dived, and was at length glad to regain the shore, at the expense of a ducking.

Magnus Troil, whose honest heart forgot his late coolness towards Mordaunt, when he saw the youth's danger, would instantly have brought him more effectual assistance, but Eric Scambester held him fast.

"Hout, sir—hout," exclaimed that faithful attendant—"Captain Cleveland has a grip of Mr Mordaunt—just let the twa strangers help ilk other, and stand by the upshot. The light of the country is not to be quenched for the like of them. Bide still, sir, I say—Bredness Voe is not a bowl of punch, that a man can be fished out of like a toast with a long spoon."

This sage remonstrance would have been altogether lost upon Magnus, had he not observed that Cleveland had in fact jumped out of the boat, and swum to Mertoun's assistance, and was keeping him afloat till the boat came to the aid of both. So soon as the immediate danger which called so loudly for assistance was thus ended, the honest udaller's desire to render aid terminated also; and recollecting the cause of offence which he had, or thought he had, against Mordaunt Mertoun, he shook off his butler's hold, and turning round scornfully from the beach, called Eric an old fool for supposing that he cared whether the young fellow sank or swam.

Still, however, amid his assumed indifference, Magnus could not help peeping over the heads of the circle, which, surrounding Mordaunt so soon as he was brought on shore, were charitably employed in endeavouring to recal him to life; and he was not able to attain the appearance of absolute unconcern, until the young man sat up on the beach, and showed plainly that the accident had been attended with no material consequences. It was then first that, cursing the assistants for not giving the lad a glass of brandy, he walked sullenly away, as if totally unconcerned in his fate.

The women, always accurate in observing the tell-tale emotions of each other, failed not to remark, that when the sisters of Burgh-Westra saw Mordaunt immersed in the waves, Minna grew as pale as death, while Brenda uttered successive shrieks of terror. But though there were some nods, winks, and hints, that auld acquaintance were not easily forgot, it was, on the whole, candidly admitted, that less than such marks of interest could scarce have been expected, when they saw the companion of their early youth in the act of perishing before their eyes.

Whatever interest Mordaunt's condition excited while it seemed perilous, began to abate as he recovered himself; and when his senses were fully restored, only Claud Halcro, with two or three others, were standing by him. About ten paces off stood Cleveland—his hair and clothes dropping water, and his features wearing so peculiar an expression, as immediately to arrest the attention of Mordaunt. There was a suppressed smile on his cheek, and a look of pride in his eye, that implied liberation from a painful restraint, and something resembling gratified scorn. Claud Halcro hastened to intimate to Mordaunt, that he owed his life to Cleveland; and the youth, rising from the ground, and losing all other feelings in those of gratitude, stepped forward with his hand stretched out, to offer his warmest thanks to his preserver. But he stopped short in surprise, as Cleveland, retreating a pace or two, folded his arms on his breast, and declined to accept his proffered hand. He drew back in turn, and gazed with astonishment at the ungracious manner, and almost insulting look, with which Cleveland, who had formerly rather expressed a frank cordiality, or at least, openness of bearing, now, after having thus rendered him a most important service, chose to receive his thanks.

"It is enough," said Cleveland, observing his surprise, "and it is unnecessary to say more about it. I have paid back my debt, and we are now equal."

"You are more than equal with me, Mr Cleveland," answered Mertoun, "because you endangered your life to do for me what I did for you without the slightest risk;—besides," he added, trying to give the discourse a more pleasant turn, "I have your rifle-gun to boot."

"Cowards only count danger for any point of the game," said Cleveland. "Danger has been my consort for life, and sailed with me on a thousand worse voyages;—and for rifles, I have enough of my own, and you may see, when you will, which can use them best."

There was something in the tone with which this

was said, that struck Mordaunt strongly; it was *niching malicho*, as Hamlet says, and meant mischief. Cleveland saw his surprise, came close up to him, and spoke in a low tone of voice: "Hark ye, my young brother—There is a custom amongst us gentlemen of fortune, that when we follow the same chase, and take the wind out of each other's sails, we think sixty yards of the sea-beach, and a brace of rifles, are no bad way of making our odds even."

"I do not understand, you, Captain Cleveland," said Mordaunt.

"I do not suppose you do,—I did not suppose you would," said the captain; and turning on his heel, with a smile that resembled a sneer, Mordaunt saw him mingle with the guests, and very soon beheld him at the side of Minna, who was talking to him with animated features, that seemed to thank him for his gallant and generous conduct.

"If it were not for Brenda," thought Mordaunt, "I almost wish he had left me in the *voe*, for no one seems to care whether I am alive or dead.—Two rifles and sixty yards of sea-beach—is that what he points at?—It may come,—but not on the day he has saved my life with risk of his own."

While he was thus musing, Eric Scambester was whispering to Halcro, "If these two lads do not do each other a mischief, there is no faith in freits. Master Mordaunt saves Cleveland,—well.—Cleveland, in requital, has turned all the sunbline of Burgh-Westra to his own side of the house; and think what it is to lose favour in such a house as this, where the punch-kettle is never allowed to cool! Well, now that Cleveland in his turn has been such a fool as to fish Mordaunt out of the *voe*, see if he does not give him sour sillocks for stock-fish."

"Pshaw, pshaw!" replied the poet, "that is all old women's fancies, my friend Eric; for what says glorious Dryden—sainted John,—

The yellow gall, that in your bosom floats,
Engenders all these melancholy thoughts."

"Saint John, or Saint James either, may be mistaken in the matter," said Eric; "for I think neither of them lived in Zetland. I only say, that if there is faith in old saws, these two lads will do each other a mischief; and, if they do, I trust it will light on Mordaunt Mertoun."

"And why, Eric Scambester," said Halcro, hastily and angrily, "should you wish ill to that poor young man, that is worth fifty of the other?"

"Let every one roose the ford as he finds it," replied Eric; "Master Mordaunt is all for wan water, like his old dog-fish of a father; now Captain Cleveland, d'ye see, takes his glass, like an honest fellow and a gentleman."

"Rightly reasoned, and in thine own division," said Halcro; and breaking off their conversation, took his way back to Burgh-Westra, to which the guests of Magnus were now returning, discussing as they went, with much animation, the various incidents of their attack upon the whale, and not a little scandalized that it should have baffled all their exertions.

"I hope Captain Donderdrecht of the *Eintracht* of

Rotterdam will never hear of it," said Magnus; "he would swear, *donner* and *blitzein*, we were only fit to fish flounders."

CHAPTER XVIII.

And helter-skelter have I rode to thee,
And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
And golden times, and happy news of price.

Ancient Pistol.

FORTUNE, who seems at times to bear a conscience, owed the hospitable *udaller* some amends, and accordingly repaid to Burgh-Westra the disappointment occasioned by the unsuccessful whale-fishing, by sending thither, on the evening of the day in which that incident happened, no less a person than the *jagger*, or travelling merchant, as he styled himself, Bryce Snailsfoot, who arrived in great pomp, himself on one pony, and his pack of goods, swelled to nearly double its usual size, forming the burden of another, which was led by a bare-headed, bare-legged boy.

As Bryce announced himself the bearer of important news, he was introduced into the dining apartment, where (for that primitive age was no respecter of persons) he was permitted to sit down at a side-table, and amply supplied with provisions and good liquor; while the attentive hospitality of Magnus permitted no questions to be put to him, until, his hunger and thirst appeased, he announced, with the sense of importance attached to distant travels, that he had just yesterday arrived at Lerwick from Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, and would have been here yesterday, but it blew hard off the *Fitful-head*.

"We had no wind here," said Magnus.

"There is somebody has not been sleeping then," said the pedlar, "and her name begins with N; but Heaven is above all."

"But the news from Orkney, Bryce, instead of croaking about a capful of wind?"

"Such news," replied Bryce, "as has not been heard this thirty years—not since Cromwell's time."

"There is not another revolution, is there?" said Halcro; "King James has not come back as blithe as King Charlie did, has he?"

"It's news," replied the pedlar, "that are worth twenty kings, and kingdoms to boot of them; for what good did the evolutions ever do us? and I dare say we have seen a dozen, great and sma'."

"Are any *Indiamen* come north about?" said Magnus Troil.

"Ye are nearer the mark, fowde," said the *jagger*; "but it is nae *Indiaman*, but a gallant armed vessel, choke-full of merchandize, that they part with so easy, that a decent man like mysell can afford to give the country the best pennyworths you ever saw; and that you will say, when I open that pack, for I count to carry it back another sort lighter than when I brought it here."

"Ay, ay, Bryce," said the *udaller*, "you must have had good bargains if you sell cheap; but what ship was it?"

"Cannot justly say—I spoke to nobody but the captain, who was a discreet man; but she had been

down on the Spanish main, for she has silks and satins, and tobacco, I warrant you, and wine, and no lack of sugar, and bonny-wallies baith of silver and gowd, and a bonnie dredging of gold-dust into the bargain."

"What like was she?" said Cleveland, who seemed to give much attention.

"A stout ship," said the itinerant merchant, "schooner-rigged, sails like a dolphin they say, carries twelve guns, and is pierced for twenty."

"Did you hear the captain's name?" said Cleveland, speaking rather lower than his usual tone.

"I just ca'd him the captain," replied Bryce Snailsfoot; "for I make it a rule never to ask questions at them I deal with in the way of trade; for there is many an honest captain, begging your pardon, Captain Cleveland, that does not care to have his name tacked to his title; and as long as we ken what bargains we are making, what signifies it wha we are making them wi', ye ken?"

"Bryce Snailsfoot is a cautious man," said the udaller, laughing; "he knows a fool may ask more questions than a wise man cares to answer."

"I have dealt with the fair traders in my day," replied Snailsfoot, "and I ken nae use in blurting braid out with a man's name at every moment; but I will uphold this gentleman to be a gallant commander—ay, and a kind one too; for every one of his crew is as brave in apparel as himself nearly—the very foremastmen have their silken scarfs; I have seen many a lady wear a warse, and think hersell nae sma' drink—and for siller buttons, and buckles, and the lave of sic vanities, there is nae end of them."

"Idiots!" muttered Cleveland between his teeth: and then added, "I suppose they are often ashore, to show all their bravery to the lasses of Kirkwall?"

"Ne'er a bit of that are they. The captain will scarce let them stir ashore without the boatswain go in the boat—as rough a tarpaulin as ever swab'd a deck—and you may as weel catch a cat without her claws, as him without his cutlass and his double brace of pistols about him; every man stands as much in awe of him as of the commander himsell."

"That must be Hawkins, or the devil," said Cleveland.

"Aweel, captain," replied the jagger, "be he the tane or the tither, or a wee bit o' baith, mind it is you that give him these names, and not I."

"Why, Captain Cleveland," said the udaller, "this may prove the very consort you spoke of."

"They must have had some good luck then, to put them in better plight than when I left them.—Did they speak of having lost their consort, pedlar?"

"In troth did they," said Bryce; "that is, they said something about a partner that had gone down to Davie Jones in these seas."

"And did you tell them what you knew of her?" said the udaller.

"And wha the deevil wad hae been the fule then," said the pedlar, "that I suld say sae? When they ken'd what came of the ship, the next question wad have been about the cargo,—and ye wad not have had me bring down an armed vessel on the coast, to harrie the poor folk about a wheen rags of duds that the sea flung upon their shores?"

"Besides what might have been found in your

own pack, you scoundrel!" said Magnus Troil, an observation which produced a loud laugh. The udaller could not help joining in the hilarity which applauded his jest; but instantly composing his countenance, he said, in an unusually grave tone, "You may laugh, my friends; but this is a matter which brings both a curse and a shame on the country; and till we learn to regard the rights of them that suffer by the winds and waves, we shall deserve to be oppressed and hag-ridden, as we have been and are, by the superior strength of the strangers who rule us."

The company hung their heads at the rebuke of Magnus Troil. Perhaps some, even of the better class, might be conscience-struck on their own account; and all of them were sensible that the appetite for plunder, on the part of the tenants and inferiors, was not at all times restrained with sufficient strictness. But Cleveland made answer gaily, "If these honest fellows be my comrades, I will answer for them that they will never trouble the country about a parcel of chests, hammocks, and such trumpery, that the roost may have washed ashore out of my poor sloop. What signifies to them whether the trash went to Bryce Snailsfoot, or to the bottom, or to the devil? So unbuckle thy pack, Bryce, and show the ladies thy cargo, and perhaps we may see something that will please them."

"It cannot be his consort," said Brenda, in a whisper to her sister; "he would have shown more joy at their appearance."

"It must be the vessel," answered Minna; "I saw his eye glisten at the thought of being again united to the partners of his dangers."

"Perhaps it glistened," said her sister, still apart, "at the thought of leaving Zetland; it is difficult to guess the thought of the heart from the glance of the eye."

"Judge not, at least, unkindly of a friend's thought," said Minna; "and then, Brenda, if you are mistaken, the fault rests not with you."

During this dialogue Bryce Snailsfoot was busied in uncoiling the carefully arranged cordage of his pack, which amounted to six good yards of dressed seal-skin, curiously complicated and secured by all manner of knots and buckles. He was considerably interrupted in the task by the udaller and others, who pressed him with questions respecting the stranger vessel.

"Were the officers often ashore, and how were they received by the people of Kirkwall?" said Magnus Troil.

"Excellently well," answered Bryce Snailsfoot; "and the captain and one or two of his men had been at some of the vanities and dances which went forward in the town; but there had been some word about customs, or king's duties, or the like, and some of the higher folks, that took upon them as magistrates, or the like, had had words with the captain, and he refused to satisfy them; and then it was like he was more coldly looked on, and he spoke of carrying the ship round to Stromness, or the Langhope, for she lay under the guns of the battery at Kirkwall. But he (Bryce) thought she wad bide at Kirkwall till the summer-fair was over, for all that."

"The Orkney gentry," said Magnus Troil, "are always in a hurry to draw the Scotch collar tighter round their own necks. Is it not enough that we must pay *scat* and *wattle*, which were all the public dues under our old Norse government; but must they come over us with king's dues and customs besides? It is the part of an honest man to resist these things. I have done so all my life, and will do so to the end of it."

There was a loud jubilee and shout of applause amongst the guests, who were (some of them at least) better pleased with Magnus Troil's latitudinarian principles with respect to the public revenue (which were extremely natural to those living in so secluded a situation, and subjected to many additional exactions), than they had been with the rigour of his judgment on the subject of wrecked goods. But Minna's inexperienced feelings carried her farther than her father, while she whispered to Brenda, not unheard by Cleveland, that the tame spirit of the Orcadians had missed every chance which late incidents had given to emancipate these islands from the Scottish yoke.

"Why," she said, "should we not, under so many changes as late times have introduced, have seized the opportunity to shake off an allegiance which is not justly due from us, and to return to the protection of Denmark, our parent country? Why should we yet hesitate to do this, but that the gentry of Orkney have mixed families and friendship so much with our invaders, that they have become dead to the throb of the heroic Norse blood, which they derived from their ancestors!"

The latter part of this patriotic speech happened to reach the astonished ears of our friend Triptolemus, who, having a sincere devotion for the protestant succession, and the Revolution established, was surprised into the ejaculation, "As the old cock crows the young cock learns—hen I should say, mistress, and I crave your pardon if I say anything amiss in either gender. But it is a happy country where the father declares against the king's customs, and the daughter against the king's crown; and, in my judgment, it can end in naething but trees and tows."

"Trees are scarce among us," said Magnus; "and for ropes we need them for our rigging, and cannot spare them to be shirt collars."

"And whoever," said the captain, "takes umbrage at what this young lady says, had better keep his ears and tongue for a safer employment than such an adventure."

"Ay, ay," said Triptolemus, "it helps the matter much to speak truths, whilk are as unwelcome to a proud stomach as wet clover to a cow's, in a land where lads are ready to draw the whittle if a lassie but looks awry. But what manners are to be expected in a country where folks call a pleugh-sock a markal?"

"Hark ye, Master Yellowley," said the captain, smiling, "I hope my manners are not among those abuses which you come hither to reform; any experiment on them may be dangerous."

"As well as difficult," said Triptolemus, drily; "but fear nothing, Captain Cleveland, from my remonstrances. My labours regard the men and things

VOL. III.

of the earth, and not the men and things of the sea,—you are not of my element."

"Let us be friends then, old clod-compeller," said the captain.

"Clod-compeller!" said the agriculturist, bethinking himself of the lore of his earlier days; "Clod-compeller, *pro* cloud-compeller, Νεφέλη-γερῆτα Ζεὺς—*Græcum est*,—in which voyage came you by that phrase?"

"I have travelled books as well as seas in my day," said the captain; "but my last voyages have been of a sort to make me forget my early cruizes through classic knowledge.—But come here, Bryce,—hast cast off the lashing?—Come all hands, and let us see if he has aught in his cargo that is worth looking upon."

With a proud, and, at the same time, a wily smile, did the crafty pedlar display a collection of wares far superior to those which usually filled his packages, and, in particular, some stuffs and embroideries, of such beauty and curiosity, fringed, flowered, and worked with such art and magnificence, upon foreign and arabesque patterns, that the sight might have dazzled a far more brilliant company than the simple race of Thule. All beheld and admired, while Mistress Babie Yellowley, holding up her hands, protested it was a sin even to look upon such extravagance, and worse than murder so much as to ask the price of them.

Others, however, were more courageous; and the prices demanded by the merchant, if they were not, as he himself declared, something just more than nothing—short only of an absolute free gift of his wares, were nevertheless so moderate, as to show that he himself must have made an easy acquisition of the goods, judging by the rate at which he offered to part with them. Accordingly, the cheapness of the articles created a rapid sale; for in Zetland, as well as elsewhere, wise folks buy more from the prudential desire to secure a good bargain, than from any real occasion for the purchase. The Lady Glowrowrum bought seven petticoats and twelve stomachers on this sole principle, and other matrons present rivaled her in this sagacious species of economy. The udaller was also a considerable purchaser; but the principal customer for whatever could please the eye of beauty, was the gallant Captain Cleveland, who rummaged the jagger's stores in selecting presents for the ladies of the party, in which Minna and Brenda Troil were especially remembered.

"I fear," said Magnus Troil, "that the young women are to consider these pretty presents as keepsakes, and that all this liberality is only a sure sign we are soon to lose you!"

This question seemed to embarrass him to whom it was put.

"I scarce know," he said, with some hesitation, "whether this vessel is my consort or no—I must take a trip to Kirkwall to make sure of that matter, and then I hope to return to Dunrossness to bid you all farewell."

"In that case," said the udaller, after a moment's pause, "I think I may carry you thither. I should be at the Kirkwall fair, to settle with the merchants I have consigned my fish to, and I have often pro-

mised Minna and Brenda that they should see the fair. Perhaps also your consort, or these strangers, whoever they be, may have some merchandize that will suit me. I love to see my rigging-loft well stocked with goods, almost as much as to see it full of dancers. We will go to Orkney in my own brig, and I can offer you a hammock if you will."

The offer seemed so acceptable to Cleveland, that, after pouring himself forth in thanks, he seemed determined to mark his joy by exhausting Bryce Snailsfoot's treasures in liberality to the company. The contents of a purse of gold were transferred to the jagger, with a facility and indifference on the part of its former owner which argued either the greatest profusion, or consciousness of superior and inexhaustible wealth; so that Babie whispered to her brother, that, "if he could afford to fling away money at this rate, the lad had made a better voyage in a broken ship than all the skippers of Dundee had made in their hails for a twelvemonth past."

But the angry feeling in which she made this remark was much mollified, when Cleveland, whose object it seemed that evening to be to buy golden opinions of all sorts of men, approached her with a garment somewhat resembling in shape the Scottish plaid, but woven of a sort of wool so soft, that it felt to the touch as if it were composed of eider-down. This, he said, was a part of a Spanish lady's dress, called a mantilla; as it would exactly fit the size of Mrs Babie Yellowley, and was very well suited for the fogs of the climate of Zetland, he entreated her to wear it for his sake. The lady, with as much condescending sweetness as her countenance was able to express, not only consented to receive this mark of gallantry, but permitted the donor to arrange the mantilla upon her projecting and bony shoulder-blades, "where," said Claud Halcro, "it hung, for all the world, as if it had been stretched betwixt a couple of cloak-pins."

While the captain was performing this piece of courtesy, much to the entertainment of the company, which, it may be presumed, was his principal object from the beginning, Mordaunt Mertoun made purchase of a small golden chaplet, with the private intention of presenting it to Brenda, when he should find an opportunity. The price was fixed, and the article was laid aside. Claud Halcro also showed some desire of possessing a silver box of antique shape, for depositing tobacco, which he was in the habit of using in considerable quantity. But the bard seldom had current coin in promptitude, and indeed, in his wandering way of life, had little occasion for any; and Bryce, on the other hand, his having been hitherto a ready-money trade, protested, that his very moderate profits upon such rare and choice articles, would not allow of his affording credit to the purchaser. Mordaunt gathered the import of this conversation from the mode in which they whispered together, while the bard seemed to advance a wishful finger towards the box in question, and the cautious pedlar detained it with the weight of his whole hand, as if he had been afraid it would literally make itself wings, and fly into Claud Halcro's pocket. Mordaunt Mertoun at this moment, desirous to gratify an old acquaintance, laid the price of the

box on the table, and said he would not permit Master Halcro to purchase that box, as he had settled in his own mind to make him a present of it.

"I cannot think of robbing you, my dear young friend," said the poet; "but the truth is, that that same box does remind me strangely of glorious John's, out of which I had the honour to take a pinch at Will's Coffee-house, for which I think more highly of my right-hand finger and thumb than any other part of my body; only you must allow me to pay you back the price when my Urkaster stock-fish come to market."

"Settle that as you like betwixt you," said the jagger, taking up Mordaunt's money; "the box is bought and sold."

"And how dare you sell over again," said Captain Cleveland, suddenly interfering, "what you already have sold to me?"

All were surprised at this interjection, which was hastily made, as Cleveland, having turned from Mistress Babie, had become suddenly, and, as it seemed, not without emotion, aware what articles Bryce Snailsfoot was now disposing of. To this short and fierce question the jagger, afraid to contradict a customer of his description, answered only by stammering, that "the Lord knew he meant nae offence."

"How, sir! no offence!" said the seaman, "and dispose of my property?" extending his hand at the same time to the box and chaplet; "restore the young gentleman's money, and learn to keep your course on the meridian of honesty."

The jagger, confused and reluctant, pulled out his leathern pouch to repay to Mordaunt the money he had just deposited in it; but the youth was not to be so satisfied.

"The articles," he said, "were bought and sold—these were your own words, Bryce Snailsfoot, in Master Halcro's hearing; and I will suffer neither you nor any other to deprive me of my property."

"Your property, young man?" said Cleveland; "It is mine,—I spoke to Bryce respecting them an instant before I turned from the table."

"I—I—I had not just heard distinctly," said Bryce, evidently unwilling to offend either party.

"Come, come," said the udaller, "we will have no quarreling about baubles; we shall be summoned presently to the rigging-loft,"—so he used to call the apartment used as a ball-room,— "and we must all go in good humour. The things shall remain with Bryce for to-night, and to-morrow I will myself settle whom they shall belong to."

The laws of the udaller in his own house were absolute as those of the Medes. The two young men, regarding each other with looks of sullen displeasure, drew off in different directions.

It is seldom that the second day of a prolonged festival equals the first. The spirits, as well as the limbs, are jaded, and unequal to the renewed expenditure of animation and exertion; and the dance at Burgh-Westra was sustained with much less mirth than on the preceding evening. It was yet an hour from midnight, when even the reluctant Magnus Troil, after regretting the degeneracy of the times, and wishing he could transfuse into the modern Hialtlanders some of the vigour which still

animated his own frame, found himself compelled to give the signal for general retreat.

Just as this took place, Halcro, leading Mordaunt Mertoun a little aside, said he had a message to him from Captain Cleveland.

"A message!" said Mordaunt, his heart beating somewhat thick as he spoke—"A challenge, I suppose?"

"A challenge!" repeated Halcro; "who ever heard of a challenge in our quiet islands? do you think that I look like a carrier of challenges, and to you of all men living?—I am none of those fighting fools, as glorious John calls them; and it was not quite a message I had to deliver—only thus far,—this Captain Cleveland, I find, hath set his heart upon having these articles you looked at."

"He shall not have them, I swear to you," replied Mordaunt Mertoun.

"Nay, but hear me," said Halcro; "it seems that by the marks or arms that are upon them, he knows that they were formerly his property. Now, were you to give me the box, as you promised, I fairly tell you I should give the man back his own."

"And Brenda might do the like," thought Mordaunt to himself, and instantly replied aloud, "I have thought better of it, my friend. Captain Cleveland shall have the toys he sets such store by, but it is on one sole condition."

"Nay, you will spoil all with your conditions," said Halcro; "for, as glorious John says, conditions are but"—

"Hear me, I say, with patience.—My condition is, that he keeps the toys in exchange for the rifle-gun I accepted from him, which will leave no obligation between us on either side."

"I see where you would be—this is Sebastian and Dorax all over. Well, you may let the jagger know he is to deliver the things to Cleveland—I think he is mad to have them—and I will let Cleveland know the conditions annexed, otherwise honest Bryce might come by two payments instead of one; and I believe his conscience would not choke upon it."

With these words, Halcro went to seek out Cleveland, while Mordaunt, observing Snailsfoot, who, as a sort of privileged person, had thrust himself into the crowd at the bottom of the dancing-room, went up to him, and gave him directions to deliver the disputed articles to Cleveland as soon as he had an opportunity.

"Ye are in the right, Maister Mordaunt," said the jagger; "ye are a prudent and a sensible lad—a calm answer turneth away wrath—and mysell, I sall be willing to please you in ony trifling matters in my sma' way; for, between the udaller of Burgh-Westra and Captain Cleveland, a man is, as it were, atween the de'il and the deep sea; and it was like that the udaller, in the end, would have taken your part in the dispute, for he is a man that loves justice."

"Which apparently you care very little about, Master Snailsfoot," said Mordaunt, "otherwise there could have been no dispute whatsoever, the right being so clearly on my side, if you had pleased to bear witness according to the dictates of truth."

"Maister Mordaunt," said the jagger, "I must own there was, as it were, a colouring or shadow of

justice on your side; but then, the justice that I meddle with, is only justice in the way of trade, to have an ellwand of due length, if it be not something worn out with leaning on it in my lang and painful journeys, and to buy and sell by just weight and measure, twenty-four merks to the lispund; but I have nothing to do, to do justice betwixt man and man, like a fowde or a law-right-man at a lawting lang syne."

"No one asked you to do so, but only to give evidence according to your conscience," replied Mordaunt, not greatly pleased either with the part the jagger had acted during the dispute, or the construction which he seemed to put on his own motives for yielding up the point.

But Bryce Snailsfoot wanted not his answer; "My conscience," he said, "Maister Mordaunt, is as tender as ony man's in my degree; but she is something of a timorsome nature, cannot abide angry folks, and can never speak above her breath, when there is aught of a fray going forward. Indeed, she hath at all times a small and low voice."

"Which you are not much in the habit of listening to," said Mordaunt.

"There is that on your ain breast that proves the contrary," said Bryce, resolutely.

"In my breast?" said Mordaunt, somewhat angrily,— "what know I of you?"

"I said *on* your breast, Maister Mordaunt, and not *in* it. I am sure nae eye that looks on that waist-coat upon your own gallant brisket, but will say, that the merchant who sold such a piece for four dollars had justice and conscience, and a kind heart to a customer to the boot of a' that; sae ye shouldna be sae thrawart wi' me for having spared the breath of my mouth in a fool's quarrel."

"I thrawart!" said Mordaunt; "pooh, you silly man! I have no quarrel with you."

"I am glad of it," said the travelling merchant; "I will quarrel with no man, with my will—least of all with an old customer; and if you will walk by my advice, you will quarrel nane with Captain Cleveland. He is like one of yon cutters and slashers that have come into Kirkwall, that think as little of slicing a man, as we do of flinching a whale—it's their trade to fight, and they live by it; and they have the advantage of the like of you, that only take it up at your own hand, and in the way of pastime when you hae nothing better to do."

The company were now almost all dispersed; and Mordaunt, laughing at the jagger's caution, bade him good night, and went to his own place of repose, which had been assigned to him by Eric Scambester (who acted the part of chamberlain as well as butler), in a small room, or rather closet, in one of the outhouses, furnished for the occasion with the hammock of a sailor.

CHAPTER XIX.

I pass like night from land to land,
 I have strange power of speech;
 So soon as e'er his face I see,
 I know the man that must hear me,
 To him my tale I teach.

COLERIDGE'S *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

THE daughters of Magnus Troil shared the same bed, in a chamber which had been that of their parents before the death of their mother. Magnus, who suffered grievously under that dispensation of Providence, had become disgusted with the apartment. The nuptial chamber was abandoned to the pledges of his bereaved affection, of whom the eldest was at that period only four years old, or thereabouts; and, having been theirs in infancy, continued, though now tricked and adorned according to the best fashion of the islands, and the taste of the lovely sisters themselves, to be their sleeping-room, or, in the old Norse dialect, their bower.

It had been for many years the scene of the most intimate confidence, if that could be called confidence, where, in truth, there was nothing to be confided; where, neither sister had a secret; and where every thought that had birth in the bosom of the one, was, without either hesitation or doubt, confided to the other as spontaneously as it had arisen. But, since Cleveland abode in the mansion of Burgh-Westra, each of the lovely sisters had entertained thoughts which are not lightly or easily communicated, unless she who listens to them has previously assured herself that the confidence will be kindly received. Minna had noticed what other and less interested observers had been unable to perceive, that Cleveland, namely, held a lower rank in Brenda's opinion than in her own; and Brenda, on her side, thought that Minna had hastily and unjustly joined in the prejudices which had been excited against Mordaunt Mertoun in the mind of their father. Each was sensible that she was no longer the same to her sister; and this conviction was a painful addition to other painful apprehensions which they supposed they had to struggle with. Their manner towards each other was, in outward appearances, and in all the little cares by which affection can be expressed, even more assiduously kind than before, as if both, conscious that their internal reserve was a breach of their sisterly union, strove to atone for it by double assiduity in those external marks of affection, which, at other times, when there was nothing to hide, might be omitted without inferring any consequences.

On the night referred to in particular, the sisters felt more especially the decay of the confidence which used to exist betwixt them. The proposed voyage to Kirkwall, and that at the time of the fair, when persons of every degree in these islands repair thither, either for business or amusement, was like to be an important incident in lives usually so simple and uniform as theirs; and, a few months ago, Minna and Brenda would have been awake half the night, anticipating, in their talk with each other, all that was likely to happen on so momentous

an occasion. But now the subject was just mentioned, and suffered to drop, as if the topic was likely to produce difference betwixt them, or to call forth a more open display of their several opinions than either was willing to make to the other.

Yet such was their natural openness and gentleness of disposition, that each sister imputed to herself the fault that there was aught like estrangement existing between them; and when, having finished their devotions, and betaken themselves to their common couch, they folded each other in their arms, and exchanged a sisterly kiss, and a sisterly good-night, they seemed mutually to ask pardon, and to exchange forgiveness, although neither said a word of offence, either offered or received; and both were soon plunged in that light and yet profound repose, which is only enjoyed when sleep sinks down on the eyes of youth and innocence.

On the night to which the story relates, both sisters were visited by dreams, which, though varied by the moods and habits of the sleepers, bore yet a strange general resemblance to each other.

Minna dreamed that she was in one of the most lonely recesses of the beach, called Swartaster, where the incessant operation of the waves, indenting a calcareous rock, has formed a deep halier, which, in the language of the island, means a subterranean cavern, into which the tide ebbs and flows. Many of these run to an extraordinary and unascertained depth underground, and are the safe retreat of cormorants and seals, which it is neither easy nor safe to pursue to their extreme recesses. Among these, this halier of Swartaster was accounted peculiarly inaccessible, and shunned both by fowlers and by seamen, on account of sharp angles and turnings in the cave itself, as well as the sunken rocks which rendered it very dangerous for skiffs or boats to advance far into it, especially if there was the usual swell of an island tide. From the dark-browed mouth of this cavern, it seemed to Minna, in her dream, that she beheld a mermaid issue, not in the classical dress of a nereid, as in Claud Halcro's masque of the preceding evening, but with comb and glass in hand according to popular belief, and lashing the waves with that long scaly train, which, in the traditions of the country, forms so frightful a contrast with the fair face, long tresses, and displayed bosom, of a human and earthly female, of surpassing beauty. She seemed to beckon to Minna, while her wild notes rang sadly in her ear, and denounced, in prophetic sounds, calamity and woe.

The vision of Brenda was of a different description, yet equally melancholy. She sat, as she thought, in her favourite bower, surrounded by her father and a party of his most beloved friends, amongst whom Mordaunt Mertoun was not forgotten. She was required to sing; and she strove to entertain them with a lively song, in which she was accounted eminently successful, and which she sung with such simple, yet natural humour, as seldom failed to produce shouts of laughter and applause, while all who could, or who could not sing, were irresistibly compelled to lend their voices to the chorus. But, on this occasion, it seemed as if her own voice refused all its usual duty, and as if, while

she felt herself unable to express the words of the well-known air, it assumed, in her own despite, the deep tones and wild and melancholy notes of Norna of Fitful-head, for the purpose of chaunting some wild Runic rhyme, resembling those sung by the heathen priests of old, when the victim (too often human) was bound to the fatal altar of Odin or of Thor.

At length the two sisters at once started from sleep, and, uttering a low scream of fear, clasped themselves in each other's arms. For their fancy had not altogether played them false; the sounds, which had suggested their dreams, were real, and sung within their apartment. They knew the voice well, indeed, and yet, knowing to whom it belonged, their surprise and fear were scarce the less, when they saw the well-known Norna of Fitful-head, seated by the chimney of the apartment, which, during the summer season, contained an iron lamp well trimmed, and, in winter, a fire of wood or of turf.

She was wrapped in her long and ample garment of wadmaal, and moved her body slowly to and fro over the pale flame of the lamp, as she sung lines to the following purpose, in a slow, sad, and almost an unearthly accent:—

"For leagues along the watery way,
Through gulph and stream my course has been;
The billows know my Runic lay,
And smooth their crests to silent green.

"The billows know my Runic lay,—
The gulph grows smooth, the stream is still;
But human hearts, more wild than they,
Know but the rule of wayward will.

"One hour is mine, in all the year,
To tell my woes, and one alone;
When gleams this magic lamp, 't is here,—
When dies the mystic light, 't is gone.

"Daughters of northern Magnus, hail,
The lamp is lit, the flame is clear,—
To you I come to tell my tale,
Awake, arise, my tale to hear!"—

Norna was well known to the daughters of Troil, but it was not without emotion, although varied by their respective dispositions, that they beheld her so unexpectedly, and at such an hour. Their opinions with respect to the supernatural attributes to which she pretended, were extremely different.

Minna, with an unusual intensity of imagination, although superior in talent to her sister, was more apt to listen to, and delight in, every tale of wonder, and was at all times more willing to admit impressions which gave her fancy scope and exercise, without minutely examining their reality. Brenda, on the other hand, had, in her gaiety, a slight propensity to satire, and was often tempted to laugh at the very circumstances upon which Minna founded her imaginative dreams; and, like all who love the ludicrous, she did not really suffer herself to be imposed upon, or overawed, by pompous pretensions of any kind whatever. But, as her nerves were weaker and more irritable than those of her sister, she often paid involuntary homage, by her fears, to ideas which her reason disowned; and hence Claud

Halcro used to say, in reference to many of the traditional superstitions around Burgh-Westra, that Minna believed them without trembling, and that Brenda trembled without believing them. In our own more enlightened days, there are few whose undoubting mind and native courage have not felt Minna's high-wrought tone of enthusiasm; and perhaps still fewer, who have not, at one time or other, felt, like Brenda, their nerves confess the influence of terrors which their reason disowned and despised.

Under the influence of such different feelings, Minna, when the first moment of surprise was over, prepared to spring from her bed, and go to greet Norna, who, she doubted not, had come on some errand fraught with fate; while Brenda, who only beheld in her a woman partially deranged in her understanding, and who yet, from the extravagance of her claims, regarded her as an undefined object of awe, or rather terror, detained her sister by an eager and terrified grasp, while she whispered in her ear an eager entreaty that she would call for assistance. But the soul of Minna was too highly wrought up by the crisis at which her fate seemed to have arrived, to permit her to follow the dictates of her sister's fears; and, extricating herself from Brenda's hold, she hastily threw on a loose night-gown, and, stepping boldly across the apartment, while her heart throbbed rather with high excitement than with fear, she thus addressed her singular visitor:

"Norna, if your mission regards us, as your words seem to express, there is one of us, at least, who will receive its import with reverence, but without fear."

"Norna, dear Norna," said the tremulous voice of Brenda,—who, feeling no safety in the bed after Minna had quitted it, had followed her, as fugitives crowd into the rear of an advancing army, because they dare not remain behind, and who now stood half concealed by her sister, and holding fast by the skirts of her gown,—“Norna, dear Norna,” said she, “whatever you are to say, let it be to-morrow. I will call Euphane Fea the housekeeper, and she will find you a bed for the night.”

“No bed for me,” said their nocturnal visitor; “no closing of the eyes for me; they have watched as shelf and stack appeared and disappeared betwixt Burgh-Westra and Orkney—they have seen the Man of Hoy sink into the sea, and the Peak of Hengcliff arise from it, and yet they have not tasted of slumber; nor must they slumber now till my task is ended. Sit down, then, Minna and thou, silly trembler, sit down, while I trim my lamp—Don your clothes, for the tale is long, and ere 'tis done, ye will shiver with worse than cold.”

“For Heaven's sake, then, put it off till day-light, dear Norna,” said Brenda; “the dawn cannot be far distant; and if you are to tell us of anything frightful, let it be by day-light, and not by the dim glimmer of that blue lamp.”

“Patience, fool!” said the enthusiast. “Not by day-light should Norna tell a tale that might blot the sun out of heaven, and blight the hopes of the hundred boats that will leave this shore ere noon, to commence their deep-sea fishing,—ay, and of the hundred families that will await their return. The

demon, whom the sounds will not fail to awaken, must shake his dark wings over a shipless and a boatless sea, as he rushes from his mountain to drink the accents of horror he loves so well to listen to."

"Have pity on Brenda's fears, good Norna," said the elder sister, "and at least postpone this frightful communication to another place and hour."

"Maiden, no!" replied Norna, sternly; "it must be told while that lamp yet burns. Mine is no daylight tale—by that lamp it must be told, which is framed out of the gibbet-irons of the cruel Lord of Wodensvoe, who murdered his brother; and has for its nourishment—enough that it never came either from the fish or from the fruit!—See, it waxes dim and dimmer, nor must my tale last longer than its flame endureth. Sit ye down there, while I sit here opposite to you, and place the lamp betwixt us; for within the sphere of its light the demon dares not venture."

The sisters obeyed, Minna casting a slow, awe-struck, yet determined look all around, as if to see the being, who, according to the doubtful words of Norna, hovered in their neighbourhood; while Brenda's fears were mingled with some share both of anger and of impatience. Norna paid no attention to either, but began her story in the following words:—

"Ye know, my daughters, that your blood is allied to mine, but in what degree ye know not; for there was early hostility betwixt your grandsire and him who had the misfortune to call me daughter.—Let me term him by his christian name of Erland, for that which marks our relation I dare not bestow. Your grandsire Olave was the brother of Erland. But when the wide udal possessions of their father Rolfe Troil, the most rich and well estated of any who descended from the old Norse stock, were divided betwixt the brothers, the fowde gave to Erland his father's lands in Orkney, and reserved for Olave those of Hialtland. Discord arose between the brethren; for Erland held that he was wronged, and when the lawting,* with the raddmen and law-right-men, confirmed the division, he went in wrath to Orkney, cursing Hialtland and its inhabitants—cursing his brother and his blood.

"But the love of the rock and of the mountain still wrought on Erland's mind, and he fixed his dwelling not on the soft hills of Ophir, or the green plains of Gramesey, but in the wild and mountainous Isle of Hoy, whose summit rises to the sky like the cliffs of Foulah and of Feroe.† He knew,—that unhappy Erland,—whatever of legendary lore scald and bard had left behind them; and to teach me that knowledge, which was to cost us both so dear, was the chief occupation of his old age. I learned to visit each lonely barrow—each lofty cairn—to tell

* The lawting was the Comitia, or Supreme Court of the country, being retained both in Orkney and Zetland, and presenting, in their constitution, the rude origin of a parliament.

† And from which hill of Hoy, at midsummer, the sun may be seen, it is said, at midnight. So says the geographer Bleau, although, according to Dr Wallace, it cannot be the true body of the sun which is visible, but only its image refracted through some watery cloud upon the horizon.

its appropriate tale, and to soothe with rhymes in his praise the spirit of the stern warrior who dwelt within. I knew where the sacrifices were made of yore to Thor and to Odin, on what stones the blood of the victims flowed—where stood the dark-browed priest—where the crested chiefs, who consulted the will of the idol—where the more distant crowd of inferior worshippers, who looked on in awe or terror. The places most shunned by the timid peasants, had no terrors for me; I dared walk in the fairy circle, and sleep by the magic spring.

"But, for my misfortune, I was chiefly fond to linger about the Dwarfie Stone, as it is called, a relic of antiquity, which strangers look on with curiosity, and the natives with awe. It is a huge fragment of a rock, which lies in a broken and rude valley, full of stones and precipices, in the recesses of the Ward-hill of Hoy. The inside of the rock has two couches, hewn by no earthly hand, and having a small passage between them. The door-way is now open to the weather; but beside it lies a large stone, which, adapted to grooves, still visible in the entrance, once had served to open and to close this extraordinary dwelling, which Trolld, a dwarf famous in the northern sagas, is said to have framed for his own favourite residence. The lonely shepherd avoids the place, for at sun-rise, high noon, or sunset, the mis-shapen form of the necromantic owner may sometimes still be seen sitting by the Dwarfie Stone.* I feared not the apparition, for, Minna, my heart was as bold, and my hand was as innocent, as yours. In my childish courage, I was even but too presumptuous, and the thirst after things unattainable led me, like our primitive mother, to desire increase of knowledge, even by prohibited means. I longed to possess the power of the Voluspa and divining women of our ancient race; to wield, like them, command over the elements; and to summon the ghosts of deceased heroes from their caverns, that they might recite their daring deeds, and impart to me their hidden treasures. Often when watching by the Dwarfie Stone, with mine eyes fixed on the Ward-hill, which rises above that gloomy valley, I have distinguished, among the dark rocks, that wonderful carbuncle, which gleams ruddy as a furnace to them who view it from beneath, but has ever become invisible to him whose daring foot has scaled the precipices from which it darts its splendour.†

* Dr Wallace gives the following account of this curiosity: "There is in Hoy, lying betwixt two hills, a stone called the Dwarfie Stone, which is one entire rock, thirty-six feet long, eighteen feet broad, nine feet thick, hollowed within by the hands of some mason (for the prints of the irons are to be seen on it to this day), with a square hole of about two feet high for the entry, and a stone proportionable standing before it for a door. Within, at one end, is a bed, excellently cut out of the stone, wherein two men may lie together, at their full length; at the other end is a couch, and in the middle, a hearth for a fire, with a hole cut above for the chimney. It stands in a desolate melancholy place, more than a mile from any inhabited house, and all the ground about is nothing but high heath and heather. It is thought to have been the residence of some melancholy hermit."—*Description of the Islands of Orkney*, p. 51, 12mo., 1700.

† "At the west end of this stone (i. e. the Dwarfie Stone),

My vain and youthful bosom burned to investigate these and an hundred other mysteries, which the sagas that I perused, or learned from Erland, rather indicated than explained; and in my daring mood, I called on the Lord of the Dwarfie Stone to aid me in attaining knowledge inaccessible to mere mortals."

"And the evil spirit heard your summons," said Minna, her blood curdling as she listened.

"Hush," said Norna, lowering her voice, "vex him not with reproach—he is with us—he hears us even now."

Brenda started from her seat.—"I will to Euphane Fea's chamber," she said, "and leave you, Minna and Norna, to finish your stories of hobgoblins and of dwarfs at your own leisure; I care not for them at any time, but I will not endure them at midnight, and by this pale lamp-light."

She was accordingly in the act of leaving the room, when her sister detained her.

"Is this the courage," she said, "of her, that disbelieves whatever the history of our fathers tells us of supernatural prodigy! What Norna has to tell concerns the fate, perhaps, of our father and his house;—if I can listen to it, trusting that God and my innocence will protect me from all that is of malign influence, you, Brenda, who believe not in such influence, have surely no cause to tremble. Credit me, that for the guiltless there is no fear."

"There may be no danger," said Brenda, unable to suppress her natural turn for humour, "but, as the old jest-book says, there is much fear. However, Minna, I will stay with you;—the rather," she added, in a whisper, "that I am loth to leave you alone with this frightful woman, and that I have a dark staircase and long passage betwixt and Euphane Fea, else I would have her here ere I were five minutes older."

"Call no one hither, maiden, upon peril of thy life," said Norna, "and interrupt not my tale again; for it cannot and must not be told after that charmed light has ceased to burn."

"And I thank Heaven," said Brenda to herself, "that the oil burns low in the cruise! I am sorely tempted to lend it a puff, but then Norna would be alone with us in the dark, and that would be worse."

So saying, she submitted to her fate, and sat down, determined to listen with all the equanimity which she could command to the remaining part of Norna's tale, which went on as follows:—

"It happened on a hot summer day, and just about the hour of noon," continued Norna, "as I sat by the Dwarfie Stone, with my eyes fixed on the Ward-hill, whence the mysterious and ever-burning car-

stands an exceeding high mountain of a steep ascent, called the Ward-hill of Hoy, near the top of which, in the months of May, June, and July, about midnight, is seen something that shines and sparkles admirably, and which is often seen a great way off. It hath shined more brightly before than it does now, and though many have climbed up the hill, and attempted to search for it, yet they could find nothing. The vulgar talk of it as some enchanted carbuncle, but I take it rather to be some water sliding down the face of a smooth rock, which, when the sun, at such a time, shines upon it, the reflection causeth that admirable splendour."

Description of Orkney, p. 52.

buncle shed its rays more brightly than usual, and repined in my heart at the restricted bounds of human knowledge, that at length I could not help exclaiming, in the words of an ancient saga,

Dwellers of the mountain, rise,
Trolld the powerful, Haims the wise!
Ye who taught weak woman's tongue
Words that sway the wise and strong,—
Ye who taught weak woman's hand
How to wield the magic wand,
And wake the gales on Foulah's steep,
Or lull wild Sumburgh's waves to sleep!—
Still are ye yet?—Not yours the power
Ye knew in Odin's mightier hour.
What are ye now but empty names,
Powerful Trolld, sagacious Haims,
That, lightly spoken, and lightly heard,
Float on the air like thistle's beard?

"I had scarce uttered these words," continued Norna, "ere the sky, which had been till then unusually clear, grew so suddenly dark around me, that it seemed more like midnight than noon. A single flash of lightning showed me at once the desolate landscape of heath, morass, mountain, and precipice, which lay around; a single clap of thunder awakened all the echoes of the Ward-hill, which continued so long to repeat the sound, that it seemed some rock, rent by the thunderbolt from the summit, was rolling over cliff and precipice into the valley. Immediately after, fell a burst of rain so precipitous, that I was fain to shun its pelting by creeping into the interior of the mysterious stone.

"I seated myself on the larger stone couch, which is cut at the farther end of the cavity, and, with my eyes fixed on the smaller bed, wearied myself with conjectures respecting the origin and purpose of my singular place of refuge. Had it been really the work of that powerful Trolld, to whom the poetry of the scalds referred it? Or was it the tomb of some Scandinavian chief, interred with his arms and his wealth, perhaps also with his immolated wife, that what he loved best in life might not in death be divided from him? Or was it the abode of penance, chosen by some devoted anchorite of later days? Or the idle work of some wandering mechanic, whom chance, and whim, and leisure, had thrust upon such an undertaking? I tell you the thoughts that then floated through my brain, that ye may know that what ensued was not the vision of a prejudiced or prepossessed imagination, but an apparition, as certain as it was awful.

"Sleep had gradually crept on me, amidst my lucubrations, when I was startled from my slumbers by a second clap of thunder; and, when I awoke, I saw, through the dim light which the upper aperture admitted, the unshapely and indistinct form of Trolld the dwarf, seated opposite to me on the lesser couch, which his square and mis-shapen bulk seemed absolutely to fill up. I was startled, but not affrighted; for the blood of the ancient race of Lochlin was warm in my veins. He spoke; and his words were of Norse, so old, that few, save my father, or I myself, could have comprehended their import,—such language as was spoken in these islands ere Olave planted the cross on the ruins of heathenism. His meaning was dark also and obscure, like that

which the pagan priests were wont to deliver, in the name of their idols, to the tribes that assembled at the Helgafels.* This was the import,—

' A thousand winters dark have flown,
Since o'er the threshold of my stone
A votaress pass'd, my power to own.
Visitor bold
Of the mansion of Trolld,
Maiden haughty of heart,
Who hast hither presumed,—
Ungifted, undoom'd,
Thou shalt not depart;
The power thou dost covet
O'er tempest and wave,
Shall be thine, thou proud maiden,
By beach and by cave,—
By stack† and by skerry,§ by noup** and by voe,††
By air§§ and by wick,*** and by halier††† and gio,§§§
And by every wild shore which the northern winds know,
And the northern tides lave.
But though this shall be given thee, thou desperately
brave,
I doom thee that never the gift thou shalt have,
Till thou reave thy life's giver
Of the gift which he gave.'

"I answered him in nearly the same strain; for the spirit of the ancient scalds of our race was upon me, and, far from fearing the phantom, with whom I sat cooped within so narrow a space, I felt the impulse of that high courage which thrust the ancient champions and druidesses upon contests with the invisible world, when they thought that the earth no longer contained enemies worthy to be subdued by them. Therefore did I answer him thus:—

Dark are thy words, and severe,
Thou dweller in the stone;
But trembling and fear
To her are unknown,
Who hath sought thee here,
In thy dwelling lone.
Come what comes soever,
The worst I can endure;
Life is but a short fever,
And death is the cure.

"The demon scowled at me, as if at once incensed and overawed; and then, coiling himself up in a thick and sulphureous vapour, he disappeared from his place. I did not, till that moment, feel the influence of fright, but then it seized me. I rushed into the open air, where the tempest had passed away, and all was pure and serene. After a moment's breathless pause, I hastened home, musing by the way on the words of the phantom, which I could not, as often happens, recal so distinctly to

* Or consecrated mountain, used by the Scandinavian priests, for the purposes of their idol-worship.

† *Stack*—A precipitous rock, rising out of the sea.

§ *Skerry*—A flat insulated rock, not subject to the overflowing of the sea.

** *Noup*—A round-headed eminence.

†† *Voe*—A creek, or inlet of the sea.

§§ *Air*—An open sea-beach.

*** *Wick*—An open bay.

††† *Halier*—A cavern into which the tide flows.

§§§ *Gio*—A deep ravine which admits the sea.

memory at the time, as I have been since able to do.

"It may seem strange that such an apparition should, in time, have glided from my mind, like a vision of the night—but so it was. I brought myself to believe it the work of fancy—I thought I had lived too much in solitude, and had given way too much to the feelings inspired by my favourite studies. I abandoned them for a time, and I mixed with the youth of my age. I was upon a visit at Kirkwall when I learned to know your father, whom business had brought thither. He easily found access to the relation with whom I lived, who was anxious to compose, if possible, the feud which divided our families. Your father, maidens, has been rather hardened than changed by years—he had the same manly form, the same old Norse frankness of manner and of heart, the same upright courage and honesty of disposition, with more of the gentle ingenuousness of youth, an eager desire to please, a willingness to be pleased, and a vivacity of spirits which survives not our early years. But though he was thus worthy of love, and though Erland wrote to me, authorizing his attachment, there was another—a stranger, Minna, a fatal stranger—full of arts unknown to us, and graces, which to the plain manners of your father were unknown. Yes, he walked, indeed, amongst us like a being of another and of a superior race.—Ye look on me as if it were strange that I should have attractions for such a lover; but I present nothing that can remind you that Norna of Fitful-head was once admired and loved as Ulla Troil—the change betwixt the animated body and the corpse after decease, is scarce more awful and absolute than I have sustained, while I yet linger on earth. Look on me, maidens—look on me by this glimmering light—Can ye believe that these haggard and weather-wasted features—these eyes, which have been almost converted to stone, by looking upon sights of terror—these locks, that, mingled with grey, now stream out, the shattered pennons of a sinking vessel—that these, and she to whom they belong, could once be the objects of fond affection?—But the waning lamp sinks fast, and let it sink while I tell my infamy.—We loved in secret, we met in secret, till I gave the last proof of fatal and of guilty passion!—And now beam out, thou magic glimmer—shine out a little space, thou flame so powerful even in thy feebleness—bid him who hovers near us, keep his dark pinions aloof from the circle thou dost illuminate—live but a little till the worst be told, and then sink when thou wilt into darkness, as black as my guilt and sorrow!"

While she spoke thus, she drew together the remaining nutriment of the lamp, and trimmed its decaying flame; then again, with a hollow voice, and in broken sentences, pursued her narrative.

"I must waste little time in words. My love was discovered, but not my guilt. Erland came to Pomona in anger, and transported me to our solitary dwelling in Hoy. He commanded me to see my lover no more, and to receive Magnus, in whom he was willing to forgive the offences of his father, as my future husband. Alas! I no longer deserved his attachment—my only wish was to escape from my father's dwelling, to conceal my shame in my lover's arms. Let me do him justice—he was faith-

ful—too, too faithful—his perfidy would have bereft me of my senses; but the fatal consequences of his fidelity have done me a tenfold injury.”

She paused, and then resumed with the wild tone of insanity, “It has made me the powerful and the despairing sovereign of the seas and winds!”

She paused a second time after this wild exclamation, and resumed her narrative in a more composed manner.

“My lover came in secret to Hoy, to concert measures for my flight, and I agreed to meet him, that we might fix the time when his vessel should come into the Sound. I left the house at midnight.”

Here she appeared to gasp with agony, and went on with her tale by broken and interrupted sentences. “I left the house at midnight—I had to pass my father’s door, and I perceived it was open—I thought he watched us, and, that the sound of my steps might not break his slumbers, I closed the fatal door—a light and trivial action—but, God in Heaven! what were the consequences!—At morn, the room was full of suffocating vapour—my father was dead—dead through my act—dead through my disobedience—dead through my infamy! All that follows is mist and darkness—a choking, suffocating, stifling mist envelopes all that I said and did, all that was said and done, until I became assured that my doom was accomplished, and walked forth the calm and terrible being you now behold me—the queen of the elements—the sharer in the power of those beings to whom man and his passions give such sport as the tortures of the dog-fish afford the fisherman, when he pierces his eyes with thorns, and turns him once more into his native element, to traverse the waves in blindness and agony. No, maidens, she whom you see before you is impassive to the follies of which your minds are the sport. I am she that bereaved the giver of the gift of life which he gave me—the dark saying has been interpreted by my deed, and I am taken from humanity, to be something pre-eminently powerful, pre-eminently wretched!”

As she spoke thus, the light, which had been long quivering, leaped high for an instant, and seemed about to expire, when Norna, interrupting herself, said hastily, “No more now—he comes—he comes—Enough that ye know me, and the right I have to advise and command you.—Approach now, proud spirit! if thou wilt.”

So saying, she extinguished the lamp, and passed out of the apartment with her usual loftiness of step, as Minna could observe from its measured cadence.

CHAPTER XX.

Is all the counsel that we two have shared—
The sisters’ vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us—O, and is all forgot?

Midsummer Night’s Dream.

THE attention of Minna was powerfully arrested by this tale of terror, which accorded with and explained many broken hints respecting Norna, which she had heard from her father and other near relations, and she was for a time so lost in surprise

VOL. III.

not unmingled with horror, that she did not even attempt to speak to her sister Brenda. When, at length, she called her by her name, she received no answer, and, on touching her hand, she found it cold as ice. Alarmed to the uttermost, she threw open the lattice and the window-shutters, and admitted at once the free air and the pale glimmer of the hyperborean summer night. She then became sensible that her sister was in a swoon. All thoughts concerning Norna, her frightful tale, and her mysterious connexion with the invisible world, at once vanished from Minna’s thoughts, and she hastily ran to the apartment of the old housekeeper, to summon her aid, without reflecting for a moment what sights she might encounter in the long dark passages which she had to traverse.

The old woman hastened to Brenda’s assistance, and instantly applied such remedies as her experience suggested; but the poor girl’s nervous system had been so much agitated by the horrible tale she had just heard, that, when recovered from her swoon, her utmost endeavours to compose her mind could not prevent her falling into a hysterical fit of some duration. This also was subdued by the experience of old Euphane Fea, who was well versed in all the simple pharmacy used by the natives of Zetland, and who, after administering a composing draught, distilled from simples and wild flowers, at length saw her patient resigned to sleep. Minna stretched herself beside her sister, kissed her cheek, and courted slumber in her turn; but the more she invoked it, the farther it seemed to fly from her eyelids; and if at times she was disposed to sink into repose, the voice of the involuntary parricide seemed again to sound in her ears, and startled her into consciousness.

The early morning hour at which they were accustomed to rise, found the state of the sisters different from what might have been expected. A sound sleep had restored the spirit of Brenda’s lightsome eye, and the rose on her laughing cheek; the transient indisposition of the preceding night having left as little trouble on her look, as the fantastic terrors of Norna’s tale had been able to impress on her imagination. The looks of Minna, on the contrary, were melancholy, downcast, and apparently exhausted by watching and anxiety. They said at first little to each other, as if afraid of touching a subject so fraught with emotion as the scene of the preceding night. It was not until they had performed together their devotions, as usual, that Brenda, while lacing her sister’s bodice (for they rendered the services of the toilet to each other reciprocally), became aware of the paleness of her sister’s looks; and having ascertained, by a glance at the mirror, that her own did not wear the same dejection, she kissed Minna’s cheek, and said affectionately, “Claud Halcro was right, my dearest sister, when his poetical folly gave us these names of Night and Day.”

“And wherefore should you say so now?” said Minna.

“Because we each are bravest in the season that we take our name from: I was frightened well nigh to death, by hearing those things last night, which you endured with courageous firmness; and now, when it is broad light, I can think of them with

composure, while you look as pale as a spirit who is surprised by sun-rise."

"You are lucky, Brenda," said her sister, gravely, "who can so soon forget such a tale of wonder and horror."

"The horror," said Brenda, "is never to be forgotten, unless one could hope that the unfortunate woman's excited imagination, which shows itself so active in conjuring up apparitions, may have fixed on her an imaginary crime."

"You believe nothing, then," said Minna, "of her interview at the Dwarfie Stone, that wondrous place, of which so many tales are told, and which, for so many centuries, has been revered as the work of a demon, and as his abode?"

"I believe," said Brenda, "that our unhappy relative is no impostor,—and therefore I believe that she was at the Dwarfie Stone during a thunder-storm, that she sought shelter in it, and that, during a swoon, or during sleep, perhaps, some dream visited her, concerned with the popular traditions, with which she was so conversant; but I cannot easily believe more."

"And yet the event," said Minna, "corresponded to the dark intimations of the vision."

"Pardon me," said Brenda, "I rather think the dream would never have been put into shape, or perhaps remembered at all, but for the event. She told us herself she had nearly forgot the vision, till after her father's dreadful death,—and who shall warrant how much of what she then supposed herself to remember was not the creation of her own fancy, disordered as it naturally was by the horrid accident? Had she really seen and conversed with a necromantic dwarf, she was like to remember the conversation long enough—at least I am sure I should."

"Brenda," replied Minna, "you have heard the good minister of the Cross Kirk say, that human wisdom was worse than folly, when it was applied to mysteries beyond its comprehension; and that if we believed no more than we could understand, we should resist the evidence of our senses, which presented us, at every turn, circumstances as certain as they were unintelligible."

"You are too learned yourself, sister," answered Brenda, "to need the assistance of the good minister of Cross Kirk; but I think his doctrine only related to the mysteries of our religion, which it is our duty to receive without investigation or doubt—but in things occurring in common life, as God has bestowed reason upon us, we cannot act wrong in employing it. But you, my dear Minna, have a warmer fancy than mine, and are willing to receive all those wonderful stories for truth, because you love to think of sorcerers, and dwarfs, and water-spirits, and would like much to have a little trow, or fairy, as the Scotch call them, with a green coat, and a pair of wings as brilliant as the hues of the starling's neck, specially to attend on you."

"It would spare you at least the trouble of lacing my bodice," said Minna, "and of lacing it wrong too; for, in the heat of your argument, you have missed two pye-holes."

"That error shall be presently mended," said Brenda; "and then, as one of our friends might say,

I will haul tight and belay—but you draw your breath so deeply, that it will be a difficult matter."

"I only sighed," said Minna, in some confusion, "to think how soon you can trifle with and ridicule the misfortunes of this extraordinary woman."

"I do not ridicule them, God knows," replied Brenda, somewhat angrily; "it is you, Minna, who turn all I say in truth and kindness, to something harsh or wicked. I look on Norna as a woman of very extraordinary abilities, which are very often reconciled with a strong cast of insanity; and I consider her as better skilled in the signs of the weather than any woman in Zetland. But that she has any power over the elements, I no more believe, than I do in the nursery stories of King Erick, who could make the wind blow from the point he set his cap to."

Minna, somewhat nettled with the obstinate incredulity of her sister, replied sharply, "And yet, Brenda, this woman—half-mad woman, and the veriest impostor, is the person by whom you chuse to be advised in the matter next your own heart at this moment."

"I do not know what you mean," said Brenda, colouring deeply, and shifting to get away from her sister. But as she was now undergoing the ceremony of being laced in her turn, her sister had the means of holding her fast by the silken string with which she was fastening the bodice, and, tapping her on the neck, which expressed, by its sudden writhe, and sudden change to a scarlet hue, as much pettish confusion as she had desired to provoke, she added, more mildly, "Is it not strange, Brenda, that, used as we have been by the stranger Mordaunt Mertoun, whose assurance has brought him uninvited to a house where his presence is so unacceptable, you should still look or think of him with favour? Surely that you do so should be a proof to you, that there are such things as spells in the country, and that you yourself labour under them. It is not for nought that Mordaunt wears a chain of elfin gold—look to it, Brenda, and be wise in time."

"I have nothing to do with Mordaunt Mertoun," answered Brenda, hastily, "nor do I know or care what he or any other young man wears about his neck. I could see all the gold chains of all the baillies of Edinburgh, that Lady Glowrowrum speaks so much of, without falling in fancy with one of the wearers." And, having thus complied with the female rule of pleading not guilty in general to such an indictment, she immediately resumed, in a different tone, "But, to say the truth, Minna, I think you, and all of you, have judged far too hastily about this young friend of ours, who has been so long our most intimate companion. Mind, Mordaunt Mertoun is no more to me than he is to you—yourself best know how little difference he made betwixt us, and that, chain or no chain, he lived with us like a brother with two sisters; and yet you can turn him off at once, because a wandering seaman, of whom we know nothing, and a peddling jagger, whom we well know to be a thief, a cheat, and a liar, speak words and carry tales in his disfavour. I do not believe he ever said he could have his choice of either of us, and only waited to see which was to have Burgh-Westra and Bredness Voe—I do not believe he ever spoke such a word, or harboured

such a thought, as that of making a choice between us."

"Perhaps," said Minna, coldly, "you may have had reason to know that his choice was already determined."

"I will not endure this," said Brenda, giving way to her natural vivacity, and springing from between her sister's hands; then turning round and facing her, while her glowing cheek was rivaled in the deepness of its crimson, by as much of her neck and bosom as the upper part of the half-laced bodice permitted to be visible,—“Even from you, Minna,” she said, “I will not endure this! You know that all my life I have spoken the truth, and that I love the truth; and I tell you, that Mordaunt Mertoun never in his life made distinction betwixt you and me, until”——

Here some feeling of consciousness stopped her short, and her sister replied, with a smile, “Until *when*, Brenda? Methinks, your love of truth seems choked with the sentence you were bringing out.”

“Until you ceased to do him the justice he deserves,” said Brenda, firmly, “since I must speak out. I have little doubt that he will not long throw away his friendship on you, who hold it so lightly.”

“Be it so,” said Minna; “you are secure from my rivalry, either in his love or friendship. But be-think you better, Brenda—this is no scandal of Cleveland’s—Cleveland is incapable of slander—no falsehood of Bryce Snailsfoot—not one of our friends or acquaintance but what says it has been the common talk of the island, that the daughters of Magnus Troil were patiently awaiting the choice of the nameless and birthless stranger, Mordaunt Mertoun.—Is it fitting that this should be said of us, the descendants of a Norwegian Jarl and the daughters of the first udaller in Zetland? Or, would it be modest or maidenly to submit to it unresented, were we the meanest lasses that ever lifted a milking-pail?”

“The tongues of fools are no reproach,” replied Brenda, warmly; “I will never quit my own thoughts of an innocent friend for the gossip of the island, which can put the worst meaning on the most innocent actions.”

“Hear but what our friends say,” repeated Minna; “hear but the Lady Glowrowrum; hear but Maddie and Clara Groatsettar.”

“If I were to hear Lady Glowrowrum,” said Brenda, steadily, “I should listen to the worst tongue in Zetland; and as for Maddie and Clara Groatsettar, they were both blithe enough to get Mordaunt to sit betwixt them at dinner, the day before yesterday, as you might have observed yourself, but that your ear was better engaged.”

“Your eyes, at least, have been but indifferently engaged, Brenda,” retorted the elder sister, “since they were fixed on a young man whom all the world but yourself believes to have talked of us with the most insolent presumption; and even if he be innocently charged, Lady Glowrowrum says it is un-maidenly and bold of you even to look in the direction where he sits, knowing it must confirm such reports.”

“I will look which way I please,” said Brenda, growing still warmer; “Lady Glowrowrum shall neither rule my thoughts, nor my words, nor my eyes. I hold Mordaunt Mertoun to be innocent,—I will look at him as such,—I will speak of him as such; and if I did not speak to him also, and behave to him as usual, it is in obedience to my father, and not for what Lady Glowrowrum, and all her nieces, had she twenty instead of two, could think, wink, nod, or tattle, about the matter that concerns them not.”

“Alas! Brenda,” answered Minna, with calmness, “this vivacity is more than is required for the defence of the character of a mere friend!—Beware—He who ruined Norna’s peace for ever, was a stranger, admitted to her affections against the will of her family.”

“He was a stranger,” replied Brenda, with emphasis, “not only in birth, but in manners. She had not been bred up with him from her youth,—she had not known the gentleness, the frankness of his disposition, by an intimacy of many years. He was indeed a stranger, in character, temper, birth, manners, and morals,—some wandering adventurer, perhaps, whom chance or tempest had thrown upon the islands, and who knew how to mask a false heart with a frank brow. My good sister, take home your own warning. There are other strangers at Burgh-Westra besides this poor Mordaunt Mertoun.”

Minna seemed for a moment overwhelmed with the rapidity with which her sister retorted her suspicion and her caution. But her natural loftiness of disposition enabled her to reply with assumed composure.

“Were I to treat you, Brenda, with the want of confidence you show towards me, I might reply that Cleveland is no more to me than Mordaunt was; or than young Swaraster, or Lawrence Ericson, or any other favourite guest of my father’s now is. But I scorn to deceive you, or to disguise my thoughts,—I love Clement Cleveland.”

“Do not say so, my dearest sister,” said Brenda, abandoning at once the air of acrimony with which the conversation had been latterly conducted, and throwing her arms around her sister’s neck, with looks, and with a tone, of the most earnest affection,—“do not say so, I implore you! I will renounce Mordaunt Mertoun,—I will swear never to speak to him again; but do not repeat that you love this Cleveland!”

“And why should I not repeat,” said Minna, disengaging herself gently from her sister’s grasp, “a sentiment in which I glory? The boldness, the strength and energy of his character, to which command is natural, and fear unknown,—these very properties, which alarm you for my happiness, are the qualities which insure it. Remember, Brenda, that when your foot loved the calm smooth sea-beach of the summer sea, mine ever delighted in the summit of the precipice, when the waves are in fury.”

“And it is even that which I dread,” said Brenda; “it is even that adventurous disposition which now is urging you to the brink of a precipice more dangerous than ever was washed by a spring-tide.”

This man,—do not frown, I will say no slander of him,—but is he not, even in your own partial judgment, stern and overbearing? accustomed, as you say, to command; but, for that very reason, commanding where he has no right to do so, and leading whom it would most become him to follow? rushing on danger, rather for its own sake, than for any other object? And can you think of being yoked with a spirit so unsettled and stormy, whose life has hitherto been led in scenes of death and peril, and who, even while sitting by your side, cannot disguise his impatience again to engage in them? A lover, methinks, should love his mistress better than his own life; but yours, my dear Minna, loves her less than the pleasure of inflicting death on others.”

“And it is even for that I love him,” said Minna. “I am a daughter of the old dames of Norway, who could send their lovers to battle with a smile, and slay them, with their own hands, if they returned with dishonour. My lover must scorn the mockeries by which our degraded race strive for distinction, or must practise them only in sport, and in earnest of nobler dangers. No whale-striking, bird-nesting favourite for me; my lover must be a sea-king, or what else modern times may give that draws near to that lofty character.”

“Alas, my sister!” said Brenda, “it is now that I must in earnest begin to believe the force of spells and of charms. You remember the Spanish story which you took from me long since, because I said, in your admiration of the chivalry of the olden times of Scandinavia, you rivaled the extravagance of the hero.—Ah, Minna! your colour shows that your conscience checks you, and reminds you of the book I mean;—is it more wise, think you, to mistake a wind-mill for a giant, or the commander of a paltry corsair for a kienpe, or a vi-king?”

Minna did indeed colour with anger at this insinuation, of which, perhaps, she felt in some degree the truth.

“You have a right,” she said, “to insult me, because you are possessed of my secret.”

Brenda’s soft heart could not resist this charge of unkindness; she adjured her sister to pardon her, and the natural gentleness of Minna’s feelings could not resist her entreaties.

“We are unhappy,” she said, as she dried her sister’s tears, “that we cannot see with the same eyes—let us not make each other more so by mutual insult and unkindness. You have my secret—it will not, perhaps, long be one, for my father shall have the confidence to which he is entitled, so soon as certain circumstances will permit me to offer it. Meantime, I repeat, you have my secret, and I more than suspect that I have yours in exchange, though you refuse to own it.”

“How, Minna!” said Brenda; “would you have me acknowledge for any one such feelings as you allude to, ere he has said the least word that could justify such a confession?”

“Surely not; but a hidden fire may be distinguished by heat as well as flame.”

“You understand these signs, Minna,” said Brenda, hanging down her head, and in vain endeavouring to suppress the temptation to repartee which her sister’s remark offered; “but I can only say, that, if

ever I love at all, it shall not be until I have been asked to do so once or twice at least, which has not yet chanced to me. But do not let us renew our quarrel, and rather let us think why Norna should have told us that horrible tale, and to what she expects it should lead.”

“It must have been as a caution,” replied Minna—“a caution which our situation, and, I will not deny it, which mine in particular, might seem to her to call for;—but I am alike strong in my own innocence, and in the honour of Cleveland.”

Brenda would fain have replied, that she did not confide so absolutely in the latter security as in the first; but she was prudent, and, forbearing to awaken the former painful discussion, only replied, “It is strange that Norna should have said nothing more of her lover. Surely he could not desert her in the extremity of misery to which he had reduced her?”

“There may be agonies of distress,” said Minna, after a pause, “in which the mind is so much jarred, that it ceases to be responsive even to the feelings which have most engrossed it;—her sorrow for her lover may have been swallowed up in horror and despair.”

“Or he may have fled from the islands, in fear of our father’s vengeance,” said Brenda.

“If for fear, or faintness of heart,” said Minna, looking upwards, “he was capable of flying from the ruin which he had occasioned, I trust he has long ere this sustained the punishment which Heaven reserves for the most base and dastardly of traitors and of cowards.—Come, sister, we are ere this expected at the breakfast board.”

And they went thither, arm in arm, with much more of confidence than had lately subsisted between them; the little quarrel which had taken place having served the purpose of a bourasque, or sudden squall, which dispels mists and vapours, and leaves fair weather behind it.

On their way to the breakfast apartment, they agreed that it was unnecessary, and might be imprudent, to communicate to their father the circumstance of the nocturnal visit, or to let him observe that they now knew more than formerly of the melancholy history of Norna.

CHAPTER XXI.

But lost to me, for ever lost, those joys,
Which reason scatters, and which time destroys.
No more the midnight fairy-train I view,
All in the merry moon-light tippling dew.
Even the last lingering fiction of the brain,
The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again.

The Library.

THE moral bard, from whom we borrow the motto of this chapter, has touched a theme with which most readers have some feelings that vibrate unconsciously. Superstition, when not arrayed in her full horrors, but laying a gentle hand only on her suppliant’s head, had charms which we fail not to regret, even in those stages of society from which her influence is well nigh banished by the light of reason and general education. At least, in more ignorant periods, her system of ideal terrors had something

in them interesting to minds which had few means of excitement. This is more especially true of those lighter modifications of superstitious feelings and practices which mingle in the amusements of the ruder ages, and are, like the auguries of *Hallow-e'en* in Scotland, considered partly as matter of merriment, partly as sad and prophetic earnest. And, with similar feelings, people even of tolerable education have, in our times, sought the cell of a fortune-teller, upon a frolic, as it is termed, and yet not always in a disposition absolutely sceptical towards the responses they receive.

When the sisters of Burgh-Westra arrived in the apartment destined for a breakfast, as ample as that which we have described on the preceding morning, and had undergone a jocular rebuke from the udaller for their late attendance, they found the company, most of whom had already breakfasted, engaged in an ancient Norwegian custom, of the character which we have just described.

It seems to have been borrowed from those poems of the scalds, in which champions and heroines are so often represented as seeking to know their destiny from some sorceress or prophetess, who, as in the legend called by Gray the Descent of Odin, awakens by the force of Runic rhyme the unwilling revealer of the doom of fate, and compels from her answers, often of dubious import, but which were then believed to express some shadow of the events of futurity.

An old sibyl, Euphane Fea, the housekeeper we have already mentioned, was installed in the recess of a large window, studiously darkened by bear-skins and other miscellaneous drapery, so as to give it something the appearance of a Laplander's hut, and accommodated, like a confessional chair, with an aperture, which permitted the person within to hear with ease whatever questions should be put, though not to see the querist. Here seated, the voluspa, or sibyl, was to listen to the rhythmical inquiries which should be made to her, and to return an extemporaneous answer. The drapery was supposed to prevent her from seeing by what individuals she was consulted, and the intended or accidental reference which the answer given under such circumstances bore to the situation of the person by whom the question was asked, often furnished food for laughter, and sometimes, as it happened, for more serious reflection. The sibyl was usually chosen from her possessing the talent of improvisation in the Norse poetry; no unusual accomplishment, where the minds of many were stored with old verses, and where the rules of metrical composition are uncommonly simple. The questions were also put in verse; but as this power of extemporaneous composition, though common, could not be supposed universal, the medium of an interpreter might be used by any querist, which interpreter, holding the consulter of the oracle by the hand, and standing by the place from which the oracles were issued, had the task of rendering into verse the subject of inquiry.

On the present occasion, Claud Halcro was summoned, by the universal voice, to perform the part of interpreter; and, after shaking his head, and muttering some apology for decay of memory and

poetical powers, contradicted at once by his own conscious smile of confidence and by the general shout of the company, the light-hearted old man came forward to play his part in the proposed entertainment.

But just as it was about to commence, the arrangement of parts was singularly altered. Norna of the Fitful-head, whom every one excepting the two sisters believed to be at the distance of many miles, suddenly, and without greeting, entered the apartment, walked majestically up to the bear-skin tabernacle, and signed to the female who was there seated to abdicate her sanctuary. The old woman came forth, shaking her head, and looking like one overwhelmed with fear; nor, indeed, were there many in the company who saw with absolute composure the sudden appearance of a person so well known and so generally feared as Norna.

She paused a moment at the entrance of the tent; and, as she raised the skin which formed the entrance, she looked up to the north, as if imploring from that quarter a train of inspiration; then signing to the surprised guests that they might approach in succession the shrine in which she was about to install herself, she entered the tent, and was shrouded from their sight.

But this was a different sport from what the company had meditated, and to most of them seemed to present so much more of earnest than of game, that there was no alacrity shown to consult the oracle. The character and pretensions of Norna seemed, to almost all present, too serious for the part which she had assumed; the men whispered to each other, and the women, according to Claud Halcro, realized the description of glorious John Dryden,—

With horror shuddering, on a heap they ran.

The pause was interrupted by the loud manly voice of the udaller. "Why does the game stand still, my masters? Are you afraid because my kinswoman is to play our voluspa? It is kindly done in her, to do for us what none in the isles can do so well; and we will not baulk our sport for it, but rather go on the merrier."

There was still a pause in the company, and Magnus Troil added, "It shall never be said that my kinswoman sat in her bower unhalsed, as if she were some of the old mountain-giantesses, and all from faint heart. I will speak first myself; but the rhyme comes worse from my tongue than when I was a score of years younger.—Claud Halcro, you must stand by me."

Hand in hand they approached the shrine of the supposed sibyl, and after a moment's consultation together, Halcro thus expressed the query of his friend and patron. Now, the udaller, like many persons of consequence in Zetland, who, as Sir Robert Sibbald has testified for them, had begun thus early to apply both to commerce and navigation, was concerned to some extent in the whale fishery of the season, and the bard had been directed to put into his halting verse an inquiry concerning its success.

CLAUD HALCRO.

"Mother darksome, mother dread—
Dweller on the Fitful-head,

Thou canst see what deeds are done
Under the never-setting sun.
Look through sleet, and look through frost,
Look to Greenland's caves and coast,—
By the ice-berg is a sail
Chasing of the swarthy whale;
Mother doubtful, mother dread,
Tell us, has the good ship sped?"

The jest seemed to turn to earnest, as all, bending their heads around, listened to the voice of Norna, who, without a moment's hesitation, answered from the recess of the tent in which she was enclosed:—

NORNA.

"The thought of the aged is ever on gear,—
On his fishing, his furrows, his flock, and his steer;
But thrive may his fishing, flock, furrow, and herd,
While the aged for anguish shall tear his grey beard."

There was a momentary pause, during which Triptolemus had time to whisper, "If ten witches and as many warlocks were to swear it, I will never believe that a decent man will either fash his beard or himself about anything, so long as stock and crop goes as it should do."

But the voice from within the tent resumed its low monotonous tone of recitation, and, interrupting farther commentary, proceeded as follows:—

NORNA.

* The ship, well-laden as bark need be,
Lies deep in the furrow of the Iceland sea;—
The breeze from Zetland blows fair and soft,
And gaily the garland* is fluttering aloft:
Seven good fishes have spouted their last,
And their jaw-bones are hanging to yard and mast;†
Two are for Lerwick, and two for Kirkwall,—
Three for Burgh-Westra, the choicest of all."

"Now the powers above look down and protect us!" said Bryce Snailsfoot; "for it is mair than woman's wit that has spaed out that ferly. I saw them at North Ronaldsha, that had seen the good bark, the Olave of Lerwick, that our worthy patron has such a great share in that she may be called his own in a manner, and they had broomed§ the bark, and, as sure as there are stars in heaven, she answered them for seven fish, exact as Norna has tell'd us in her rhyme."

"Umph—seven fish exactly! and you heard it at North Ronaldsha?" said Captain Cleveland, "and I suppose told it as a good piece of news when you came hither?"

"It never crossed my tongue, captain," answered the pedlar; "I have kenn'd mony chapmen, travelling merchants, and such like, neglect their goods to

* The garland is an artificial coronet, composed of ribbons by those young women who take an interest in a whaling vessel or her crew: it is always displayed from the rigging, and preserved with great care during the voyage.

† The best oil exudes from the jaw-bones of the whale, which, for the purpose of collecting it, are suspended to the masts of the vessel.

§ There is established among whalers a sort of telegraphic signal, in which a certain number of motions, made with a broom, expresses to any other vessel the number of fish which they have caught.

carry clashes and clavers up and down, from one country-side to another; but that is no traffic of mine. I dinna believe I have mentioned the Olave's having made up her cargo to three folk since I crossed to Dunrossness."

"But if one of those three had spoken the news over again, and it is two to one that such a thing happened, the old lady prophesies upon velvet."

Such was the speech of Cleveland, addressed to Magnus Troil, and heard without any applause. The Udaller's respect for his country extended to its superstitions, and so did the interest which he took in his unfortunate kinswoman. If he never rendered a precise assent to her high supernatural pretensions, he was not at least desirous of hearing them disputed by others.

"Norna," he said, "his cousin (an emphasis on the word), held no communication with Bryce Snailsfoot, or his acquaintances. He did not pretend to explain how she came by her information; but he had always remarked that Scotsmen, and indeed strangers in general, when they came to Zetland, were ready to find reasons for things which remained sufficiently obscure to those whose ancestors had dwelt there for ages."

Captain Cleveland took the hint, and bowed, without attempting to defend his own scepticism.

"And now forward, my brave hearts," said the udaller; "and may all have as good tidings as I have! Three whales cannot but yield—let me think how many hogsheads."

There was an obvious reluctance on the part of the guests to be the next in consulting the oracle of the tent.

"Gude news are welcome to some folks, if they came frae the de'il himsell," said Mistress Babie Yellowley, addressing the Lady Glowrowrum, for a similarity of disposition in some respects had made a sort of intimacy betwixt them; "but I think, my leddy, that this has ower mickle of rank witchcraft in it to have the countenance of douce christian folks like you and me, my leddy."

"There may be something in what you say, my dame," replied the good Lady Glowrowrum; "but we Hialtlanders are no just like other folks; and this woman, if she be a witch, being the fowde's friend and near kinswoman, it will be ill ta'en if we haena our fortunes spaed like a' the rest of them; and sae my nieces may e'en step forward in their turn, and nae harm dune. They will hae time to repent, ye ken, in the coure of nature, if there be onything wrang in it, Mistress Yellowley."

While others remained under similar uncertainty and apprehension, Halcro, who saw by the knitting of the old udaller's brows, and by a certain impatient shuffle of his right foot, like the motion of a man who with difficulty refrains from stamping, that his patience began to wax rather thin, gallantly declared, that he himself would, in his own person, and not as a procurator for others, put the next query to the Pythoness. He paused a minute—collected his rhymes, and thus addressed her:—

CLAUD HALCRO.

"Mother doubtful, mother dread,
Dweller of the Fitful-head,

Thou hast conn'd full many a rhyme,
That lives upon the surge of time ;
Tell me, shall my lays be sung.
Like Hacon's of the golden tongue,
Long after Halcro 's dead and gone ?
Or, shall Hialtland's minstrel own
One note to rival glorious John ?"

The voice of the sibyl immediately replied from her sanctuary,

NORNA.

"The infant loves the rattle's noise ;
Age, double childhood, hath its toys ;
But different far the descant rings,
As strikes a different hand the strings.
The eagle mounts the polar sky—
The Imber-geese, unskill'd to fly,
Must be content to glide along,
Where seal and sea-dog list his song."

Halcro bit his lip, shrugged his shoulders, and then, instantly recovering his good humour, and the ready, though slovenly power of extemporaneous composition, with which long habit had invested him, he gallantly rejoined,

CLAUD HALCRO.

"Be mine the Imber-geese to play,
And haunt lone cave and silent bay ;—
The archer's aim so shall I shun—
So shall I 'scape the level'd gun—
Content my verse's tuneless jingle,
With Thule's sounding tides to mingle,
While, to the ear of wondering wight,
Upon the distant headland's height,
Softened by murmur of the sea,
The rude sounds seem like harmony !"

As the little bard stepped back, with an alert gait, and satisfied air, general applause followed the spirited manner in which he had acquiesced in the doom which leveled him with an Imber-geese. But his resigned and courageous submission did not even yet encourage any other person to consult the redoubted Norna.

"The coward fools!" said the udaller. "Are you too afraid, Captain Cleveland, to speak to an old woman?—Ask her anything—ask her whether the twelve-gun sloop at Kirkwall be your consort or no."

Cleveland looked at Minna, and probably conceiving that she watched with anxiety his answer to her father's question, he collected himself, after a moment's hesitation.

"I never was afraid of man or woman.—Master Halcro, you have heard the question which our host desires me to ask—put it in my name, and in your own way—I pretend to as little skill in poetry as I do in witchcraft."

Halcro did not wait to be invited twice, but grasping Captain Cleveland's hand in his, according to the form which the game prescribed, he put the query which the udaller had dictated to the stranger, in the following words :—

CLAUD HALCRO.

"Mother doubtful, mother dread,
Dweller of the Fitful-head,

A gallant bark from far abroad,
Saint Magnus hath her in his road,
With guns and firelocks not a few—
A silken and a scarlet crew,
Deep stored with precious merchandize,
Of gold and goods of rare device—
What hath this our comrade bold
Of interest in bark, goods, and gold ?"

There was a pause of unusual duration ere the oracle would return any answer ; and when she replied, it was in a lower, though an equally decided tone, with that which she had hitherto employed :—

NORNA.

"Gold is ruddy, fair and free,
Blood is crimson, and dark to see ;—
I look'd out on Saint Magnus Bay,
And I saw a falcon that hath struck her prey,—
A gobbet of flesh in her beak she bore,
And talons and singles are dripping with gore ;
Let him that asks after them look on his hand,
And if there is blood on 't, he 's one of their band."

Cleveland smiled scornfully, and held out his hand.—"Few men have been on the Spanish main as often as I have, without having had to do with the *Guarda Costas* once and again ; but there never was aught like a stain on my hand that a wet towel would not wipe away."

The udaller added his voice potential—"There is never peace with Spaniards beyond the Line,—I have heard Captain Tragendeck and honest old Commodore Rummelaer say so an hundred times, and they have both been down in the Bay of Honduras, and all thereabouts.—I hate all Spaniards, since they came here and reft the Fair Isle men of their vivers in 1558. I have heard my grandfather speak of it ; and there is an old Dutch history somewhere about the house, that shows what work they made in the Low Countries long since. There is neither mercy nor faith in them."

"True—true, my old friend," said Cleveland ; "they are as jealous of their Indian possessions as an old man of his young bride ; and if they can catch you at disadvantage, the mines for your life is the word,—and so we fight them with our colours nailed to the mast."

"That is the way," shouted the udaller ; "the old British jack should never down. When I think of the wooden walls, I almost think myself an Englishman, only it would be becoming too like my Scotch neighbours ;—but come, no offence to any here, gentlemen—all are friends, and all are welcome.—Come, Brenda, go on with the play—do you speak next, you have Norse rhymes enough we all know."

"But none that suit the game we play at, father," said Brenda, drawing back.

"Nonsense !" said her father, pushing her onward, while Halcro seized on her reluctant hand ; "never let mistimed modesty mar honest mirth—Speak for Brenda, Halcro—it is your trade to interpret maiden's thoughts."

The poet bowed to the beautiful young woman, with the devotion of a poet and the gallantry of a traveller, and having, in a whisper, reminded her that she was in no way responsible for the nonsense he was about to speak, he paused, looked upward,

simpered as if he had caught a sudden idea, and at length set off in the following verses:—

CLAUD HALCRO.

"Mother doubtful, mother dread—
Dweller of the Fitful-head,
Well thou know'st it is thy task
To tell what Beauty will not ask;
Then steep thy words in wine and milk,
And weave a doom of gold and silk,—
For we would know, shall Brenda prove
In love, and happy in her love?"

The prophetess replied almost immediately from behind her curtain:—

NORNA.

"Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast
Is like the snow on Rona's crest,
High seated in the middle sky,
In bright and barren purity;
But by the sun-beam gently kiss'd,
Scarce by the gazing eye 't is miss'd,
Ere, down the lonely valley stealing,
Fresh grass and growth its course revealing,
It cheers the flock, revives the flower,
And decks some happy shepherd's bower."

"A comfortable doctrine, and most justly spoken," said the udaller, seizing the blushing Brenda, as she was endeavouring to escape—"never think shame for the matter, my girl. To be the mistress of some honest man's house, and the means of maintaining some old Norse name, making neighbours happy, the poor easy, and relieving strangers, is the most creditable lot a young woman can look to, and I heartily wish it to all here. Come, who speaks next—good husbands are going—Maddie Groatsettar—my pretty Clara, come and have your share."

The Lady Glowrowrum shook her head, and "could not," she said, "altogether approve"—

"Enough said—enough said," replied Magnus; "no compulsion; but the play shall go on till we are tired of it. Here, Minna—I have got you at command. Stand forth, my girl—there are plenty of things to be ashamed of besides old-fashioned and innocent pleasantry. Come, I will speak for you myself—though I am not sure I can remember rhyme enough for it.

There was a slight colour which passed rapidly over Minna's face, but she instantly regained her composure, and stood erect by her father, as one superior to any little jest to which her situation might give rise.

Her father, after some rubbing of his brow, and other mechanical efforts to assist his memory, at length recovered verse sufficient to put the following query, though in less gallant strains than those of Halcro:—

MAGNUS TROIL.

"Mother, speak, and do not tarry,
Here 's a maiden fain would marry
Shall she marry, ay or not?
If she marry, what 's her lot?"

A deep sigh was uttered within the tabernacle of the soothsayer, as if she compassionated the subject

of the doom which she was obliged to pronounce. She then, as usual, returned her response:

NORNA.

"Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast
Is like the snow on Rona's crest;
So pure, so free from earthly dye,
It seems, whilst leaning on the sky,
Part of the heaven to which 't is nigh;
But passion, like the wild March rain,
May soil the wreath with many a stain.
We gaze—the lovely vision 's gone—
A torrent fills the bed of stone,
That hurrying to destruction's shock,
Leaps headlong from the lofty rock."

The udaller heard this reply with high resentment—"By the bones of the martyr," he said, his brave visage becoming suddenly ruddy, "this is an abuse of courtesy! and, were it any but yourself that had classed my daughter's name and the word destruction together, they had better have left the word unspoken. But, come forth of the tent, thou old gal-dragon," he added, with a smile—"I should have known that thou canst not long joy in anything that smacks of mirth, God help thee!" His summons received no answer; and after waiting a moment, he again addressed her—"Nay, never be sullen with me, kinswoman, though I did speak a hasty word—thou knowest I bear malice to no one, least of all to thee—so come forth and let us shake hands.—Thou might'st have foretold the wreck of my ship and boats, or a bad herring-fishery, and I should have said never a word; but Minna or Brenda, you know, are things which touch me nearer. But come out, shake hands, and there let there be an end on't."

Norna returned no answer whatever to his repeated invocations, and the company began to look upon each other with some surprise, when the udaller, raising the skin which covered the entrance of the tent, discovered that the interior was empty. The wonder was now general, and not unmixed with fear; for it seemed impossible that Norna could have, in any manner, escaped from the tabernacle in which she was enclosed without having been discovered by the company. Gone, however, she was, and the udaller, after a moment's consideration, dropt the skin-curtain again over the entrance of the tent.

"My friends," he said, with a cheerful countenance, "we have long known my kinswoman, and that her ways are not like those of the ordinary folks of this world. But she means well by Hialtland, and hath the love of a sister for me, and for my house; and no guest of mine needs either to fear evil, or to take offence at her hand. I have little doubt she will be with us at dinner-time."

"Now, Heaven forbid!" said Mrs Babie Yellowley—"for, my gude Leddy Glowrowrum, to tell your leddyship the truth, I likena cummers that can come and gae like a glance of the sun, or the whip of a whirlwind."

"Speak lower, speak lower," said the Lady Glowrowrum, "and be thankful that yon carline hasna ta'en the house-side away wi' her. The like of her have played warse pranks, and so has she hersell, unless she is the sairer lied on."

Similar murmurs ran through the rest of the company, until the udaller uplifted his stentorian and imperative voice to put them to silence, and invited, or rather commanded, the attendance of his guests to behold the boats set off for the haaf or deep-sea fishing.

"The wind had been high since sunrise," he said, "and had kept the boats in the bay; but now it was favourable, and they would sail immediately."

This sudden alteration of the weather occasioned sundry nods and winks amongst the guests, who were not indisposed to connect it with Norna's sudden disappearance; but without giving vent to observations which could not but be disagreeable to their host, they followed his stately step to the shore, as the herd of deer follows the leading stag, with all manner of respectful observance.

CHAPTER XXII.

There was a laughing devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled—and Mercy sigh'd farewell.

The Corsair, Canto I.

THE ling or white fishery is the principal employment of the natives of Zetland, and was formerly that upon which the gentry chiefly depended for their income, and the poor for their subsistence. The fishing season is therefore, like the harvest of an agricultural country, the busiest and most important, as well as the most animating, period of the year.

The fishermen of each district assemble at particular stations, with their boats and crews, and erect upon the shore small huts, composed of shingle, and covered with turf, for their temporary lodging, and skeos, or drying-houses, for the fish; so that the lonely beach at once assumes the appearance of an Indian town. The banks to which they repair for the haaf fishing, are often many miles distant from the station where the fish is dried; so that they are always twenty or thirty hours absent, frequently longer; and under unfavourable circumstances of wind and tide, they remain at sea, with a very small stock of provisions, and in a boat of a construction which seems extremely slender, for two or three days, and are sometimes heard of no more. The departure of the fishers, therefore, on this occupation, has in it a character of danger and of suffering, which renders it dignified, and the anxiety of the females who remain on the beach, watching the departure of the lessening boat, or anxiously looking out for its return, gives pathos to the scene.*

* Dr Edmondstone, the ingenious author of "a View of the Ancient and Present State of the Zetland Islands," has placed this part of the subject in an interesting light. "It is truly painful to witness the anxiety and distress which the wives of these poor men suffer on the approach of a storm. Regardless of fatigue, they leave their homes, and fly to the spot where they expect their husbands to land, or ascend the summit of a rock, to look out for them on the bosom of the deep. Should they get the glimpse of a sail, they watch, with trembling solicitude, its alternate rise

The scene, therefore, was in busy and anxious animation, when the udaller and his friends appeared on the beach. The various crews of about thirty boats, amounting each to from three to five or six men, were taking leave of their wives and female relatives, and jumping on board their long Norway skiffs, where their lines and tackle lay ready stowed. Magnus was not an idle spectator of the scene; he went from one place to another inquiring into the state of their provisions for the voyage, and their preparations for the fishing—now and then, with a rough Dutch or Norse oath, abusing them for block-heads, for going to sea with their boats indifferently found, but always ending by ordering from his own stores a gallon of gin, a lispund of meal, or some similar essential addition to their sea-stores. The hardy sailors, on receiving such favours, expressed their thanks in the brief gruff manner that their landlord best approved; but the women were more clamorous in their gratitude, which Magnus was often obliged to silence by cursing all female tongues from Eve's downwards.

At length all were on board and ready, the sails were hoisted, the signal for departure given, the rowers began to pull, and all started from the shore, in strong emulation to get first to the fishing ground, and to have their lines set before the rest; an exploit to which no little consequence was attached by the boat's crew who should be happy enough to perform it.

While they were yet within hearing of the shore, they chaunted an ancient Norse ditty, appropriate to the occasion, of which Claud Halcro had executed the following literal translation:—

Farewell, merry maidens, to dance, song, and laugh,
For the brave lads of Westra are bound to the haaf;
And we must have labour, and hunger, and pain,
Ere we dance with the maids of Dunrossness again.

For now, in our trim boats of Norway deal,
We must dance on the waves, with the porpus and seal;
The breeze it shall pipe, so it pipe not too high,
And the gull be our songstress whene'er she flits by.

Sing on, my brave bird, while we follow, like thee,
By bank, shoal, and quicksand, the swarms of the sea;
And when twenty-score fishes are straining my line,
Sing louder, brave bird, for their spoils shall be thine.

We 'll sing while we bait, and we 'll sing when we haul,
For the deeps of the haaf have enough for us all:
There is torsk for the gentle, and skate for the carle,
And there 's wealth for bold Magnus, the son of the earl.

Huzza! my brave comrades, give way for the haaf,
We shall sooner come back to the dance and the laugh;
For life without mirth is a lamp without oil;
Then mirth and long life to the bold Magnus Troil!

and disappearance on the waves; and though often tranquillized by the safe arrival of the objects of their search, yet it sometimes is their lot 'to hail the bark that never can return.' Subject to the influence of a variable climate, and engaged on a sea naturally tempestuous, with rapid currents, scarcely a season passes over without the occurrence of some fatal accident or hairbreadth escape."—*View, &c. of the Zetland Islands*, vol. I, p. 238. Many interesting particulars respecting the fisheries and agriculture of Zetland, as well as its antiquities, may be found in the work we have quoted.

The rude words of the song were soon drowned in the ripple of the waves, but the tune continued long to mingle with the sound of wind and sea, and the boats were like so many black specks on the surface of the ocean, diminishing by degrees as they bore far and farther seaward; while the ear could distinguish touches of the human voice, almost drowned amid that of the elements.

The fishermen's wives looked their last after the parting sails, and were now departing slowly, with downcast and anxious looks, towards the huts in which they were to make arrangements for preparing and drying the fish, with which they hoped to see their husbands and friends return deeply loaded. Here and there an old sibyl displayed the superior importance of her experience, by predicting, from the appearance of the atmosphere, that the wind would be fair or foul, while others recommended a vow to the Kirk of St Ninian's, for the safety of their men and boats (an ancient catholic superstition, not yet wholly abolished); and others, but in a low and timorous tone, regretted to their companions, that Norna of Fitful-head had been suffered to depart in discontent that morning from Burgh-Westra, "and, of all days that were in the year, that they suld have contrived to give her displeasure on the first day of the white fishing!"

The gentry, guests of Magnus Troil, having whiled away as much time as could be so disposed of, in viewing the little armament set sail, and in conversing with the poor women who had seen their friends embark in it, began now to separate into various groups and parties, which strolled in different directions, as fancy led them, to enjoy what may be called the clear-obscure of a Zetland summer day, which, though wanting the brilliant sunshine that cheers other countries during the fine season, has a mild and pleasing character of its own, which softens while it saddens landscapes, which, in their own lonely, bare, and monotonous tone, have something in them stern as well as barren.

In one of the loneliest recesses of the coast, where a deep indenture of the rocks gave the tide access to the cavern, or, as it is called, the Halier of Swartaster, Minna Troil was walking with Captain Cleveland. They had chosen probably that walk, as being little liable to interruption from others; for, as the force of the tide rendered the place unfit either for fishing or sailing, so it was not the ordinary resort of walkers, on account of its being the supposed habitation of mermaids, a race which Norwegian superstition invests with magical, as well as mischievous qualities. Here, therefore, Minna wandered with her lover.

A small spot of milk-white sand, that stretched beneath one of the precipices which walled in the creek on either side, afforded them space for a dry, firm, and pleasant walk of about an hundred yards, terminated at one extremity by a dark stretch of the bay, which, scarce touched by the wind, seemed almost as smooth as glass, and which was seen from between two lofty rocks, the jaws of the creek, or indenture, which approached each other above, as if they wished to meet over the dark tide that separated them. The other end of their promenade was closed by a lofty and almost unscalable pre-

cipice, the abode of hundreds of sea-fowl, of different kinds, in the bottom of which the huge halier, or sea-cave, itself yawned, as if for the purpose of swallowing up the advancing tide, which it seemed to receive into an abyss of immeasurable depth and extent. The entrance of this dismal cavern consisted not in a single arch, as usual, but was divided into two, by a huge pillar of natural rock, which, rising out of the sea, and extending to the top of the cavern, seemed to lend its support to the roof, and thus formed a double portal to the halier, on which the fishermen and peasants had bestowed the rude name of the Devil's Nostrils. In this wild scene, lonely and undisturbed but by the clang of the sea-fowl, Cleveland had already met with Minna Troil more than once; for with her it was a favourite walk, as the objects which it presented agreed peculiarly with her love of the wild, the melancholy, and the wonderful. But now the conversation in which she was earnestly engaged, was such as entirely to withdraw her attention, as well as that of her companion, from the scenery around them.

"You cannot deny it," she said; "you have given way to feelings, respecting this young man, which indicate prejudice and violence,—the prejudice unmerited, as far as you are concerned at least, and the violence equally imprudent and unjustifiable."

"I should have thought," replied Cleveland, "that the service I rendered him yesterday might have freed me from such a charge. I do not talk of my own risk, for I have lived in danger, and love it; it is not every one, however, would have ventured so near the furious animal to save one with whom they had no connexion."

"It is not every one, indeed, who could have done so," answered Minna, gravely; "but it is every one who has courage and generosity. The giddy-brained Claud Halcro would have done as much as you, had his strength been equal to his courage,—my father would have done as much, though having such just cause of resentment against the young man, for his vain and braggart abuse of our hospitality. Do not, therefore, boast of your exploit too much, my good friend, lest you should make me think that it required too great an effort. I know you love not Mordaunt Mertoun, though you exposed your own life to save his."

"Will you allow nothing then," said Cleveland, "for the long misery I was made to endure from the common and prevailing report, that this beardless bird-hunter stood betwixt me and what I on earth coveted most—the affections of Minna Troil?"

He spoke in a tone at once impassioned and insinuating, and his whole language and manner seemed to express a grace and elegance, which formed the most striking contrast with the speech and gesture of the unpolished seaman, which he usually affected or exhibited. But his apology was unsatisfactory to Minna.

"You have known," she said, "perhaps too soon, and too well, how little you had to fear,—if you indeed feared,—that Mertoun, or any other, had interest with Minna Troil.—Nay, truce to thanks and protestations; I would accept it as the best proof of gratitude, that you would be reconciled with this youth, or at least avoid every quarrel with him."

"That we should be friends, Minna, is impossible," replied Cleveland; "even the love I bear you, the most powerful emotion that my heart ever knew, cannot work that miracle."

"And why, I pray you?" said Minna; "there have been no evil offences between you, but rather an exchange of mutual services; why can you not be friends?—I have many reasons to wish it."

"And can you then forget the slights which he has cast upon Brenda, and on yourself, and on your father's house?"

"I can forgive them all," said Minna;—"can you not say so much, who have in truth received no offence?"

Cleveland looked down, and paused for an instant, then raised his head and replied, "I might easily deceive you, Minna, and promise you what my soul tells me is an impossibility; but I am forced to use too much deceit with others, and with you I will use none. I cannot be friend to this young man;—there is a natural dislike—an instinctive aversion—a something like a principle of repugnance in our mutual nature, which makes us odious to each other. Ask himself—he will tell you he has the same antipathy against me. The obligation he conferred on me was a bridle to my resentment; but I was so galled by the restraint, that I could have gnawed the curb till my lips were bloody."

"You have worn what you are wont to call your iron masque so long, that your features," replied Minna, "retain the impressions of its rigidity, even when it is removed."

"You do me injustice, Minna," replied her lover, "and you are angry with me because I deal with you plainly and honestly. Plainly and honestly, however, will I say, that I cannot be Mertoun's friend, but it shall be his own fault, not mine, if I am ever his enemy. I seek not to injure him; but do not ask me to love him. And of this remain satisfied, that it would be vain even if I could do so; for as sure as I attempted any advances towards his confidence, so sure would I be to awaken his disgust and suspicion. Leave us to the exercise of our natural feelings, which, as they will unquestionably keep us as far separate as possible, are most likely to prevent any possible interference with each other.—Does this satisfy you?"

"It must," said Minna, "since you tell me there is no remedy.—And now tell me why you looked so grave when you heard of your consort's arrival,—for that it is her I have no doubt,—in the port of Kirkwall?"

"I fear," replied Cleveland, "the consequences of that vessel's arrival with her crew, as comprehending the ruin of my fondest hopes. I had made some progress in your father's favour, and, with time, might have made more, when hither come Alured and Hawkins to blight my prospects for ever. I told you on what terms we parted. I then commanded a vessel braver and better found than their own, with a crew who, at my slightest nod, would have faced fiends armed with their own fiery element; but I now stand alone, a single man, destitute of all means to overawe or to restrain them; and they will soon show so plainly the ungovernable license of their habits and dispositions, that ruin to

themselves and me will in all probability be the consequence."

"Do not fear it," said Minna; "my father can never be so unjust as to hold you liable for the offences of others."

"But what will Magnus Troil say to my own, fair Minna?" said Cleveland, smiling.

"My father is a Norwegian," said Minna, "one of an oppressed race, who will not care whether you fought against the Spaniards, who are the tyrants of the New World, or against the Dutch and English, who have succeeded to their usurped dominions. His own ancestors supported and exercised the freedom of the seas in those gallant barks, whose pennons were the dread of all Europe."

"I fear, nevertheless," said Cleveland, smiling, "that the descendant of an ancient sea-king will scarce acknowledge a fitting acquaintance in a modern rover. I have not disguised from you that I have reason to fear the English laws; and Magnus, though a great enemy to taxes, imposts, scat, wattle, and so forth, has no idea of latitude upon points of a more general character;—he would willingly reeve a rope to the yard-arm for the benefit of an unfortunate buccaneer."

"Do not suppose so," said Minna; "he himself suffers too much oppression from the tyrannical laws of our proud neighbours of Scotland. I trust he will soon be able to rise in resistance against them. The enemy—such I will call them—are now divided amongst themselves, and every vessel from their coast brings intelligence of fresh commotions—the Highlands against the Lowlands—the williamites against the jacobites—the whigs against the tories, and, to sum the whole, the kingdom of England against that of Scotland. What is there, as Claud Halcro well hinted, to prevent our availing ourselves of the quarrels of these robbers, to assert the independence of which we are deprived?"

"To hoist the raven standard on the Castle of Scalloway," said Cleveland, in imitation of her tone and manner, "and proclaim your father Earl Magnus the First!"

"Earl Magnus the Seventh, if it please you," replied Minna; "for six of his ancestors have worn the coronet before him.—You laugh at my ardour,—but what is there to prevent all this?"

"Nothing *will* prevent it," replied Cleveland, "because it will never be attempted—Anything *might* prevent it, that is equal in strength to the long-boat of a British man-of-war."

"You treat us with scorn, sir," replied Minna; "yet yourself should know what a few resolved men may perform."

"But they must be armed, Minna," replied Cleveland, "and willing to place their lives upon each desperate adventure.—Think not of such visions. Denmark has been cut down into a second-rate kingdom, incapable of exchanging a single broadside with England; and, in these islands, the love of independence has been suppressed by a long term of subjection, or shows itself but in a few muttered growls over the bowl and bottle. And, were your men as willing warriors as their ancestors, what could the unarmed crews of a few fishing-boats do against the British navy?—Think no more of it, sweet Minna—

it is a dream, and I must term it so, though it makes your eye so bright, and your step so noble."

"It is indeed a dream!" said Minna, looking down, "and it ill becomes a daughter of Hialtland to look or to move like a freewoman—Our eye should be on the ground, and our step slow and reluctant, as that of one who obeys a task-master."

"There are lands," said Cleveland, "in which the eye may look bright upon groves of the palm and the cocoa, and where the foot may move light as a galley under sail, over fields carpeted with flowers, and savannahs surrounded by aromatic thickets, and where subjection is unknown, except that of the brave to the bravest, and of all to the most beautiful."

Minna paused a moment ere she replied, and then answered, "No, Cleveland. My own rude country has charms for me, even desolate as you think it, and depressed as it surely is, which no other land on earth can present to me. I endeavour in vain to represent to myself those visions of trees, and of groves, which my eye never saw; but my imagination can conceive no sight in nature more sublime than those waves, when agitated by a storm, or more beautiful than when they come, as they now do, rolling in calm tranquillity to the shore. Not the fairest scene in a foreign land,—not the brightest sun-beam that ever shone upon the richest landscape, would win my thoughts for a moment from that lofty rock, misty hill, and wide-rolling ocean. Hialtland is the land of my deceased ancestors, and of my living father; and in Hialtland will I live and die."

"Then in Hialtland," answered Cleveland, "will I too live and die. I will not go to Kirkwall,—I will not make my existence known to my comrades, from whom it were else hard for me to escape. Your father loves me, Minna; who knows whether long attention, anxious care, might not bring him to receive me into his family? Who would regard the length of a voyage that was certain to terminate in happiness?"

"Dream not of such an issue," said Minna; "it is impossible. While you live in my father's house,—while you receive his assistance, and share his table, you will find him the generous friend, and the hearty host; but touch him on what concerns his name and family, and the frank-hearted udaller will start up before you the haughty and proud descendant of a Norwegian Jarl. See you, a moment's suspicion has fallen on Mordaunt Mertoun, and he has banished from his favour the youth whom he so lately loved as a son. No one must ally with his house that is not of untainted northern descent."

"And mine may be so, for aught that is known to me upon the subject," said Cleveland.

"How!" said Minna; "have you any reason to believe yourself of Norse descent?"

"I have told you before," replied Cleveland, "that my family is totally unknown to me. I spent my earliest days upon a solitary plantation in the little island of Tortuga, under the charge of my father, then a different person from what he afterwards became. We were plundered by the Spaniards, and reduced to such extremity of poverty, that my father, in desperation, and in thirst of revenge, took up arms, and having become chief of a little band, who were in the same circumstances,

became a buccaneer, as it is called, and cruized against Spain, with various vicissitudes of good and bad fortune, until, while he interfered to check some violence of his companions, he fell by their hands—no uncommon fate among the captains of these rovers. But whence my father came, or what was the place of his birth, I know not, fair Minna, nor have I ever had a curious thought on the subject."

"He was a Briton, at least, your unfortunate father?" said Minna.

"I have no doubt of it," said Cleveland; "his name, which I have rendered too formidable to be openly spoken, is an English one; and his acquaintance with the English language, and even with English literature, together with the pains which he took, in better days, to teach me both, plainly spoke him to be an Englishman. If the rude bearing which I display towards others is not the genuine character of my mind and manners, it is to my father, Minna, that I owe any share of better thoughts and principles, which may render me worthy, in some small degree, of your notice and approbation. And yet it sometimes seems to me, that I have two different characters; for I cannot almost believe, that I, who now walk this lone beach with the lovely Minna Troil, and am permitted to speak to her of the passion which I have cherished, have ever been the daring leader of the bold band whose name was as terrible as a tornado."

"You had not been permitted," said Minna, "to use that bold language towards the daughter of Magnus Troil, had you not been the brave and undaunted leader, who, with so small means, has made his name so formidable. My heart is like that of a maiden of the ancient days, and is to be won, not by fair words, but by gallant deeds."

"Alas! that heart," said Cleveland; "and what is it that I may do—what is it that man can do, to win in it the interest which I desire?"

"Rejoin your friends—pursue your fortunes—leave the rest to destiny," said Minna. "Should you return the leader of a gallant fleet, who can tell what may befall?"

"And what shall assure me, that, when I return—if return I ever shall—I may not find Minna Troil a bride or a spouse?—No, Minna, I will not trust to destiny the only object worth attaining, which my stormy voyage in life has yet offered me."

"Hear me," said Minna. "I will bind myself to you, if you dare accept such an engagement, by the promise of Odin, the most sacred of our northern rites which are yet practised among us, that I will never favour another, until you resign the pretensions which I have given to you.—Will that satisfy you?—for more I cannot—more I will not give."

"Then with that," said Cleveland, after a moment's pause, "I must perforce be satisfied; but remember, it is yourself that throw me back upon a mode of life which the laws of Britain denounce as criminal, and which the violent passions of the daring men by whom it is pursued, have rendered infamous."

"But I," said Minna, "am superior to such prejudices. In warring with England, I see their laws in no other light than as if you were engaged with an enemy, who, in fulness of pride and power, has

declared he will give his antagonist no quarter. A brave man will not fight the worse of this;—and, for the manners of your comrades, so that they do not infect your own, why should their evil report attach to you?"

Cleveland gazed at her as she spoke, with a degree of wondering admiration, in which, at the same time, there lurked a smile at her simplicity.

"I could not," he said, "have believed, that such high courage could have been found united with such ignorance of the world, as the world is now wielded. For my manners, they who best know me will readily allow, that I have done my best, at the risk of my popularity, and of my life itself, to mitigate the ferocity of my mates; but how can you teach humanity to men burning with vengeance against the world, by whom they are proscribed, or learn them temperance and moderation in enjoying the pleasures which chance throws in their way, to vary a life which would be otherwise one constant scene of peril and hardship? But this promise, Minna—this promise, which is all I am to receive in guerdon for my faithful attachment—let me at least lose no time in claiming that."

"It must not be rendered here, but in Kirkwall. —We must invoke, to witness the engagement, the spirit which presides over the ancient circle of Stennis. But perhaps you fear to name the ancient father of the slain too, the severe, the terrible?"

Cleveland smiled.

"Do me the justice to think, lovely Minna, that I am little subject to fear real causes of terror; and for those which are visionary, I have no sympathy whatsoever.

"You believe not in them, then," said Minna, "and are so far better suited to be Brenda's lover than mine."

"I will believe," replied Cleveland, "in whatever you believe. The whole inhabitants of that Valhalla, about which you converse so much with that fiddling, rhyming fool, Claud Halcro—all these shall become living and existing things to my credulity. But, Minna, do not ask me to fear any of them."

"Fear! no—not to *fear* them, surely," replied the maiden; "for, not before Thor or Odin, when they approached in the fulness of their terrors, did the heroes of my dauntless race yield one foot in retreat. But when you make this boast, bethink you that you defy an enemy of a kind you have never yet encountered."

"Not in these northern latitudes," said the lover, with a smile, "where hitherto I have seen but angels; but I have faced, in my time, the demons of the equinoctial line, which we rovers suppose to be as powerful, and as malignant, as those of the north."

"Have you then witnessed those wonders that are beyond the visible world?" said Minna, with some degree of awe.

Cleveland composed his countenance, and replied,—"A short while before my father's death, I came, though then very young, into the command of a sloop, manned with thirty as desperate fellows as ever handled a musket. We cruized for a long while with bad success, taking nothing but wretched small-craft, which were destined to catch turtle, or

otherwise loaded with coarse and worthless trumpery. I had much ado to prevent my comrades from avenging upon the crews of those baubling shallops the disappointment which they had occasioned to us. At length, we grew desperate, and made a descent on a village, where we were told we should intercept the mules of a certain Spanish governor, laden with treasure. We succeeded in carrying the place; but while I endeavoured to save the inhabitants from the fury of my followers, the muleteers, with their precious cargo, escaped into the neighbouring woods. This filled up the measure of my unpopularity. My people, who had been long discontented, became openly mutinous. I was deposed from my command, in solemn council, and condemned, as having too little luck and too much humanity for the profession I had undertaken, to be marooned,* as the phrase goes, on one of those little sandy, bushy islets, which are called, in the West Indies, keys, and which are frequented only by turtle and by sea-fowl. Many of them are supposed to be haunted—some, by the demons worshipped by the old inhabitants—others, by caciques and others, whom the Spaniards had put to death by torture, to compel them to discover their hidden treasures—and others by the various spectres in which sailors of all nations have implicit faith. My place of banishment, called Coffin-key, about two leagues and a half to the south-east of Bermudas, was so infamous as the resort of these supernatural inhabitants, that I believe the wealth of Mexico would not have persuaded the bravest of the scoundrels who put me ashore there, to have spent an hour on the islet alone, even in broad day-light; and when they rowed off, they pulled for the sloop like men that dared not cast their eyes behind them. And there they left me, to subsist myself as I might, on a speck of unproductive sand, surrounded by the boundless Atlantic, and haunted, as they supposed, by malignant demons."

"And what was the consequence?" said Minna, eagerly.

"I supported life," said the adventurer, "at the expense of such sea-fowl as were silly enough to let me approach so near as to knock them down with a stick; and by means of turtle-eggs, when these complaisant birds became better acquainted with the mischievous disposition of the human species, and more shy of course of my advances."

"And the demons of whom you spoke?"—continued Minna.

"I had my secret apprehensions upon their account," said Cleveland: "In open day-light, or in absolute darkness, I did not greatly apprehend their approach; but in the misty dawn of the morning, or when evening was about to fall, I saw, for the first week of my abode on the key, many a dim and undefined spectre, now resembling a Spaniard, with his capa wrapped around him, and his huge sombrero, as large as an umbrella, upon his head,—now a Dutch sailor, with his rough cap and trunk-hose,—and now an Indian cacique, with his feathery crown and long lance of cane."

* To *maroon* a seaman, signified to abandon him on a desolate coast or island—a piece of cruelty often practised by pirates and buccaneers.

"Did you not approach and address them?" said Minna.

"I always approached them," replied the seaman; "but,—I grieve to disappoint your expectations, my fair friend,—whenever I drew near them, the phantom changed into a bush, or a piece of drift-wood, or a wreath of mist, or some such cause of deception, until at last I was taught by experience to cheat myself no longer with such visions, and continued a solitary inhabitant of Coffin-key, as little alarmed by visionary terrors, as I ever was in the great cabin of a stout vessel with a score of companions around me."

"You cheated me into listening to a tale of nothing," said Minna; "but how long did you continue on the island?"

"Four weeks of miserable existence," said Cleveland, "when I was relieved by the crew of a vessel which came thither a-turtling. Yet my miserable seclusion was not entirely useless to me; for on that spot of barren sand I found the iron masque, which has since been my chief security against treason, or mutiny of my followers. It was there I formed the resolution to seem no softer hearted, nor better instructed—no more humane, and no more scrupulous, than those with whom fortune had leagued me. I thought over my former story, and saw that seeming more brave, skilful, and enterprising than others, had gained me command and respect, and that seeming more gently nurtured, and more civilized than they, had made them envy and hate me as a being of another species. I agreed with myself, then, that since I could not lay aside my superiority of intellect and education, I would do my best to disguise, and to sink in the rude seaman, all appearance of better feeling and better accomplishments. I foresaw then what has since happened, that, under the appearance of daring obduracy, I should acquire such a habitual command over my followers, that I might use it for the insurance of discipline, and for relieving the distresses of the wretches who fell under our power. I saw, in short, that, to attain authority, I must assume the external semblance, at least, of those over whom it was to be exercised. The tidings of my father's fate, while it excited me to wrath and to revenge, confirmed the resolution I had adopted. He also had fallen a victim to his superiority of mind, morals, and manners, above those whom he commanded. They were wont to call him the gentleman; and, unquestionably, they thought he waited some favourable opportunity to reconcile himself, perhaps at their expense, with those existing forms of society with which his habits seemed best to suit, and, even therefore, they murdered him. Nature and justice alike called on me for revenge. I was soon at the head of a new body of the adventurers, who are so numerous in those islands. I sought not after those by whom I had been myself marooned, but after the wretches who had betrayed my father; and on them I took a revenge so severe, that it was of itself sufficient to stamp me with the character of that inexorable ferocity which I was desirous to be thought to possess, and which, perhaps, was gradually coming on my disposition in actual earnest. My manner, speech, and conduct, seemed so totally changed, that those

who formerly knew me were disposed to ascribe the alteration to my intercourse with the demons who haunted the sands of Coffin-key; nay, there were some superstitious enough to believe, that I had actually formed a league with them."

"I tremble to hear the rest!" said Minna; "did you not become the monster of courage and cruelty whose character you assumed?"

"If I have escaped being so, it is to you, Minna," replied Cleveland, "that the wonder must be ascribed. It is true, I have always endeavoured to distinguish myself rather by acts of the most adventurous valour, than by schemes of revenge or of plunder, and that at length I could save lives by a rude jest, and sometimes, by the excess of the measures which I myself proposed, could induce those under me to intercede in favour of prisoners; so that the seeming severity of my character has better served the cause of humanity, than had I appeared directly devoted to it."

He ceased, and, as Minna replied not a word, both remained silent for a little space, when Cleveland again resumed the discourse:—

"You are silent," he said, "Miss Troil, and I have injured myself in your opinion by the frankness with which I have laid my character before you. I may truly say that my natural disposition has been controled, but not altered, by the untoward circumstances in which I am placed."

"I am uncertain," said Minna, after a moment's consideration, "whether you had been thus candid, had you not known I should soon see your comrades, and discover from their conversation and their manners, what you would otherwise gladly have concealed."

"You do me injustice, Minna, cruel injustice. From the instant that you knew me to be a sailor of fortune, an adventurer, a buccaneer, or, if you will have the broad word, a PIRATE, what had you to expect less than what I have told you?"

"You speak too truly," said Minna—"all this I might have anticipated, and I know not how I should have expected it otherwise. But it seemed to me that a war on the cruel and superstitious Spaniards had in it something ennobling—something that refined the fierce employment to which you have just now given its true and dreaded name. I thought that the independent warriors of the Western Ocean, raised up, as it were, to punish the wrongs of so many murdered and plundered tribes, must have had something of noble elevation, like the sons of the north, whose long galleys avenged on so many coasts the oppressions of degenerate Rome. This I thought, and this I dreamed—I grieve that I am awakened and undeceived. Yet I blame you not for the erring of my own fancy—Farewell, we must now part."

"Say at least," said Cleveland, "that you do not hold me in horror for having told you the truth."

"I must have time for reflection," said Minna, "time to weigh what you have said, ere I can fully understand my own feelings. Thus much, however, I can say even now, that he who pursues the wicked purpose of plunder, by means of blood and cruelty, and who must veil his remains of natural remorse under an affectation of superior profligacy, is not,

and cannot be, the lover whom Minna Troil expected to find in Cleveland; and if she still love him, it must be as a penitent, and not as a hero."

So saying, she extricated herself from his grasp (for he still endeavoured to detain her), making an imperative sign to him to forbear from following her.—"She is gone," said Cleveland, looking after her; "wild and fanciful as she is, I expected not this.—She startled not at the name of my perilous course of life, yet seems totally unprepared for the evil which must necessarily attend it; and so all the merit I have gained, with my resemblance to a Norse champion, or king of the sea, is to be lost at once, because a gang of pirates do not prove to be a choir of saints. I would that Rackam, Hawkins, and the rest, had been at the bottom of the Race of Portland—I would the Pentland Frith had swept them to hell rather than to Orkney! I will not, however, quit the chase of this angel for all that these fiends can do. I will—I must to Orkney before the udaller makes his voyage thither—our meeting might alarm even his blunt understanding, although, thank Heaven, in this wild country, men know the nature of our trade only by hearsay, through our honest friends the Dutch, who take care never to speak very ill of those they make money by.—Well, if fortune would but stand my friend with this beautiful enthusiast, I would pursue her wheel no farther at sea, but set myself down amongst these rocks, as happy as if they were so many groves of bananas and palmettoes."

With these, and such thoughts, half rolling in his bosom, half expressed in indistinct hints and murmurs, the pirate Cleveland returned to the mansion of Burgh-Westra.

CHAPTER XXIII.

There was shaking of hands, and sorrow of heart,
For the hour was approaching when merry folks must part;
So we call'd for our horses, and ask'd for our way,
While the jolly old landlord said, "Nothing's to pay."

Lilliput, a Poem.

WE do not dwell upon the festivities of the day, which had nothing in them to interest the reader particularly. The table groaned under the usual plenty, which was disposed of by the guests with the usual appetite—the bowl of punch was filled and emptied with the same celerity as usual—the men quaffed, and the women laughed—Claud Halcro rhymed, punned, and praised John Dryden—the udaller bumpered and sung choruses—and the evening concluded, as usual, in the rigging-loft, as it was Magnus Troil's pleasure to term the dancing apartment.

It was then and there that Cleveland, approaching Magnus, where he sat betwixt his two daughters, intimated his intention of going to Kirkwall in a small brig, which Bryce Snailsfoot, who had disposed of his goods with unprecedented celerity, had freighted thither, to procure a supply.

Magnus heard the sudden proposal of his guest with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure, and demanded sharply of Cleveland, how long it was since he had learned to prefer Bryce Snailsfoot's

company to his own? Cleveland answered, with his usual bluntness of manner, that time and tide tarried for no one, and that he had his own particular reasons for making his trip to Kirkwall sooner than the udaller proposed to set sail—that he hoped to meet with him and his daughters at the great fair, which was now closely approaching, and might perhaps find it possible to return to Zetland along with them.

While he spoke this, Brenda kept her eye as much upon her sister as it was possible to do, without exciting general observation. She remarked, that Minna's pale cheek became yet paler while Cleveland spoke; and that she seemed, by compressing her lips, and slightly knitting her brows, to be in the act of repressing the effects of strong interior emotion. But she spoke not; and when Cleveland, having bidden adieu to the udaller, approached to salute her, as was then the custom, she received his farewell without trusting herself to attempt a reply.

Brenda had her own trial approaching; for Mordaunt Mertoun, once so much loved by her father, was now in the act of making his cold parting from him, without receiving a single look of friendly regard. There was, indeed, sarcasm in the tone with which Magnus wished the youth a good journey, and recommended to him, if he met a bonny lass by the way, not to dream that she was in love, because she chanced to laugh at him. Mertoun coloured at what he felt as an insult, though it was but half intelligible to him; but he remembered Brenda, and suppressed every feeling of resentment. He proceeded to take his leave of the sisters. Minna, whose heart was considerably softened towards him, received his farewell with some degree of interest; but Brenda's was so visible in the kindness of her manner, and the moisture which gathered in her eye, that it was noticed even by the udaller, who exclaimed, half-angrily, "Why, ay, lass, that may be right enough, for he was an old acquaintance; but mind! I have no will that he remain one."

Mertoun, who was slowly leaving the apartment, half overheard this disparaging observation, and half turned round to resent it. But his purpose failed him when he saw that Brenda had been obliged to have recourse to her handkerchief to hide her emotion; and the sense that it was excited by his departure, obliterated every thought of her father's unkindness. He retired—the other guests followed his example; and many of them, like Cleveland and himself, took their leave over-night, with the purpose of commencing their homeward journey on the succeeding morning.

That night, the mutual sorrow of Minna and Brenda, if it could not wholly remove the reserve which had estranged the sisters from each other, at least melted all its frozen and unkindly symptoms. They wept in each other's arms; and though neither spoke, yet each became dearer to the other; because they felt that the grief which called forth these drops, had a source common to them both.

It is probable, that though Brenda's tears were most abundant, the grief of Minna was most deeply seated; for, long after the younger had sobbed herself asleep, like a child, upon her sister's bosom,

Minna lay awake, watching the dubious twilight, while tear after tear slowly gathered in her eye, and found a current down her cheek, as soon as it became too heavy to be supported by her long black silken eye-lashes. As she lay, bewildered among the sorrowful thoughts which supplied these tears, she was surprised to distinguish, beneath the window, the sounds of music. At first she supposed it was some freak of Claud Halcro, whose fantastic humour sometimes indulged itself in such serenades. But it was not the cue of the old minstrel, but the guitar which she heard—an instrument which none in the island knew how to touch except Cleveland, who had learned, in his intercourse with the South-American Spaniards, to play on it with superior execution. Perhaps it was in those climates also that he had learned the song, which, though he now sung it under the window of a maiden of Thule, had certainly never been composed for the native of a climate so northerly and so severe, since it spoke of productions of the earth and skies, which are there unknown.

1.

Love wakes and weeps
While Beauty sleeps!
O for Music's softest numbers,
To prompt a theme,
For Beauty's dream,
Soft as the pillow of her slumbers

2.

Through groves of palm
Sigh gales of balm,
Fire-flies on the air are wheeling;
While through the gloom
Comes soft perfume,
The distant beds of flowers revealing.

3.

O wake and live!
No dream can give
A shadow'd bliss, the real excelling;
No longer sleep,
From lattice peep
And list the tale that Love is telling.

The voice of Cleveland was deep, rich, and manly, and accorded well with the Spanish air, to which the words, probably a translation from the same language, had been adapted. His invocation would not probably have been fruitless, could Minna have arisen without awakening her sister. But that was impossible; for Brenda, who, as we already mentioned, had wept bitterly before she had sunk into repose, now lay with her face on her sister's neck, and one arm stretched around her, in the attitude of a child which has cried itself asleep in the arms of its nurse. It was impossible for Minna to extricate herself from her grasp without awaking her; and she could not, therefore, execute her hasty purpose of donning her gown, and hastening to the window to speak with Cleveland, who, she had no doubt, had resorted to this contrivance to procure an interview. The restraint was sufficiently provoking, for it was more than probable that her lover came to take his last farewell; but that Brenda, inimical as she seemed to be of late towards Cleve-

land, should awake and witness it, was a thought not to be endured.

There was a short pause, in which Minna endeavoured more than once, with as much gentleness as possible, to unclasp Brenda's arm from her neck; but whenever she attempted it, the slumberer muttered some little pettish sound, like a child disturbed in its sleep, which sufficiently showed that perseverance in the attempt would awaken her fully.

To her great vexation, therefore, Minna was compelled to remain still and silent; when her lover, as if determined upon gaining her ear by music of another strain, sung the following fragment of a sea-ditty:—

Farewell! Farewell! the voice you hear,
Has left its last soft tone with you,—
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew.

The accents which I scarce could form
Beneath your frown's controlling check,
Must give the word, above the storm,
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

The timid eye I dared not raise,—
The hand, that shook when press'd to thine,
Must point the guns upon the chase,—
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

To all I love, or hope, or fear,—
Honour, or own, a long adieu!
To all that life has soft and dear,
Farewell! save memory of you!

He was again silent; and again she, to whom the serenade was addressed, strove in vain to arise without rousing her sister. It was impossible; and she had nothing before her but the unhappy thought that Cleveland was taking leave in his desolation, without a single glance, or a single word. He, too, whose temper was so fiery, yet who subjected his violent mood with such sedulous attention to her will,—could she but have stolen a moment but to say adieu—to caution him against new quarrels with Mertoun—to implore him to detach himself from such comrades as he had described,—could she but have done this, who could say what effect such parting admonitions might have had upon his character—nay, upon the future events of his life?

Tantalized by such thoughts, Minna was about to make another and decisive effort, when she heard voices beneath the window, and thought she could distinguish that they were those of Cleveland and Mertoun, speaking in a sharp tone, which, at the same time, seemed cautiously suppressed, as if the speakers feared being overheard. Alarm now mingled with her former desire to rise from bed, and she accomplished at once the purpose which she had so often attempted in vain. Brenda's arm was unloosed from her sister's neck, without the sleeper receiving more alarm than provoked two or three unintelligible murmurs, while, with equal speed and silence, Minna put on some part of her dress, with the intention to steal to the window. But, ere she could accomplish this, the sound of the voices without was exchanged for that of blows and struggling, which terminated suddenly by a deep groan.

Terrified at this last signal of mischief, Minna sprung to the window, and endeavoured to open it; for the persons were so close under the walls of the house that she could not see them, save by putting her head out of the casement. The iron hasp was stiff and rusted, and, as generally happens, the haste with which she laboured to undo it only rendered the task more difficult. When it was accomplished, and Minna had eagerly thrust her body half out at the casement, those who had created the sounds which alarmed her were become invisible, excepting that she saw a shadow cross the moon-light, the substance of which must have been in the act of turning a corner, which concealed it from her sight. The shadow moved slowly, and seemed that of a man who supported another upon his shoulders; an indication which put the climax to Minna's agony of mind. The window was not above eight feet from the ground, and she hesitated not to throw herself from it hastily, and to pursue the object which had excited her terror.

But when she came to the corner of the buildings from which the shadow seemed to have been projected, she discovered nothing which could point out the way that the figure had gone; and, after a moment's consideration, became sensible that all attempts at pursuit would be alike wild and fruitless. Besides all the projections and recesses of the many-angled mansion, and its numerous offices—besides the various cellars, store-houses, stables, and so forth, which defied her solitary search, there was a range of low rocks, stretching down to the haven, and which were, in fact, a continuation of the ridge which formed its pier. These rocks had many indentures, hollows, and caverns, into any one of which the figure to which the shadow belonged might have retired with his fatal burden; for fatal, she feared, it was most likely to prove.

A moment's reflection, as we have said, convinced Minna of the folly of farther pursuit. Her next thought was to alarm the family; but what tale had she to tell, and of whom was that tale to be told!—On the other hand, the wounded man—if indeed he were wounded—alas, if indeed he were not mortally wounded,—might not be past the reach of assistance; and, with this idea, she was about to raise her voice, when she was interrupted by that of Claud Halcro, who was returning apparently from the haven, and singing, in his manner, a scrap of an old Norse ditty, which might run thus in English:

And you shall deal the funeral dole:

Ay, deal it, mother mine,

To weary body, and to heavy soul,

The white bread and the wine.

And you shall deal my horses of pride;

Ay, deal them, mother mine;

And you shall deal my lands so wide,

And deal my castles nine

But deal not vengeance for the deed,

And deal not for the crime;

The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,

And the rest in God's own time.—

The singular adaptation of these rhymes to the si-

VOL. III.

uation in which she found herself, seemed to Minna like a warning from Heaven. We are speaking of a land of omens and superstitions, and perhaps will scarce be understood by those whose limited imagination cannot conceive how strongly these operate upon the human mind during a certain progress of society. A line of Virgil, turned up casually, was received in the seventeenth century, and in the court of England, as an intimation of future events; and no wonder that a maiden of the distant and wild isles of Zetland should have considered as an injunction from Heaven, verses which happened to convey a sense analogous to her present situation.

"I will be silent," she muttered,—*"I will seal my lips—"*

The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
And the rest in God's own time."

"Who speaks there?" said Claud Halcro, in some alarm; for he had not, in his travels in foreign parts, been able by any means to rid himself of his native superstitions. In the condition to which fear and horror had reduced her, Minna was at first unable to reply; and Halcro, fixing his eyes upon the female white figure, which he saw indistinctly (for she stood in the shadow of the house, and the morning was thick and misty), began to conjure her in an ancient rhyme which occurred to him as suited for the occasion, and which had in its gibberish a wild and unearthly sound, which may be lost in the ensuing translation:—

Saint Magnus control thee, that martyr of treason;

Saint Ronan rebuke thee, with rhyme and with reason;

By the mass of Saint Martin, the might of Saint Mary,

Be thou gone, or thy weird shall be worse if thou tarry!

If of good, go hence and hallow thee,—

If of ill, let the earth swallow thee,—

If thou'rt of air, let the grey mist fold thee,—

If of earth, let the swart mine hold thee,—

If a pixie, seek thy ring,—

If a nixie, seek thy spring;—

If on middle earth thou'st been

Slave of sorrow, shame, and sin,

Hast eat the bread of toil and strife,

And dree'd the lot which men call life,

Begone to thy stone! for thy coffin is scant of thee,

The worm, thy play-fellow, wails for the want of thee;—

Hence, houseless ghost! let the earth hide thee,

Till Michael shall blow the blast, see that there thou bide thee!

Phantom, fly hence! take the Cross for a token,

Hence pass till Hallowmass!—my spell is spoken.

"It is I, Halcro," muttered Minna, in a tone so thin and low, that it might have passed for the faint reply of the conjured phantom.

"You!—you!" said Halcro, his tone of alarm changing to one of extreme surprise; "by this moonlight, which is waning, and so it is!—Who could have thought to find you, my most lovely Night, wandering abroad in your own element!—But you saw them, I reckon, as well as I—bold enough in you to follow them, though."

"Saw whom?—follow whom?" said Minna, hoping to gain some information on the subject of her fears and her anxiety.

"The corpse-lights which danced at the haven,"

replied Halcro; "they bode no good, I promise you—you wot well what the old rhyme says—

Where corpse-light
Dances bright,
Be it day or night,
Be it by light or dark,
There shall corpse lie stiff and stark.

I went half as far as the haven to look after them, but they had vanished. I think I saw a boat put off, however,—some one bound for the haaf, I suppose.—I would we had good news of this fishing—there was Norna left us in anger, and then these corpse-lights!—Well, God help the while. I am an old man, and can but wish that all were well over.—But how now, my pretty Minna? tears in your eyes!—And now that I see you in the fair moon-light, bare-footed too, by Saint Magnus!—Were there no stockings of Zetland wool soft enough for these pretty feet and ancles, that glance so white in the moon-beam?—What, silent!—angry, perhaps," he added, in a more serious tone, "at my nonsense. For shame, silly maiden!—Remember I am old enough to be your father, and have always loved you as my child."

"I am not angry," said Minna, constraining herself to speak—"but heard you nothing?—saw you nothing?—They must have passed you."

"They?" said Claud Halcro; "what mean you by they?—is it the corpse-lights?—No, they did not pass by me, but I think they have passed by you, and blighted you with their influence, for you are as pale as a spectre.—Come, come, Minna," he added, opening a side-door of the dwelling, "these moon-light walks are fitter for old poets than for young maidens—And so lightly clad as you are! Maiden, you should take care how you give yourself to the breezes of a Zetland night, for they bring more sleet than odours upon their wings.—But, maiden, go in; for, as glorious John says—or, as he does not say—for I cannot remember how his verse chimes—but, as I say myself, in a pretty poem, written when my muse was in her teens,—

Menseful maiden ne'er should rise,
Till the first beam tinge the skies;
Silk-fringed eyelids still should close,
Till the sun has kiss'd the rose;
Maiden's foot we should not view,
Mark'd with tiny print on dew,
Till the opening flowerets spread
Carpet meet for beauty's tread—

Stay, what comes next?—let me see."

When the spirit of recitation seized on Claud Halcro, he forgot time and place, and might have kept his companion in the cold air for half an hour, giving poetical reasons why she ought to have been in bed. But she interrupted him by the question, earnestly pronounced, yet in a voice which was scarcely articulate, holding Halcro, at the same time, with a trembling and convulsive grasp, as if to support herself from falling,—"Saw you no one in the boat which put to sea but now?"

"Nonsense," replied Halcro; "how could I see any one, when light and distance only enabled me to know that it was a boat, and not a grampus?"

"But there must have been some one in the boat?"

repeated Minna, scarce conscious of what she said.

"Certainly," answered the poet; "boats seldom work to windward of their own accord.—But come, this is all folly; and so, as the queen says, in an old play, which was revived for the stage by rare Will D'Avenant, 'To bed—to bed—to bed.'"

They separated, and Minna's limbs conveyed her with difficulty, through several devious passages, to her own chamber, where she stretched herself cautiously beside her still sleeping sister, with a mind harassed with the most agonizing apprehensions. That she had heard Cleveland, she was positive—the tenor of the songs left her no doubt on that subject. If not equally certain that she had heard young Mertoun's voice in hot quarrel with her lover, the impression to that effect was strong on her mind. The groan, with which the struggle seemed to terminate—the fearful indication from which it seemed that the conqueror had borne off the lifeless body of his victim—all tended to prove that some fatal event had concluded the contest. And which of the unhappy men had fallen?—which had met a bloody death?—which had achieved a fatal and a bloody victory?—These were questions to which the still small voice of interior conviction answered, that her lover Cleveland, from character, temper, and habits, was most likely to have been the survivor of the fray. She received from the reflection an involuntary consolation which she almost detested herself for admitting, when she recollected that it was at once darkened with her lover's guilt, and embittered with the destruction of Brenda's happiness for ever.

"Innocent, unhappy sister;" such were her reflections; "thou art ten times better than I, because so unpretending—so unassuming in thine excellence! How is it possible that I should cease to feel a pang, which is only transferred from my bosom to thine?"

As these cruel thoughts crossed her mind, she could not refrain from straining her sister so close to her bosom, that, after a heavy sigh, Brenda awoke.

"Sister," she said, "is it you?—I dreamed I lay on one of those monuments which Claud Halcro described to us, where the effigy of the inhabitant beneath lies carved in stone upon the sepulchre. I dreamed such a marble form lay by my side, and that it suddenly acquired enough of life and animation to fold me to its cold, moist bosom—and it is yours, Minna, that is indeed so chilly.—You are ill, my dearest Minna! for God's sake, let me rise and call Euphane Fea.—What ails you? has Norna been here again?"

"Call no one hither," said Minna, detaining her; "nothing ails me for which any one has a remedy—nothing but apprehensions of evil worse than even Norna could prophesy. But God is above all, my dear Brenda; and let us pray to him to turn, as he only can, our evil into good."

They did jointly repeat their usual prayer for strength and protection from on high, and again composed themselves to sleep, suffering no word save "God bless you," to pass betwixt them, when their devotions were finished; thus scrupulously dedicating to Heaven their last waking words, if human frailty prevented them from commanding their last

waking thoughts. Brenda slept first, and Minna, strongly resisting the dark and evil presentiments which again began to crowd themselves upon her imagination, was at last so fortunate as to slumber also.

The storm which Halcro had expected began about day-break—a squall, heavy with wind and rain, such as is often felt, even during the finest part of the season, in these latitudes. At the whistle of the wind, and the clatter of the rain on the shingle-roofing of the fisher-huts, many a poor woman was awakened, and called on her children to hold up their little hands, and join in prayer for the safety of the dear husband and father, who was even then at the mercy of the disturbed elements. Around the house of Burgh-Westra, chimneys howled, and windows clashed. The props and rafters of the higher parts of the building, most of them formed out of wreck-wood, groaned and quivered, as if they feared to be again dispersed by the tempest. But the daughters of Magnus Troil continued to sleep as softly and as sweetly as if the hand of Chantry had formed them out of statuary marble. The squall had passed away, and the sun-beams, dispersing the clouds which drifted to leeward, shone full through the lattice, when Minna first started from the profound sleep into which fatigue and mental exhaustion had lulled her, and raising herself on her arm, began to recal events which, after this interval of profound repose, seemed almost to resemble the baseless visions of the night. She almost doubted if what she recalled of horror, previous to her starting from her bed, was not indeed the fiction of a dream, suggested, perhaps, by some external sounds.

"I will see Claud Halcro instantly," she said; "he may know something of these strange noises, as he was stirring at the time."

With that she sprung from bed, but hardly stood upright on the floor, ere her sister exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! Minna, what ails your foot—your ankle?"

She looked down, and saw with surprise, which amounted to agony, that both her feet, but particularly one of them, was stained with dark crimson, resembling the colour of dried blood.

Without attempting to answer Brenda, she rushed to the window, and cast a desperate look on the grass beneath, for there she knew she must have contracted the fatal stain. But the rain, which had fallen there in treble quantity, as well from the heavens as from the eaves of the house, had washed away that guilty witness, if indeed such had ever existed there. All was fresh and fair, and the blades of grass, overcharged and bent with rain-drops, glittered like diamonds in the bright morning sun.

While Minna stared upon the spangled verdure, with her full dark eyes fixed and enlarged to circles by the intensity of her terror, Brenda was hanging about her, and, with many an eager inquiry, pressed to know whether or how she had hurt herself?

"A piece of glass cut through my shoe," said Minna, bethinking herself that some excuse was necessary to her sister; "I scarce felt it at the time."

"And yet see how it has bled," said her sister. "Sweet Minna," she added, approaching her with

a wetted towel, "let me wipe the blood off—the hurt may be worse than you think of."

But as she approached, Minna, who saw no other way of preventing discovery that the blood with which she was stained had never flowed in her own veins, harshly and hastily repelled the proffered kindness. Poor Brenda, unconscious of any offence which she had given to her sister, drew back two or three paces on finding her service thus unkindly refused, and stood gazing at Minna with looks in which there was more of surprise and mortified affection than of resentment, but which had yet something also of natural displeasure.

"Sister," said she, "I thought we had agreed but last night, that, happen to us what might, we would at least love each other."

"Much may happen betwixt night and morning," answered Minna, in words rather wrenched from her by her situation, than flowing forth the voluntary interpreters of her thoughts.

"Much may indeed have happened in a night so stormy," answered Brenda; "for see where the very wall around Euphane's plant-a-cruive has been blown down; but neither wind nor rain, nor aught else, can cool our affection, Minna."

"But that may chance," replied Minna, "which may convert it into"—

The rest of the sentence she muttered in a tone so indistinct, that it could not be apprehended; while, at the same time, she washed the blood-stains from her feet and left ankle. Brenda, who still remained looking on at some distance, endeavoured in vain to assume some tone which might re-establish kindness and confidence betwixt them.

"You were right," she said, "Minna, to suffer no one to help you to dress so simple a scratch—standing where I do, it is scarce visible."

"The most cruel wounds," replied Minna, "are those which make no outward show—Are you sure you see it at all?"

"O, yes!" replied Brenda, framing her answer as she thought would best please her sister; "I see a very slight scratch; nay, now you draw on the stocking, I can see nothing."

"You do indeed see nothing," answered Minna, somewhat wildly; "but the time will soon come that all—ay, all—will be seen and known."

So saying, she hastily completed her dress, and led the way to the breakfast, where she assumed her place among the guests; but with a countenance so pale and haggard, and manners and speech so altered, and so bewildered, that it excited the attention of the whole company, and the utmost anxiety on the part of her father Magnus Troil. Many and various were the conjectures of the guests, concerning a distemperature which seemed rather mental than corporeal. Some hinted that the maiden had been struck with an evil eye, and something they muttered about Norna of the Fitful-head; some talked of the departure of Captain Cleveland, and murmured, "it was a shame for a young lady to take on so after a land-louper, of whom no one knew anything;" and this contemptuous epithet was in particular bestowed on the captain by Mistress Babie Yellowley, while she was in the act of wrapping round her old skinny neck the very handsome overlay (as she called it)

wherewith the said captain had presented her. The old Lady Glowrowrum had a system of her own, which she hinted to Mistress Yellowley, after thanking God that her own connexion with the Burgh-Westra family was by the lass's mother, who was a canny Scotswoman, like herself.

"For, as to these Troils, you see, Dame Yellowley, for as high as they hold their heads, they say that ken (winking sagaciously), that there is a bee in their bonnet;—that Norna, as they call her, for it's no her right name neither, is at whiles far beside her right mind,—and they that ken the cause, say the fowde was some gate or other linked in with it, for he will never hear an ill word of her. But I was in Scotland then, or I might have kenn'd the real cause, as weel as other folk. At any rate, there is a kind of wildness in the blood. Ye ken very weel daft folk dinna bide to be contradicted; and I'll say that for the fowde—he likes to be contradicted as ill as ony man in Zetland. But it shall never be said that I said ony ill of the house that I am sae nearly connected wi'. Only ye will mind, dame, it is through the Sinclairs that we are a-kin, not through the Troils,—and the Sinclairs are kenn'd far and wide for a wise generation, dame. But I see there is the stirrup-cup coming round."

"I wonder," said Mistress Babie to her brother, as soon as the Lady Glowrowrum turned from her, "what gars that muckle wife dame, dame, dame, that gate at me? She might ken the blude of the Clinkscales is as gude as ony Glowrowrum's amang them."

The guests, meanwhile, were fast taking their departure, scarcely noticed by Magnus, who was so much engrossed with Minna's indisposition, that, contrary to his hospitable wont, he suffered them to go away unsaluted. And thus concluded, amidst anxiety and illness, the festival of Saint John, as celebrated on that season at the house of Burgh-Westra; adding another caution to that of the Emperor of Ethiopia,—with how little security man can reckon upon the days which he destines to happiness!

CHAPTER XXIV.

But this sad evil which doth her infest,
Doth course of natural cause far exceed,
And housed is within her hollow brest,
That either seems some cursed witch's deed,
Or evill spright that in her doth such torment breed.

Fairy Queen, Book III, Canto III.

THE term had now elapsed, by several days, when Mordaunt Mertoun, as he had promised at his departure, should have returned to his father's abode at Jarlshof, but there were no tidings of his arrival. Such delay might, at another time, have excited little curiosity and no anxiety; for old Swertha, who took upon her the office of thinking and conjecturing for the little household, would have concluded that he had remained behind the other guests upon some party of sport or pleasure. But she knew that Mordaunt had not been lately in favour with Magnus Troil; she knew that he proposed his stay at Burgh-Westra should be a short one, upon account of his father's health, to whom, notwithstanding the little

encouragement which his filial piety received, he paid uniform attention. Swertha knew all this, and she became anxious. She watched the looks of her master, the elder Mertoun; but, wrapt in dark and stern uniformity of composure, his countenance, like the surface of a midnight lake, enabled no one to penetrate into what was beneath. His studies, his solitary meals, his lonely walks, succeeded each other in unvaried rotation, and seemed undisturbed by the least thought about Mordaunt's absence.

At length such reports reached Swertha's ear, from various quarters, that she became totally unable to conceal her anxiety, and resolved, at the risk of provoking her master into fury, or perhaps that of losing her place in his household, to force upon his notice the doubts which afflicted her own mind. Mordaunt's good humour and goodly person must indeed have made no small impression on the withered and selfish heart of the poor old woman, to induce her to take a course so desperate, and from which her friend the ranzelman endeavoured in vain to deter her. Still, however, conscious that a miscarriage in the matter, would, like the loss of Trinculo's bottle in the horse-pool, be attended not only with dishonour, but with infinite loss, she determined to proceed on her high emprise with as much caution as was consistent with the attempt.

We have already mentioned, that it seemed a part of the very nature of this reserved and unsocial being, at least since his retreat into the utter solitude of Jarlshof, to endure no one to start a subject of conversation, or to put any question to him, that did not arise out of urgent and pressing emergency. Swertha was sensible, therefore, that, in order favourably to open the discourse which she proposed to hold with her master, she must contrive that it should originate with himself.

To accomplish this purpose, while busied in preparing the table for Mr Mertoun's simple and solitary dinner-meal, she formally adorned the table with two covers instead of one, and made all her other preparations as if he was to have a guest or companion at dinner.

The stratagem succeeded; for Mertoun, on coming from his study, no sooner saw the table thus arranged, than he asked Swertha, who, waiting the effect of her stratagem as a fisher watches his ground-baits, was fiddling up and down the room, "Whether Mordaunt was not returned from Burgh-Westra?"

This question was the cue for Swertha, and she answered in a voice of sorrowful anxiety, half-real, half-affected, "Na, na!—nae sic divot had dunted at their door. It wad be blithe news indeed, to ken that young Maister Mordaunt, puir dear bairn, were safe at hame."

"And, if he be not at home, why should you lay a cover for him, you doting fool?" replied Mertoun, in a tone well calculated to stop the old woman's proceedings. But she replied, boldly, "That, indeed, somebody should take thought about Maister Mordaunt; a' that she could do was to have seat and plate ready for him when he came. But she thought the dear bairn had been ower lang awa; and, if she maun speak out, she had her ain fears when and whether he might ever come hame."

"Your fears!" said Mertoun, his eyes flashing as they usually did when his hour of ungovernable passion approached; "do you speak of your idle fears to me, who know that all of your sex, that is not fickleness, and folly, and self-conceit, and self-will, is a bundle of idiotical fears, vapours, and tremors? What are your fears to me, you foolish old hag?"

It is an admirable quality in womankind, that, when a breach of the laws of natural affection comes under their observation, the whole sex is in arms. Let a rumour arise in the street of a parent that has misused a child, or a child that has insulted a parent,—I say nothing of the case of husband and wife, where the interest may be accounted for in sympathy,—and all the women within hearing will take animated and decided part with the sufferer. Swertha, notwithstanding her greed and avarice, had her share of the generous feeling which does so much honour to her sex, and was, on this occasion, so much carried on by its impulse, that she confronted her master, and upbraided him with his hard-hearted indifference, with a boldness at which she herself was astonished.

"To be sure it wasna her that suld be fearing for her young maister, Maister Mordaunt, even although he was, as she might weel say, the very sea-calf of her heart; but any other father, but his honour himself, wad have had speerings made after the poor lad, and him gane this eight days from Burgh-Westra, and naebody kenn'd when and where he had gane. There wasna a bairn in the howff but was maining for him; for he made all their bits of boats with his knife; there wadna be a dry eye in the parish, if aught worse than weal should befall him,—na, no ane, unless it might be his honour's ain."

Mertoun had been much struck, and even silenced, by the insolent volubility of his insurgent housekeeper; but, at the last sarcasm, he imposed on her silence in her turn with an audible voice, accompanied with one of the most terrific glances which his dark eye and stern features could express. But Swertha, who, as she afterwards acquainted the ranzelman, was wonderfully supported during the whole scene, would not be controlled by the loud voice and ferocious look of her master, but proceeded in the same tone as before.

"His honour," she said, "had made an unco wark because a wheen bits of kists and duds, that naebody had use for, had been gathered on the beach by the poor bodies of the township; and here was the bravest lad in the country lost, and cast away, as it were, before his een, and nae ane asking what was come o' him."

"What should come of him but good, you old fool," answered Mr Mertoun, "as far, at least, as there can be good in any of the follies he spends his time in?"

This was spoken rather in a scornful than an angry tone, and Swertha, who had got into the spirit of the dialogue, was resolved not to let it drop, now that the fire of her opponent seemed to slacken.

"O ay, to be sure I am an auld fule,—but if Maister Mordaunt should have settled down in the roost, as mair than ae boat had been lost in that

wearyfu' squall the other morning—by good luck it was short as it was sharp, or naething could have lived in it—or if he were drowned in a loch coming hame on foot, or if he were killed by miss of footing on a craig—the hail island kenn'd how venturesome he was—who," said Swertha, "will be the auld fule then?" And she added a pathetic ejaculation, that "God would protect the poor motherless bairn! for if he had had a mother, there would have been search made after him before now."

This last sarcasm affected Mertoun powerfully—his jaw quivered, his face grew pale, and he muttered to Swertha to go into his study (where she was scarcely ever permitted to enter), and fetch him a bottle which stood there.

"O ho!" quoth Swertha to herself, as she hastened on the commission, "my master knows where to find a cup of comfort to qualify his water with upon fitting occasions."

There was indeed a case of such bottles as were usually employed to hold strong waters, but the dust and cobwebs in which they were enveloped showed that they had not been touched for many years. With some difficulty Swertha extracted the cork of one of them, by the help of a fork—for cork-screw was there none at Jarlshof—and having ascertained by smell, and, in case of any mistake, by a moderate mouthful, that it contained wholesome Barbadoes-waters, she carried it into the room, where her master still continued to struggle with his faintness. She then began to pour a small quantity into the nearest cup that she could find, wisely judging, that, upon a person so much unaccustomed to the use of spirituous liquors, a little might produce a strong effect. But the patient signed to her impatiently to fill the cup, which might hold more than the third of an English pint measure, up to the very brim, and swallowed it down without hesitation.

"Now the saunts above have a care on us!" said Swertha; "he will be drunk as weel as mad, and wha is to guide him then, I wonder?"

But Mertoun's breath and colour returned, without the slightest symptom of intoxication; on the contrary, Swertha afterwards reported, that, "Although she had always had a firm opinion in favour of a dram, yet she never saw one work such miracles—he spoke mair like a man of the middle world, than she had ever heard him since she had entered his service."

"Swertha," he said, "you are right in this matter, and I was wrong.—Go down to the ranzelman directly, tell him to come and speak with me, without an instant's delay, and bring me special word what boats and people he can command; I will employ them all in the search, and they shall be plentifully rewarded."

Stimulated by the spur which maketh the old woman proverbially to trot, Swertha posted down to the hamlet, with all the speed of threescore, rejoicing that her sympathetic feelings were likely to achieve their own reward, having given rise to a quest which promised to be so lucrative, and in the profits whereof she was determined to have her share, shouting out as she went, and long before she got within hearing, the names of Neil Ronaldson, Sweyn Erickson, and the other friends and confederates who

were interested in her mission. To say the truth, notwithstanding that the good dame really felt a deep interest in Mordaunt Mertoun, and was mentally troubled on account of his absence, perhaps few things would have disappointed her more than if he had at this moment started up in her path safe and sound, and rendered unnecessary, by his appearance, the expense and the bustle of searching after him.

Soon did Swertha accomplish her business in the village, and adjust with the senators of the township her own little share of per centage upon the profits likely to accrue on her mission; and speedily did she return to Jarlshof, with Neil Ronaldson by her side, schooling him to the best of her skill in all the peculiarities of her master.

"Aboon a' things," she said, "never make him wait for an answer; and speak loud and distinct, as if you were hailing a boat,—for he downa bide to say the same thing twice over; and if he asks about distance, ye may make leagues for miles, for he kens naething about the face of the earth that he lives upon; and if he speak of siller, ye may ask dollars for shillings, for he minds them nae mair than sclate-stanes."

Thus tutored, Neil Ronaldson was introduced into the presence of Mertoun, but was utterly confounded to find that he could not act upon the system of deception which had been projected.—When he attempted, by some exaggeration of distance and peril, to enhance the hire of the boats and of the men (for the search was to be by sea and land), he found himself at once cut short by Mertoun, who showed not only the most perfect knowledge of the country, but of distances, tides, currents, and all belonging to the navigation of those seas, although these were topics with which he had hitherto appeared to be totally unacquainted. The ranzelman, therefore, trembled when they came to speak of the recompense to be afforded for their exertions in the search; for it was not more unlikely that Mertoun should be as well informed of what was just and proper upon this head as upon others; and Neil remembered the storm of his fury, when, at an early period after he had settled at Jarlshof, he drove Swertha and Sweyn Erickson from his presence. As, however, he stood hesitating betwixt the opposite fears of asking too much or too little, Mertoun stopped his mouth, and ended his uncertainty, by promising him a recompense beyond what he dared have ventured to ask, with an additional gratuity, in case they returned with the pleasing intelligence that his son was safe.

When this great point was settled, Neil Ronaldson, like a man of conscience, began to consider earnestly the various places at which search should be made after the young man; and having undertaken faithfully that the inquiry should be prosecuted at all the houses of the gentry, both in this and the neighbouring islands, he added, that, "After all, if his honour would not be angry, there was ane not far off, that, if anybody dared speer her a question, and if she liked to answer it, could tell more about Maister Mordaunt than anybody else could.—Ye will ken wha I mean, Swertha? Her that was down at the haven this morning." Thus he concluded,

addressing himself with a mysterious look to the housekeeper, which she answered with a nod and a wink.

"How mean you?" said Mertoun; "speak out, short and open—whom do you speak of?"

"It is Norna of the Fitful-head," said Swertha, "that the ranzelman is thinking about; for she has gone up to St Ringan's Kirk this morning on business of her own."

"And what can this person know of my son?" said Mertoun; "she is, I believe, a wandering mad-woman, or impostor."

"If she wanders," said Swertha, "it is for nae lack of means at hame, and that is weel known—plenty of a' thing has she of her ain, forbye that the fowde himsell would let her want naething."

"But what is that to my son?" said Mertoun, impatiently.

"I dinna ken—she took unco pleasure in Maister Mordaunt from the time she first saw him, and mony a braw thing she gave him at ae time or another, forbye the gowd chain that hangs about his bonnie craig—folks say it is of fairy gold.—I kenna what gold it is, but Bryce Snailsfoot says, that the value will mount to an hundred pund English, and that is nae deaf nuts."

"Go, Ronaldson," said Mertoun, "or else send some one, to seek this woman out—if you think there be a chance of her knowing anything of my son."

"She kens a' thing that happens in thae islands," said Neil Ronaldson, "muckle sooner than other folk, and that is Heaven's truth.—But as to going to the kirk, or the kirk-yard, to speer after her, there is not a man in Zetland will do it, for meed or for money—and that's Heaven's truth as weel as the other."

"Cowardly, superstitious fools!" said Mertoun.—"but give me my cloak, Swertha.—This woman has been at Burgh-Westra—she is related to Troil's family—she may know something of Mordaunt's absence, and its cause—I will seek her myself—she is at the Cross Kirk, you say?"

"No, not at the Cross Kirk, bnt at the auld kirk of Saint Ringan's—it's a dowie bit, and far frae being canny; and if your honour," added Swertha, "wad walk by my rule, I wad wait until she came back, and no trouble her when she may be mair busied wi' the dead, for onything that we ken, than she is wi' the living. The like of her carena to have other folk's een on them when they are, gude sain us! doing their ain particular turns."

Mertoun made no answer, but throwing his cloak loosely around him (for the day was misty, with passing showers), and leaving the decayed mansion of Jarlshof, he walked at a pace much faster than was usual with him, taking the direction of the ruinous church, which stood, as he well knew, within three or four miles of his dwelling.

The ranzelman and Swertha stood gazing after him in silence, until he was fairly out of ear-shot, when, looking seriously on each other, and shaking their sagacious heads in the same boding degree of vibration, they uttered their remarks in the same breath.

"Fools are aye fleet and fain," said Swertha.

"Fey* folks run fast," added the ranzelman; "and the thing that we are born to, we cannot win by.—I have known them that tried to stop folks that were fey.—You have heard of Helen Emberson of Camsey, how she stopped all the boles and windows about the house, that her gudeman might not see day-light, and rise to the haaf-fishing, because she feared foul weather; and how the boat he should have sailed in was lost in the roost; and how she came back, rejoicing in her gudeman's safety—but ne'er may care, for there she found him drowned in the masking-fat, within the wa's of his ain biggin; and moreover"—

But here Swertha reminded the ranzelman that he must go down to the haven to get off the fishing-boats; "for baith that my heart is sair for the bonnie lad, and that I am fear'd he cast up of his ain accord before you are at sea; and, as I have often told ye, my master may lead, but he winna drive; and if ye do not his bidding, and get out to sea, the never a bodle of boat-hire will ye see."

"Weel, weel, good dame," said the ranzelman, "we will launch as fast as we can; and by good luck, neither Clawson's boat, nor Peter Grots's is out to the haaf this morning, for a rabbit ran across them as they were going on board, and they came back like wise men, kenning they wad be called to other wark this day. And a marvel it is to think, Swertha, how few real judicious men are left in this land. There is our great udaller is weel enough when he is fresh, but he makes ower mony voyages in his ship and his yawl to be lang sae; and now, they say, his daughter, Mistress Minna, is sair out of sorts.—Then there is Norna kens muckle mair than other folks, but wise woman ye cannot call her.—Our tacksman here, Maister Mertoun, his wit is sprung in the bowsprit, I doubt—his son is a daft gowk; and I ken few of consequence hereabouts—excepting always myself, and maybe you, Swertha—but what may, in some sense or other, be called fules."

"That may be, Neil Ronaldson," said the dame; "but if you do not hasten the faster to the shore, you will lose tide; and, as I said to my master some short time syne, wha will be the fule then?"

CHAPTER XXV.

I do love these ancient ruins—

We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history,
And, questionless, here, in this open court
(Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather), some men lie interr'd,
Loved the church so well, and gave so largely to it,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till dooms-day; but all things have their end—
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death which we have.

WEBSTER'S *Duchess of Malfy*.

THE ruinous church of Saint Ninian had, in its time, enjoyed great celebrity; for that mighty sys-

* *Fey* is an epithet applied to those who are *fated*, which seems to be the derivation of it, or predestined to death, and who are supposed by the Scottish common people to rush upon their doom, as if carried forward by some irresistible impulse.

tem of superstition, which spread its roots over all Europe, had not failed to extend them even to this remote archipelago, and Zetland had, in the catholic times, her saints, her shrines, and her relics, which, though little known elsewhere, attracted the homage, and commanded the observance, of the simple inhabitants of Thule. Their devotion to this church of Saint Ninian, or, as he was provincially termed, Saint Ringan, situated, as the edifice was, close to the sea-beach, and serving, in many points, as a land-mark to their boats, was particularly obstinate, and was connected with so much superstitious ceremonial and credulity, that the reformed clergy thought it best, by an order of the church courts, to prohibit all spiritual service within its walls, as tending to foster the rooted faith of the simple and rude people around in saint-worship, and other erroneous doctrines of the Romish Church.

After the church of Saint Ninian had been thus denounced as a seat of idolatry, and desecrated of course, the public worship was transferred to another church; and the roof, with its lead and its rafters, having been stripped from the little rude old Gothic building, it was left in the wilderness to the mercy of the elements. The fury of the uncontrolled winds, which howled along an exposed space of shifting sands (for the soil resembled that which we have described at Jarlshof), very soon choked up nave and aisle, and, on the north-west side, which was chiefly exposed to the wind, hid the outside walls more than half way upwards with mounds of drifted sand, over which the gable-ends of the building, with the little belfry, which was built above its nave, arose in ragged and shattered nakedness of ruin.

Yet, deserted as it was, the kirk of Saint Ringan still retained some semblance of the ancient homage formerly rendered there. The rude and ignorant fishermen of Dunrossness observed a practice, of which they themselves had well nigh forgot the origin, and from which the protestant clergy in vain endeavoured to deter them.—When their boats were in extreme peril, it was common amongst them to propose to vow awmous, as they termed it, that is, an alms, to Saint Ringan; and when the danger was over, they never failed to absolve themselves of their vow, by coming singly and secretly to the old church, and putting off their shoes and stockings at the entrance of the church-yard, walking thrice around the ruins, observing that they did so in the course of the sun. When the circuit was accomplished for the third time, the votary dropped his offering, usually a small silver coin, through the mullions of a lanceolated window, which opened into a side-aisle, and then retired, avoiding carefully to look behind him till he was beyond the precincts which had once been hallowed ground; for it was believed that the skeleton of the saint received the offering in his bony hand, and showed his ghastly death's-head at the window into which it was thrown.

Indeed, the scene was rendered more appalling to weak and ignorant minds, because the same stormy and eddying winds, which, on the one side of the church, threatened to bury the ruins with sand, and had, in fact, heaped it up in huge quantities, so as

almost to hide the side-wall with its buttresses, seemed bent on uncovering the graves of those who had been laid to their long rest on the south-eastern quarter; and, after an unusually hard gale, the coffins, and sometimes the very corpses, of those who had been interred without the usual cearments, were discovered in a ghastly manner to the eyes of the living.

It was to this desolated place of worship that the elder Mertoun now proceeded, though without any of those religious or superstitious purposes with which the church of Saint Ringan was usually approached. He was totally without the superstitious fears of the country,—nay, from the sequestered and sullen manner in which he lived, withdrawing himself from human society even when assembled for worship, it was the general opinion that he erred on the more fatal side, and believed rather too little than too much of that which the church receives.

As he entered the little bay, on the shore, and almost on the beach of which the ruins are situated, he could not help pausing for an instant, and becoming sensible that the scene, as calculated to operate on human feelings, had been selected with much judgment as the site of a religious house.—In front lay the sea, into which two head-lands, which formed the extremities of the bay, projected their gigantic causeways of dark and sable rocks, on the ledges of which the gulls, scouries, and other sea-fowl, appeared like flakes of snow; while, upon the lower ranges of the cliff, stood whole lines of cormorants, drawn up alongside of each other, like soldiers in their battle array, and other living thing was there none to see. The sea, although not in a tempestuous state, was disturbed enough to rush on these capes with a sound like distant thunder, and the billows, which rose in sheets of foam half way up these sable rocks, formed a contrast of colouring equally striking and awful.

Betwixt the extremities, or capes, of these projecting head-lands, there rolled, on the day when Mertoun visited the scene, a deep and dense aggregation of clouds, through which no human eye could penetrate, and which bounding the vision, and excluding all view of the distant ocean, rendered it no unapt representation of the sea in the vision of Mirza, whose extent was concealed by vapours, and clouds, and storms. The ground rising steeply from the sea-beach, permitted no view into the interior of the country, and seemed a scene of irretrievable barrenness, where scrubby and stunted heath, intermixed with the long bent, or coarse grass, which first covers sandy soils, were the only vegetables that could be seen. Upon a natural elevation, which rose above the beach in the very bottom of the bay, and receded a little from the sea, so as to be without reach of the waves, arose the half-buried ruin which we have already described, surrounded by a wasted, half-ruinous, and mouldering wall, which, breached in several places, served still to divide the precincts of the cemetery. The mariners who were driven by accident into this solitary bay, pretended that the church was occasionally observed to be full of lights, and, from that circumstance, were used to prophesy shipwrecks and deaths by sea.

As Mertoun approached near to the chapel, he adopted, insensibly, and perhaps without much pre-

meditation, measures to avoid being himself seen until he came close under the walls of the burial-ground, which he approached, as it chanced, on that side where the sand was blowing from the graves in the manner we have described.

Here, looking through one of the gaps in the wall, which time had made, he beheld the person whom he sought, occupied in a manner which assorted well with the ideas popularly entertained of her character, but which was otherwise sufficiently extraordinary.

She was employed beside a rude monument, on one side of which was represented the rough outline of a cavalier, or knight, on horseback, while, on the other, appeared a shield, with the armorial bearings so defaced as not to be intelligible; which escutcheon was suspended by one angle, contrary to the modern custom, which usually places them straight and upright. At the foot of this pillar was believed to repose, as Mertoun had formerly heard, the bones of Ribolt Troil, one of the remote ancestors of Magnus, and a man renowned for deeds of valorous emprise in the fifteenth century. From the grave of this warrior Norna of the Fitful head seemed busied in shoveling the sand, an easy task where it was so light and loose; so that it seemed plain that she would shortly complete what the rude winds had begun, and make bare the bones which lay there interred. As she laboured she muttered her magic song; for without the Runic rhyme no form of northern superstition was ever performed. We have perhaps preserved too many examples of these incantations; but we cannot help attempting to translate that which follows:—

Champion, famed for warlike toil,
Art thou silent, Ribolt Troil?
Sand, and dust, and pebbly stones,
Are leaving bare thy giant bones.
Who dared touch the wild-bear's skin
Ye slumber'd on, while life was in?—
A woman now, or babe, may come
And cast the covering from thy tomb.

Yet be not wrathful, chief, nor blight
Mine eyes or ears with sound or sight!
I come not, with unhallow'd tread,
To wake the slumbers of the dead,
Or lay the giant relics bare;
But what I seek thou well canst spare.
Be it to my hand allow'd
To shear a merk's weight from thy shroud;
Yet leave thee sheeted lead enough
To shield thy bones from weather rough.

See, I draw my magic knife—
Never while thou wert in life
Laid'st thou still for sloth or fear,
When point and edge were glittering near;
See, the cearments now I sever—
Waken now, or sleep for ever!
Thou wilt not wake?—the deed is done!
The prize I sought is fairly won.

Thanks, Ribolt, thanks,—for this the sea
Shall smooth its ruffled crest for thee,—
And while afar its billows foam,
Subside to peace near Ribolt's tomb.
Thanks, Ribolt, thanks—for this the might
Of wild winds raging at their height,
When to thy place of slumber nigh,
Shall soften to a lullaby.

She, the dame of doubt and dread,
 Norna of the Fitful-head,
 Mighty in her own despite—
 Miserable in her might;
 In despair and frenzy great,—
 In her greatness desolate;
 Wisest, wickedest who lives,
 Well can keep the word she gives.

While Norna chaunted the first part of this rhyme, she completed the task of laying bare a part of the leaden coffin of the ancient warrior, and severed from it, with much caution and apparent awe, a portion of the metal. She then reverentially threw back the sand upon the coffin; and by the time she had finished her song, no trace remained that the secrets of the sepulchre had been violated.

Mertoun remained gazing on her from behind the church-yard wall during the whole ceremony, not from any impression of veneration for her or her employment, but because he conceived that to interrupt a madwoman in her act of madness, was not the best way to obtain from her such intelligence as she might have to impart. Meanwhile he had full time to consider her figure, although her face was obscured by her disheveled hair, and by the hood of her dark mantle, which permitted no more to be visible than a druidess would probably have exhibited at the celebration of her mystical rites. Mertoun had often heard of Norna before; nay, it is most probable that he might have seen her repeatedly, for she had been in the vicinity of Jarlshof more than once since his residence there. But the absurd stories which were in circulation respecting her, prevented his paying any attention to a person, whom he regarded as either an impostor, or a madwoman, or a compound of both. Yet, now that his attention was, by circumstances, involuntarily fixed upon her person and deportment, he could not help acknowledging to himself that she was either a complete enthusiast, or rehearsed her part so admirably, that no Pythoness of ancient times could have excelled her. The dignity and solemnity of her gestures,—the sonorous, yet impressive, tone of the voice with which she obtested the departed spirit whose mortal relics she ventured to disturb, were such as failed not to make an impression upon him, careless and indifferent as he generally appeared to all that went on around him. But no sooner was her singular occupation terminated, than, entering the church-yard with some difficulty, by clambering over the disjointed ruins of the wall, he made Norna aware of his presence. Far from starting, or expressing the least surprise at his appearance in a place so solitary, she said in a tone that seemed to intimate that he had been expected,—“So,—you have sought me at last?”

“And found you,” replied Mertoun, judging he would best introduce the inquiries he had to make, by assuming a tone which corresponded to her own.

“Yes!” she replied, “found me you have, and in the place where all men must meet—amid the tabernacles of the dead.”

“Here we must, indeed, meet at last,” replied Mertoun, glancing his eyes on the desolate scene around, where head-stones, half covered in sand, and

VOL. III.

others, from which the same wind had stripped the soil on which they rested, covered with inscriptions, and sculptured with the emblems of mortality, were the most conspicuous objects,—“here, as in the house of death, all men must meet at length; and happy those that come soonest to the quiet haven.”

“He that dares desire this haven,” said Norna, “must have steered a steady course in the voyage of life. I dare not hope for such quiet harbour. Darest thou expect it? or has the course thou hast kept deserved it?”

“It matters not to my present purpose,” replied Mertoun; “I have to ask you what tidings you know of my son Mordaunt Mertoun?”

“A father,” replied the sibyl, “asks of a stranger what tidings she has of his son! How should I know aught of him? the cormorant says not to the mallard, where is my brood?”

“Lay aside this useless affectation of mystery,” said Mertoun; “with the vulgar it has its effect, but upon me it is thrown away. The people of Jarlshof have told me that you do know, or may know, something of Mordaunt Mertoun, who has not returned home after the festival of Saint John’s, held in the house of your relative, Magnus Troil. Give me such information, if indeed you have it to give; and it shall be recompensed, if the means of recompense are in my power.”

“The wide round of earth,” replied Norna, “holds nothing that I would call a recompense for the slightest word that I throw away upon a living ear. But for thy son, if thou wouldst see him in life, repair to the approaching fair of Kirkwall, in Orkney.”

“And wherefore thither?” said Mertoun; “I know he had no purpose in that direction.”

“We drive on the stream of fate,” answered Norna, “without oar or rudder. You had no purpose this morning of visiting the kirk of Saint Rinnan, yet you are here;—you had no purpose but a minute hence of being at Kirkwall, and yet you will go thither.”

“Not unless the cause is more distinctly explained to me. I am no believer, dame, in those who assert your supernatural powers.”

“You shall believe in them ere we part,” said Norna. “As yet you know but little of me, nor shall you know more. But I know enough of you, and could convince you with one word that I do so.”

“Convince me then,” said Mertoun; “for unless I am so convinced, there is little chance of my following your counsel.”

“Mark, then,” said Norna, “what I have to say on your son’s score, else what I shall say to you on your own will banish every other thought from your memory. You shall go to the approaching fair at Kirkwall; and, on the fifth day of the fair, you shall walk, at the hour of noon, in the outer aisle of the cathedral of Saint Magnus, and there you shall meet a person who will give you tidings of your son.”

“You must speak more distinctly, dame,” returned Mertoun, scornfully, “if you hope that I should follow your counsel. I have been fooled in my time by women, but never so grossly as you seem willing to gull me.”

"Hearken, then!" said the old woman. "The word which I speak shall touch the nearest secret of thy life, and thrill thee through nerve and bone."

So saying, she whispered a word into Mertoun's ear, the effect of which seemed almost magical. He remained fixed and motionless with surprise, as, waving her arm slowly aloft, with an air of superiority and triumph, Norna glided from him, turned round a corner of the ruins, and was soon out of sight.

Mertoun offered not to follow, or to trace her. "We fly from our fate in vain!" he said, as he began to recover himself; and turning, he left behind him the desolate ruins with their cemetery. As he looked back from the very last point at which the church was visible, he saw the figure of Norna, muffled in her mantle, standing on the very summit of the ruined tower, and stretching out in the sea-breeze something which resembled a white pennon, or flag. A feeling of horror, similar to that excited by her last words, again thrilled through his bosom, and he hastened onwards with unwonted speed, until he had left the church of Saint Ninian, with its bay of sand, far behind him.

Upon his arrival at Jarlshof, the alteration in his countenance was so great, that Swertha conjectured he was about to fall into one of those fits of deep melancholy, which she termed his dark hour.

"And what better could be expected," thought Swertha, "when he must needs go visit Norna of the Fitful-head, when she was in the haunted kirk of Saint Ninian's?"

But without testifying any other symptoms of an alienated mind, than that of deep and sullen dejection, her master acquainted her with his intention to go to the fair of Kirkwall,—a thing so contrary to his usual habits, that the housekeeper well nigh refused to credit her ears. Shortly after he heard, with apparent indifference, the accounts returned by the different persons who had been sent out in quest of Mordaunt, by sea and land, who all of them returned without any tidings. The equanimity with which Mertoun heard the report of their bad success, convinced Swertha still more firmly, that in his interview with Norna, that issue had been predicted to him by the sibyl whom he had consulted.

The township were yet more surprised, when their tacksman, Mr Mertoun, as if on some sudden resolution, made preparations to visit Kirkwall during the fair, although he had hitherto avoided sedulously all such places of public resort. Swertha puzzled herself a good deal without being able to penetrate this mystery; and vexed herself still more concerning the fate of her young master. But her concern was much softened by the deposit of a sum of money, seeming, however moderate in itself, a treasure in her eyes, which her master put into her hands, acquainting her, at the same time, that he had taken his passage for Kirkwall, in a small bark belonging to the proprietor of the island of Mousa.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Nae langer she wept,—her tears were a' spent,—
Despair it was come, and she thought it content;
She thought it content, but her cheek it grew pale,
And she droop'd like a lily broke down by the hail.

Continuation of Auld Robin Gray.

THE condition of Minna much resembled that of the village heroine in Lady Ann Lindsay's beautiful ballad. Her natural firmness of mind prevented her from sinking under the pressure of the horrible secret, which haunted her while awake, and was yet more tormenting during her broken and hurried slumbers. There is no grief so dreadful as that which we dare not communicate, and in which we can neither ask nor desire sympathy; and when to this is added the burden of a guilty mystery to an innocent bosom, there is little wonder that Minna's health should have sunk under the burden.

To the friends around, her habits and manners, nay, her temper, seemed altered to such an extraordinary degree, that it is no wonder that some should have ascribed the change to witchcraft, and some to incipient madness. She became unable to bear the solitude in which she formerly delighted to spend her time; yet when she hurried into society, it was without either joining in, or attending to, what passed. Generally she appeared wrapped in sad, and even sullen abstraction, until her attention was suddenly roused by some casual mention of the name of Cleveland, or of Mordaunt Mertoun, at which she started, with the horror of one who sees the lighted match applied to a charged mine, and expects to be instantly involved in the effects of the explosion. And when she observed that the discovery was not yet made, it was so far from being a consolation, that she almost wished the worst was known, rather than endure the continued agonies of suspense.

Her conduct towards her sister was so variable, yet uniformly so painful to the kind-hearted Brenda, that it seemed to all around one of the strongest features of her malady. Sometimes Minna was impelled to seek her sister's company, as if by the consciousness that they were common sufferers by a misfortune of which she herself alone could grasp the extent; and then suddenly the feeling of the injury which Brenda had received through the supposed agency of Cleveland, made her unable to bear her presence, and still less to endure the consolation which her sister, mistaking the nature of her malady, vainly endeavoured to administer. Frequently, also, did it happen, that, while Brenda was imploring her sister to take comfort, she incautiously touched upon some subject which thrilled to the very centre of her soul; so that, unable to conceal her agony, Minna would rush hastily from the apartment. All these different moods, though they too much resembled, to one who knew not their real source, the caprices of unkind estrangement, Brenda endured with such prevailing and unruffled gentleness of disposition, that Minna was frequently moved to shed floods of tears upon her neck; and, perhaps, the moments in which she did so, though embittered by the recollection that her fatal secret concerned the destruction of Brenda's happiness as well as her

own, were still, softened as they were by sisterly affection, the most endurable moments of this most miserable period of her life.

The effects of the alternations of moping melancholy, fearful agitation, and bursts of nervous feeling, were soon visible on the poor young woman's face and person. She became pale and emaciated; her eye lost the steady quiet look of happiness and innocence, and was alternately dim and wild, as she was acted upon by a general feeling of her own distressful condition, or by some quicker and more poignant sense of agony. Her very features seemed to change, and become sharp and eager, and her voice, which, in its ordinary tones, was low and placid, now sometimes sunk in indistinct mutterings, and sometimes was raised beyond the natural key, in hasty and abrupt exclamations. When in company with others, she was sullenly silent, and when she ventured into solitude, was observed (for it was now thought very proper to watch her on such occasions) to speak much to herself.

The pharmacy of the islands was in vain resorted to by Minna's anxious father. Sages of both sexes, who knew the virtues of every herb which drinks the dew, and augmented these virtues by words of might, used while they prepared and applied the medicines, were consulted with no benefit; and Magnus, in the utmost anxiety, was at last induced to have recourse to the advice of his kinswoman, Norna of the Fitful-head, although, owing to circumstances, noticed in the course of the story, there was at this time some estrangement between them. His first application was in vain. Norna was then at her usual place of residence, upon the sea-coast, near the head-land from which she usually took her designation; but, although Eric Scambester himself brought the message, she refused positively to see him, or to return any answer.

Magnus was angry at the slight put upon his messenger and message, but his anxiety on Minna's account, as well as the respect which he had for Norna's real misfortunes and imputed wisdom and power, prevented him from indulging, on the present occasion, his usual irritability of disposition. On the contrary, he determined to make an application to his kinswoman in his own person. He kept his purpose, however, to himself, and only desired his daughters to be in readiness to attend him upon a visit to a relation whom he had not seen for some time, and directed them, at the same time, to carry some provisions along with them, as the journey was distant, and they might perhaps find their friend unprovided.

Unaccustomed to ask explanations of his pleasure, and hoping that exercise and the amusement of such an excursion might be of service to her sister, Brenda, upon whom all household and family charges now devolved, caused the necessary preparations to be made for the expedition; and, on the next morning, they were engaged in tracing the long and tedious course of beach and of moorland, which, only varied by occasional patches of oats and barley, where a little ground had been selected for cultivation, divided Burgh-Westra from the north-western extremity of the Main-land (as the principal island is called), which terminates in the cape called Fitful-

head, as the south-western point ends in the cape of Sumburgh.

On they went, through wild and over wold, the udaller bestriding a strong, square-made, well-barreled palfrey, of Norwegian breed, somewhat taller, and yet as stout, as the ordinary ponies of the country; while Minna and Brenda, famed, amongst other accomplishments, for their horsemanship, rode two of those hardy animals, which, bred and reared with more pains than is usually bestowed, showed, both by the neatness of their form and their activity, that the race, so much and so carelessly neglected, is capable of being improved into beauty, without losing anything of its spirit or vigour. They were attended by two servants on horseback, and two on foot, secure that the last circumstance would be no delay to their journey, because a great part of the way was so rugged, or so marshy, that the horses could only move at a foot pace; and that, whenever they met with any considerable tract of hard and even ground, they had only to borrow from the nearest herd of ponies the use of a couple for the accommodation of these pedestrians.

The journey was a melancholy one, and little conversation passed, except when the udaller, pressed by impatience and vexation, urged his pony to a quick pace, and again, recollecting Minna's weak state of health, slackened to a walk, and reiterated inquiries how she felt herself, and whether the fatigue was not too much for her. At noon the party halted and partook of some refreshment, for which they had made ample provision, beside a pleasant spring, the pureness of whose waters, however, did not suit the udaller's palate, until qualified by a liberal addition of right Nantz. After he had a second, yea and a third time, filled a large silver travelling-cup, embossed with a German Cupid smoking a pipe, and a German Bacchus emptying his flask down the throat of a bear, he began to become more talkative than vexation had permitted him to be during the early part of their journey, and thus addressed his daughters:—

"Well, children, we are within a league or two of Norna's dwelling, and we will soon see how the old spell-mutterer will receive us."

Minna interrupted her father with a faint exclamation, while Brenda, surprised to a great degree, exclaimed, "Is it then to Norna that we are to make this visit?—Heaven forbid!"

"And wherefore should Heaven forbid?" said the udaller, knitting his brows; "wherefore, I would gladly know, should Heaven forbid me to visit my kinswoman, whose skill may be of use to your sister, if any woman in Zetland, or man either, can be of service to her;—You are a fool, Brenda,—your sister has more sense.—Cheer up, Minna!—thou wert ever wont to like her songs and stories, and used to hang about her neck, when little Brenda cried and ran from her like a Spanish merchant-man from a Dutch caper."*

"I wish she may not frighten me as much to-day, father," replied Brenda, desirous of indulging Minna in her taciturnity, and at the same time to amuse her

* A light armed vessel of the seventeenth century, adapted for privateering, and much used by the Dutch.

father by sustaining the conversation; "I have heard so much of her dwelling, that I am rather alarmed at the thought of going there uninvited."

"Thou art a fool," said Magnus, "to think that a visit from her kinsfolks can ever come amiss to a kind hearty Hialtland heart, like my cousin Norna's—and now I think on't, I will be sworn that is the reason why she would not receive Eric Scambester!—It is many a long day since I have seen her chimney smoke, and I have never carried you thither—She hath indeed some right to call me unkind. But I will tell her the truth—and that is, that, though such be the fashion, I do not think it is fair or honest to eat up the substance of lone women-folks, as we do that of our brother udallers, when we roll about from house to house in the winter season, until we gather like a snow-ball, and eat up all wherever we come."

"There is no fear of our putting Norna to any distress just now," replied Brenda, "for I have ample provision of everything that we can possibly need—fish, and bacon, and salted mutton, and dried geese—more than we could eat in a week, besides enough of liquor for you, father."

"Right, right, my girl!" said the udaller; "a well-found ship makes a merry voyage—so we will only want the kindness of Norna's roof, and a little bedding for you; for, as to myself, my sea-cloak, and honest dry boards of Norway deal, suit me better than your eider-down cushions and mattresses. So that Norna will have the pleasure of seeing us without having a stiver's worth of trouble."

"I wish she may think it a pleasure, sir," replied Brenda.

"Why, what does the girl mean, in the name of the martyr?" replied Magnus Troil; "doest thou think my kinswoman is a heathen, who will not rejoice to see her own flesh and blood?—I would I were as sure of a good year's fishing!—No! no! I only fear we may find her from home at present, for she is often a wanderer, and all with thinking over much on what can never be helped."

Minna sighed deeply as her father spoke, and the udaller went on—

"Doest thou sigh at that, my girl?—why, 'tis the fault of half the world—let it never be thine own, Minna."

Another suppressed sigh intimated that the caution came too late.

"I believe you are afraid of my cousin as well as Brenda is," said the udaller, gazing on her pale countenance; "if so, speak the word, and we will return back again as if we had the wind on our quarter, and were running fifteen knots by the line."

"Do, for Heaven's sake, sister, let us return!" said Brenda, imploringly; "you know—you remember—you must be well aware that Norna can do nought to help you."

"It is but too true," said Minna, in a subdued voice; "but I know not—she may answer a question—a question that only the miserable dare ask at the miserable."

"Nay, my kinswoman is no miser," answered the udaller, who only heard the beginning of the word; "a good income she has, both in Orkney and here, and many a fair lispund of butter is paid to her.

But the poor have the best share of it, and shame fall the Zetlander who begrudges them; the rest she spends, I wot not how, in her journeys through the islands. But you will laugh to see her house, and Nick Strumpfer, whom she calls Pacolet—many folks think Nick is the devil; but he is flesh and blood, like any of us—his father lived in Græmsay.—I shall be glad to see Nick again."

While the udaller thus ran on, Brenda, who, in recompense for a less portion of imagination than her sister, was gifted with sound common sense, was debating with herself the probable effect of this visit on her sister's health. She came finally to the resolution of speaking with her father aside, upon the first occasion which their journey should afford. To him she determined to communicate the whole particulars of their nocturnal interview with Norna,—to which, among other agitating causes, she attributed the depression of Minna's spirits,—and then make himself the judge whether he ought to persist in his visit to a person so singular, and expose his daughter to all the shock which her nerves might possibly receive from the interview.

Just as she had arrived at this conclusion, her father, dashing the crumbs from his laced waistcoat with one hand, and receiving with the other a fourth cup of brandy and water, drank devoutly to the success of their voyage, and ordered all to be in readiness to set forward. Whilst they were saddling their ponies, Brenda, with some difficulty, contrived to make her father understand she wished to speak with him in private—no small surprise to the honest udaller, who, though secret as the grave in the very few things where he considered secrecy as of importance, was so far from practising mystery in general, that his most important affairs were often discussed by him openly in presence of his whole family, servants included.

But far greater was his astonishment, when, remaining purposely with his daughter Brenda, a little in the wake, as he termed it, of the other riders, he heard the whole account of Norna's visit to Burgh-Westra, and of the communication with which she had then astounded his daughters. For a long time he could utter nothing but interjections, and ended with a thousand curses on his kinswoman's folly in telling his daughters such a history of horror.

"I have often heard," said the udaller, "that she was quite mad, with all her wisdom, and all her knowledge of the seasons; and, by the bones of my namesake, the martyr, I begin now to believe it most assuredly. I know no more how to steer than if I had lost my compass. Had I known this before we set out, I think I had remained at home; but now that we have come so far, and that Norna expects us"—

"Expects us, father!" said Brenda; "how can that be possible?"

"Why, that I know not—but she that can tell how the wind is to blow, can tell which way we are designing to ride. She must not be provoked;—perhaps she has done my family this ill for the words I had with her about that lad Mordaunt Mertoun, and if so, she can undo it again;—and so she shall, or I will know the cause wherefore. But I will try fair words first."

Finding it thus settled that they were to go forward, Brenda endeavoured next to learn from her father whether Norna's tale was founded in reality. He shook his head, groaned bitterly, and, in a few words, acknowledged that the whole, so far as concerned her intrigue with a stranger, and her father's death, of which she became the accidental and most innocent cause, was a matter of sad and indisputable truth. "For her infant," he said, "he could never, by any means, learn what became of it."

"Her infant!" exclaimed Brenda; "she spoke not a word of her infant!"

"Then I wish my tongue had been blistered," said the udaller, "when I told you of it.—I see that, young and old, a man has no better chance of keeping a secret from you women, than an eel to keep himself in his hold when he is sniggled with a loop of horse-hair—sooner or later the fisher teazes him out of his hole, when he has once the noose round his neck."

"But the infant, my father?" said Brenda, still insisting on the particulars of this extraordinary story, "what became of it?"

"Carried off, I fancy, by the blackguard Vaughan," answered the udaller, with a gruff accent, which plainly betokened how weary he was of the subject.

"By Vaughan?" said Brenda, "the lover of poor Norna, doubtless!—what sort of a man was he, father?"

"Why, much like other men, I fancy," answered the udaller; "I never saw him in my life.—He kept company with the Scottish families at Kirkwall; and I with the good old Norse folks—Ah! if Norna had dwelt always amongst her own kin, and not kept company with her Scottish acquaintance, she would have known nothing of Vaughan, and things might have been otherwise—But then I should have known nothing of your blessed mother, Brenda—and that," he said, his large blue eyes shining with a tear, "would have saved me a short joy and a long sorrow."

"Norna could but ill have supplied my mother's place to you, father, as a companion and a friend—that is, judging from all I have heard," said Brenda, with some hesitation. But Magnus, softened by recollections of his beloved wife, answered her with more indulgence than she expected.

"I would have been content," he said, "to have wedded Norna at that time. It would have been the soldering of an old quarrel—the healing of an old sore. All our blood relations wished it, and, situated as I was, especially not having seen your blessed mother, I had little will to oppose their counsels. You must not judge of Norna or of me by such an appearance as we now present to you—She was young and beautiful, and I gamesome as a Highland buck, and little caring what haven I made for, having, as I thought, more than one under my lee. But Norna preferred this man Vaughan, and, as I told you before, it was, perhaps, the best kindness she could have done to me."

"Ah, poor kinswoman!" said Brenda. "But believe you, father, in the high powers which she claims—in the mysterious vision of the dwarf—in the"—

She was interrupted in these questions by Magnus, to whom they were obviously displeasing.

"I believe, Brenda," he said, "according to the belief of my forefathers—I pretend not to be a wiser man than they were in their time,—and they all believed that, in cases of great worldly distress, Providence opened the eyes of the mind, and afforded the sufferers a vision of futurity. It was but a trimming of the boat, with reverence,"—here he touched his hat reverentially; "and, after all the shifting of ballast, poor Norna is as heavily loaded in the bows as ever was an Orkneyman's yawl at the dog-fishing—she has more than affliction enough on board to balance whatever gift she may have had in the midst of her calamity. They are as painful to her, poor soul, as a crown of thorns would be to her brows, though it were the badge of the empire of Denmark. And do not you, Brenda, seek to be wiser than your fathers. Your sister Minna, before she was so ill, had as much reverence for whatever was produced in Norse, as if it had been in the pope's bull, which is all written in pure Latin."

"Poor Norna!" repeated Brenda; "and her child—was it never recovered?"

"What do I know of her child," said the udaller, more gruffly than before, "except that she was very ill, both before and after the birth, though we kept her as merry as we could with pipe and harp, and so forth:—the child had come before its time into this bustling world, so it is likely it has been long dead.—But you know nothing of all these matters, Brenda; so get along for a foolish girl, and ask no more questions about what it does not become you to inquire into."

So saying, the udaller gave his sturdy little palfrey the spur, and cantering forward over rough and smooth, while the pony's accuracy and firmness of step put all difficulties of the path at secure defiance, he placed himself soon by the side of the melancholy Minna, and permitted her sister to have no farther share in his conversation than as it was addressed to them jointly. She could but comfort herself with the hope, that, as Minna's disease appeared to have its seat in the imagination, the remedies recommended by Norna might have some chance of being effectual, since, in all probability, they would be addressed to the same faculty.

Their way had hitherto held chiefly over moss and moor, varied occasionally by the necessity of making a circuit around the heads of those long lagoons, called voes, which run up into and indent the country in such a manner, that, though the Mainland of Zetland may be thirty miles or more in length, there is, perhaps, no part of it which is more than three miles distant from the salt water. But they had now approached the north-western extremity of the isle, and travelled along the top of an immense ridge of rocks, which had for ages withstood the rage of the Northern Ocean, and of all the winds by which it is buffeted.

At length exclaimed Magnus to his daughters, "There is Norna's dwelling!—Look up, Minna, my love; for if this does not make you laugh, nothing will.—Saw you ever anything but an osprey that would have made such a nest for herself as that is?—By my namesake's bones, there is not the like of

it that living thing ever dwelt in (having no wings and the use of reason), unless it chanced to be the Frawa-stack off Papa, where the King's daughter of Norway was shut up to keep her from her lovers—and all to little purpose, if the tale be true;* for, maidens, I would have you to wot that it is hard to keep flax from the lowe.†

CHAPTER XXVII.

Thrice from the cavern's darksome womb
Her groaning voice arose;
And come, my daughter, fearless come,
And fearless tell thy woes:

MICKLE.

THE dwelling of Norna, though none but a native of Zetland, familiar, during his whole life, with every variety of rock-scenery, could have seen anything ludicrous in this situation, was not unaptly compared by Magnus Troil to the eyry of the osprey, or sea-eagle. It was very small, and had been fabricated out of one of those dens which are called Burghs and Picts-houses in Zetland, and Duns on the main-land of Scotland and the Hebrides, and which seem to be the first effort at architecture—the connecting link betwixt a fox's hole in a cairn of loose stones, and an attempt to construct a human habitation out of the same materials, without the use of lime or cement of any kind,—without any timber, so far as can be seen from their remains,—without any knowledge of the arch or of the stair. Such as they are, however, the numerous remains of these dwellings, for there is one found on every head-land, islet, or point of vantage, which could afford the inhabitants additional means of defence, tend to prove that the remote people by whom these Burghs were constructed, were a numerous race, and that the islands had then a much greater population, than, from other circumstances, we might have been led to anticipate.

The Burgh of which we at present speak had been altered and repaired at a later period, probably by some petty despot, or sea-rover, who, tempted by the security of the situation, which occupied the whole of a projecting point of rock, and was divided from the main-land by a rent or chasm of some depth, had built some additions to it in the rudest style of Gothic defensive architecture;—had plastered the inside with lime and clay, and broken out windows for the admission of light and air; and finally, by roofing it over, and dividing it into stories, by means of beams of wreck-wood, had converted the whole into a tower, resembling a pyramidal dovecot, formed by a double wall, still containing within its thickness that set of circular galleries, or concentric rings, which is proper to all the forts of this primitive construction, and which seems to have constituted the only shelter which they were originally qualified to afford to their shivering inhabitants.

This singular habitation, built out of the loose stones which lay scattered around, and exposed for

* The *Frawa-stack*, or Maiden-rock, an inaccessible cliff, divided by a narrow gulf from the island of Papa, has on the summit some ruins, concerning which there is a legend similar to that of Danae.

† *Lowe*—flame,

ages to the vicissitudes of the elements, was as grey, weather-beaten, and wasted, as the rock on which it was founded, and from which it could not easily be distinguished, so completely did it resemble in colour, and so little did it differ in regularity of shape from, a pinnacle or fragment of the cliff.

Minna's habitual indifference to all that of late had passed around her, was for a moment suspended by the sight of an abode, which, at another and happier period of her life, would have attracted at once her curiosity and her wonder. Even now she seemed to feel interest as she gazed upon this singular retreat, and recollected it was that of certain misery and probable insanity, connected, as its inhabitant asserted, and Minna's faith admitted, with power over the elements, and the capacity of intercourse with the invisible world.

"Our kinswoman," she muttered, "has chosen her dwelling well, with no more of earth than a sea-fowl might rest upon, and all around sightless tempests and raging waves. Despair and magical power could not have a fitter residence."

Brenda, on the other hand, shuddered when she looked on the dwelling to which they were advancing, by a difficult, dangerous, and precarious path, which sometimes, to her great terror, approached to the verge of the precipice; so that Zetlander as she was, and confident as she had reason to be in the steadiness and sagacity of the sure-footed pony, she could scarce suppress an inclination to giddiness, especially at one point, when, being foremost of the party, and turning a sharp angle of the rock, her feet, as they projected from the side of the pony, hung for an instant sheer over the ledge of the precipice, so that there was nothing save empty space betwixt the sole of her shoe and the white foam of the vexed ocean, which dashed, howled, and foamed, five hundred feet below. What would have driven a maiden of another country into delirium, gave her but a momentary uneasiness, which was instantly lost in the hope that the impression which the scene appeared to make on her sister's imagination might be favourable to her cure.

She could not help looking back to see how Minna should pass the point of peril, which she herself had just rounded; and could hear the strong voice of the udaller, though to him such rough paths were familiar as the smooth sea-beach, call, in a tone of some anxiety, "Take heed, jarto,"* as Minna, with an eager look, dropped her bridle, and stretched forward her arms, and even her body, over the precipice, in the attitude of the wild-swan, when, balancing itself, and spreading its broad pinions, it prepares to launch from the cliff upon the bosom of the winds. Brenda felt, at that instant, a pang of unutterable terror, which left a strong impression on her nerves, even when relieved, as it instantly was, by her sister recovering herself and sitting upright on her saddle, the opportunity and temptation (if she felt it) passing away, as the quiet, steady animal which supported her rounded the projecting angle, and turned its patient and firm foot from the verge of the precipice.

They now attained a more level and open space of

* *Jarto*—My dear.

ground, being the flat top of an isthmus of projecting rock, narrowing again towards a point, where it was terminated by the chasm which separated the small peak, or stack, occupied by Norna's habitation, from the main ridge of cliff and precipice. This natural fosse, which seemed to have been the work of some convulsion of nature, was deep, dark, and irregular, narrower towards the bottom, which could not be distinctly seen, and widest at top, having the appearance as if that part of the cliff occupied by the building had been half rent away from the isthmus which it terminated,—an idea favoured by the angle at which it seemed to recede from the land, and slope seaward, with the building which crowned it.

This angle of projection was so considerable, that it required recollection to dispel the idea that the rock, so much removed from the perpendicular, was about to precipitate itself seaward with its old tower; and many a timorous person would have been afraid to put foot upon it, lest an addition of weight, so inconsiderable as that of the human body, should hasten a catastrophe which seemed at every instant impending.

Without troubling himself about such fantasies, the udaller rode towards the tower, and there dismounting along with his daughters, gave the ponies in charge to one of their domestics, with directions to disencumber them of their burdens, and turn them out for rest and refreshment upon the nearest heath. This done, they approached the gate, which seemed formerly to have been connected with the land by a rude draw-bridge, some of the apparatus of which was still visible. But the rest had been long demolished, and was replaced by a stationary foot-bridge, formed of barrel-staves covered with turf, very narrow and ledgeless, and supported by a sort of arch, constructed out of the jaw-bones of the whale. Along this "brigg of dread" the udaller stepped with his usual portly majesty of stride, which threatened its demolition and his own at the same time; his daughters trod more lightly and more safely after him, and the party stood below the low and rugged portal of Norna's habitation.

"If she should be abroad after all," said Magnus, as he plied the black oaken door with repeated blows;—"but if so we will at least lie by a day for her return, and make Nick Strumpfer pay the demurrage in bland and brandy."

As he spoke the door opened, and displayed, to the alarm of Brenda, and the surprise of Minna herself, a square-made dwarf, about four feet five inches high, with a head of most portentous size, and features correspondent—namely, a huge mouth, a tremendous nose, with large black nostrils, which seemed to have slit upwards, blubber lips of an unconscionable size, and huge wall-eyes, with which he leered, sneered, grinned, and goggled on the udaller as an old acquaintance, without uttering a single word. The young women could hardly persuade themselves that they did not see before their eyes the very demon Troll, who made such a distinguished figure in Norna's legend. Their father went on addressing this uncouth apparition in terms of such condescending friendship as the better sort apply to their inferiors, when they wish, for any im-

mediate purpose, to conciliate or coax them,—a tone, by the by, which generally contains, in its very familiarity, as much offence as the more direct assumption of distance and superiority.

"Ha, Nick! honest Nick!" said the udaller, "here you are, lively and lovely as Saint Nicholas your namesake, when he is carved with an axe for the head-piece of a Dutch dogger. How doest thou do, Nick, or Pacolet, if you like that better? Nicholas, here are my two daughters, nearly as handsome as thyself, thou seest."

Nick grinned, and did a clumsy obeisance by way of courtesy, but kept his broad mis-shapen person firmly placed in the door-way.

"Daughters," continued the udaller, who seemed to have his reasons for speaking this Cerberus fair, at least according to his own notions of propitiation,—"*This is Nick Strumpfer, maidens, whom his mistress calls Pacolet, being a light-limbed dwarf, as you see, like he that wont to fly about like a scourie, on his wooden hobby-horse, in the old story-book of Valentine and Orson, that you, Minna, used to read whilst you were a child. I assure you he can keep his mistress's counsel, and never told one of her secrets in his life—ha, ha, ha!*"

The ugly dwarf grinned ten times wider than before, and showed the meaning of the udaller's jest, by opening his immense jaws, and throwing back his head, so as to discover, that, in the immense cavity of his mouth, there only remained the small shriveled remnant of a tongue, capable perhaps of assisting him in swallowing his food, but unequal to the formation of articulate sounds. Whether this organ had been curtailed by cruelty, or injured by disease, it was impossible to guess; but that the unfortunate being had not been originally dumb, was evident from his retaining the sense of hearing. Having made this horrible exhibition, he repaid the udaller's mirth with a loud, horrid, and discordant laugh, which had something in it the more hideous that his mirth seemed to be excited by his own misery. The sisters looked on each other in silence and fear, and even the udaller seemed disconcerted.

"And how now?" he proceeded, after a minute's pause. "When didst thou wash that throat of thine, that is about the width of the Pentland Frith, with a cup of brandy? Ha, Nick! I have that with me which is sound stuff, boy, ha!"

The dwarf bent his beetle-brows, shook his mis-shapen head, and made a quick, sharp indication, throwing his right hand up to his shoulder with the thumb pointed backwards.

"What! my kinswoman," said the udaller, comprehending the signal, "be angry? Well, shalt have a flask to carouse when she is from home, old acquaintance;—lips and throats may swallow though they cannot speak."

Pacolet grinned a grim assent.

"And now," said the udaller, "stand out of the way, Pacolet, and let me carry my daughters to see their kinswoman. By the bones of Saint Magnus, it shall be a good turn in thy way.—Nay, never shake thy head, man; for if thy mistress be at home, see her we will."

The dwarf again intimated the impossibility of their being admitted, partly by signs, partly by

mumbling some uncouth and most disagreeable sounds, and the udaller's mood began to rise.

"Tittle tattle, man," said he; "trouble not me with thy gibberish, but stand out of the way, and the blame, if there be any, shall rest with me."

So saying, Magnus Troil laid his sturdy hand upon the collar of the recusant dwarf's jacket of blue wadmaal, and, with a strong, but not a violent grasp, removed him from the door-way, pushed him gently aside, and entered, followed by his two daughters, whom a sense of apprehension, arising out of all which they saw and heard, kept very close to him. A crooked and dusky passage through which Magnus led the way, was dimly enlightened by a shot-hole, communicating with the interior of the building, and originally intended, doubtless, to command the entrance by a hagbut or culverin. As they approached nearer, for they walked slowly and with hesitation, the light, imperfect as it was, was suddenly obscured; and, on looking upward to discern the cause, Brenda was startled to observe the pale and obscurely-seen countenance of Norna gazing downward upon them, without speaking a word. There was nothing extraordinary in this, as the mistress of the mansion might be naturally enough looking out to see what guests were thus suddenly and unceremoniously intruding themselves on her presence. Still, however, the natural paleness of her features, exaggerated by the light in which they were at present exhibited,—the immoveable sternness of her look, which showed neither kindness nor courtesy of civil reception,—her dead silence, and the singular appearance of everything about her dwelling, augmented the dismay which Brenda had already conceived. Magnus Troil and Minna had walked slowly forward, without observing the apparition of their singular hostess.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The witch then raised her wither'd arm,
And waved her wand on high,
And, while she spoke the mutter'd charm,
Dark lightning fill'd her eye.

MICKLE.

"THIS should be the stair," said the udaller, blundering in the dark against some steps of irregular ascent—"This should be the stair, unless my memory greatly fail me; ay, and there she sits," he added, pausing at a half-open door, "with all her tackle about her as usual, and as busy, doubtless, as the devil in a gale of wind."

As he made this irreverent comparison, he entered, followed by his daughters, the darkened apartment in which Norna was seated, amidst a confused collection of books of various languages, parchment scrolls, tablets and stones inscribed with the straight and angular characters of the Runic alphabet, and similar articles, which the vulgar connected with the exercise of the forbidden arts. There were also lying in the chamber, or hung over the rude and ill-contrived chimney, an old shirt of mail, with the head-piece, battle-axe, and lance, which had once belonged to it; and on a shelf were disposed, in great order, several of those curious stone axes, formed of green granite, which are often found in

these islands, where they are called thunderbolts by the common people, who usually preserve them as a charm of security against the effects of lightning; also a stone sacrificial knife, used perhaps for immolating human victims, and one or two of the brazen implements called celts, the purpose of which has troubled the repose of so many antiquaries. A variety of other articles, some of which had neither name nor were capable of description, lay in confusion about the apartment; and in one corner, on a quantity of withered sea-weed, reposed what seemed, at first view, to be a large unshapely dog, but, when seen more closely, proved to be a tame seal, which it had been Norna's amusement to domesticate.

This uncouth favourite bristled up in its corner, upon the arrival of so many strangers, with an alertness similar to that which a terrestrial dog would have displayed on a similar occasion; but Norna remained motionless seated behind a table of rough granite, propped up by mis-shapen feet of the same material, which, besides the old book with which she seemed to be busied, sustained a cake of the coarse unleavened bread used by the poor peasants of Norway, together with a jar of water.

Magnus Troil remained a minute in silence gazing upon his kinswoman, while the singularity of her mansion inspired Brenda with much fear, and changed, though but for a moment, the melancholy and abstracted mood of Minna, into a feeling of interest not unmixed with awe. The silence was interrupted by the udaller, who, unwilling on the one hand to give his kinswoman offence, and desirous on the other to show that he was not daunted by a reception so singular, opened the conversation thus:—

"I give you good e'en, cousin Norna—my daughters and I have come far to see you."

Norna raised her eyes from her volume, looked full at her visitors, then let them quietly sink down on the leaf with which she seemed to be engaged.

"Nay, cousin," said Magnus, "take your own time—our business with you can wait your leisure.—See here, Minna, what a fair prospect here is of the cape, scarce a quarter of a mile off; you may see the billows breaking on it topmast high. Our kinswoman has got a pretty seal too—Here, seal-chie, my man, whew, whew!"

The seal took no farther notice of the udaller's advances to acquaintance, than by uttering a low growl.

"He is not so well trained," continued the udaller, affecting an air of ease and unconcern, "as Peter Mac-Raw's, the old piper of Stornoway, who had a seal that flapped its tail to the tune of *Caberfae*, and acknowledged no other whatsoever.—Well, cousin," he concluded, observing that Norna closed her book, "are you going to give us a welcome at last, or must we go farther than our blood-relation's house to seek one, and that when the evening is wearing late apace?"

"Ye dull and hard-hearted generation, as deaf as the adder to the voice of the charmer," answered Norna, addressing them, "why come you to me? You have slighted every warning I could give of the coming harm, and now that it hath come upon

you, ye seek my counsel when it can avail you nothing."

"Look you, kinswoman," said the udaller, with his usual frankness, and boldness of manner and accent, "I must needs tell you that your courtesy is something of the coarsest and the coldest. I cannot say that I ever saw an adder, in regard there are none in these parts; but touching my own thoughts of what such a thing may be, it cannot be termed suitable comparison to me or to my daughters, and that I would have you to know. For old acquaintance, and certain other reasons, I do not leave your house upon the instant; but as I came hither in all kindness and civility, so I pray you to receive me with the like, otherwise we will depart, and leave shame on your inhospitable threshold."

"How!" said Norna, "dare you use such bold language in the house of one from whom all men, from whom you yourself, come to solicit counsel and aid? They who speak to the Reim-kennar, must lower their voice to her before whom winds and waves hush both blast and billow."

"Blast and billow may hush themselves if they will," replied the peremptory udaller, "but that will not I. I speak in the house of my friend as in my own, and strike sail to none."

"And hope ye by this rudeness to compel me to answer to your interrogatories?" replied Norna.

"Kinswoman," replied Magnus Troil, "I know not so much as you of the old Norse sagas; but this I know, that when kempies were wont, long since, to seek the habitations of the galdragons and spæ-women, they came with their axes on their shoulders, and their good swords drawn in their hands, and compelled the power whom they invoked to listen to and to answer them, ay, were it Odin himself."

"Kinsman," replied Norna, arising from her seat, and coming forward, "thou hast spoken well, and in good time for thyself and thy daughters; for hadst thou turned from my threshold without extorting an answer, morning's sun had never again shone upon you. The spirits who serve me are jealous, and will not be employed in aught that may benefit humanity, unless their service is commanded by the undaunted importunity of the brave and the free. And now speak, what wouldst thou have of me?"

"My daughter's health," replied Magnus, "which no remedies have been able to restore."

"Thy daughter's health?" answered Norna; "and what is the maiden's ailment?"

"The physician," said Troil, "must name the disease. All that I can tell thee of it is"—

"Be silent," said Norna, interrupting him, "I know all thou canst tell me, and more than thou thyself knowest. Sit down, all of you—and thou maiden," she said, addressing Minna, "sit thou in that chair," pointing to the place she had just left, "once the seat of Giervada, at whose voice the stars hid their beams, and the moon herself grew pale."

Minna moved with slow and tremulous step towards the rude seat which was thus indicated to her, which was composed of stone, formed into the shape of a chair by the rough and unskilful hand of some ancient Gothic artist.

VOL. III.

Brenda, creeping as close as possible to her father, seated herself along with him upon a bench at some distance from Minna, and kept her eyes, with a mixture of fear, pity, and anxiety, closely fixed upon her. It would be difficult altogether to decipher the emotions by which this amiable and affectionate girl was agitated at the moment. Deficient in her sister's predominating quality of high imagination, and little credulous, of course, to the marvelous, she could not but entertain some vague and indefinite fears on her own account, concerning the nature of the scene which was soon to take place. But these were in a manner swallowed up in her apprehensions on the score of her sister, who, with a frame so much weakened, spirits so much exhausted, and a mind so susceptible of the impressions which all around her was calculated to excite, now sat pensively resigned to the agency of one, whose treatment might produce the most baneful effects upon such a subject.

Brenda gazed at Minna, who sat in that rude chair of dark stone, her finely formed shape and limbs making the strongest contrast with its ponderous and irregular angles, her cheek and lips as pale as clay, and her eyes turned upward, and lighted with the mixture of resignation and excited enthusiasm, which belonged to her disease and her character. The younger sister then looked on Norna, who muttered to herself in a low, monotonous manner, as, gliding from one place to another, she collected different articles, which she placed one by one on the table. And lastly, Brenda looked anxiously to her father, to gather, if possible, from his countenance, whether he entertained any part of her own fears for the consequences of the scene which was to ensue, considering the state of Minna's health and spirits. But Magnus Troil seemed to have no such apprehensions, but viewed with stern composure Norna's preparations; and appeared to wait the event with the composure of one, who, confiding in the skill of a medical artist, sees him preparing to enter upon some important and painful operation, in the issue of which he is interested by friendship or by affection.

"Norna, meanwhile, went onward with her preparations, until she had placed on the stone table a variety of miscellaneous articles, and among the rest, a small chafing-dish full of charcoal, a crucible, and a piece of thin sheet-lead. She then spoke aloud—"It is well that I was aware of your coming hither—ay, long before you yourself had resolved it—how should I else have been prepared for that which is now to be done?—Maiden," she continued, addressing Minna, "where lies thy pain?"

The patient answered, by pressing her hand to the left side of her bosom.

"Even so," replied Norna, "even so—'tis the site of weal or woe.—And you, her father and her sister, think not this the idle speech of one who talks by guess—if I can tell the ill, it may be that I shall be able to render that less severe, which may not, by any aid, be wholly amended.—The heart—ay, the heart—touch that, and the eye grows dim, the pulse fails, the wholesome stream of our blood is choked and troubled, our limbs decay like sapless sea-weed in a summer's sun; our better views of existence

are passed and gone; what remains is the dream of lost happiness, or the fear of inevitable evil. But the Reim-kennar must to her work—well it is that I have prepared the means.”

She threw off her long dark-coloured mantle, and stood before them in her short jacket of light-blue wadmaal, with its skirt of the same stuff, fancifully embroidered with black velvet, and bound at the waist with a chain or girdle of silver formed into singular devices. Norna next undid the fillet which bound her grizzled hair, and shaking her head wildly, caused it to fall in disheveled abundance over her face, and around her shoulders, so as almost entirely to hide her features. She then placed a small crucible on the chafing-dish already mentioned,—dropped a few drops from a vial on the charcoal below,—pointed towards it her wrinkled forefinger, which she had previously moistened with liquid from another small bottle, and said with a deep voice, “Fire, do thy duty,” and the words were no sooner spoken, than, probably by some chemical combination of which the spectators were not aware, the charcoal which was under the crucible became slowly ignited; while Norna, as if impatient of the delay, threw hastily back her disordered tresses, and, while her features reflected back the sparkles and red light of the fire, and her eyes flashed from amongst her hair like those of a wild animal from its cover, blew fiercely till the whole was in an intense glow. She paused a moment from her toil, and muttering that the elemental spirit must be thanked, recited, in her usual monotonous, yet wild mode of chaunting, the following verses,—

“Thou so needful, yet so dread,
With cloudy crest, and wing of red;
Thou, without whose genial breath
The north would sleep the sleep of death;
Who deign'st to warm the cottage hearth,
Yet hurl'st proud palaces to earth,—
Brightest, keenest of the powers,
Which form and rule this world of ours!
With my rhyme of Runic, I
Thank thee for thy agency.”

She then severed a portion from the small mass of sheet-lead which lay upon the table, and, placing it in the crucible, subjected it to the action of the lighted charcoal, and, as it melted, she sung,

“Old Reim-kennar, to thy art
Mother Hertha sends her part;
She, whose gracious bounty gives
Needful food for all that lives,
From the deep mine of the north,
Came the mystic metal forth,
Doom'd amidst disjointed stones,
Long to cear a champion's bones,
Disinhumed my charms to aid—
Mother Earth, my thanks are paid.”

She then poured out some water from the jar into a large cup, or goblet, and sung once more, as she slowly stirred it round with the end of her staff,—

“Girdle of our islands dear,
Element of Water, hear!
Thou whose power can overwhelm
Broken mounds and ruined realm
On the lowly Belgian strand;
All thy fiercest rage can never

Of our soil a furlong sever
From our rock-defended land;
Play then gently thou thy part,
To assist old Norna's art.”

She then, with a pair of pincers, removed the crucible from the chafing-dish, and poured the lead, now entirely melted, into the bowl of water, repeating at the same time,—

“Elements, each other greeting,
Gifts and power attend your meeting!”

The melted lead, spattering as it fell into the water, formed, of course, the usual combination of irregular forms which is familiar to all who in childhood have made the experiment, and from which, according to our childish fancy, we may have selected portions bearing some resemblance to domestic articles—the tools of mechanics, or the like. Norna seemed to busy herself in some such researches, for she examined the mass of lead with scrupulous attention, and detached it into different portions, without apparently being able to find a fragment in the form which she desired.

At length she again muttered, rather as speaking to herself than to her guests, “He, the Viewless, will not be omitted,—he will have his tribute even in the work to which he gives nothing.—Stern compeller of the clouds, thou also shalt hear the voice of the Reim-kennar.”

Thus speaking, Norna once more threw the lead into the crucible, where, hissing and spattering as the wet metal touched the sides of the red-hot vessel, it was soon again reduced into a state of fusion. The sibyl meantime turned to a corner of the apartment, and opening suddenly a window which looked to the north-west, let in the fitful radiance of the sun, now lying almost level upon a great mass of red clouds, which, boding future tempest, occupied the edge of the horizon, and seemed to brood over the billows of the boundless sea. Turning to this quarter, from which a low hollow moaning breeze then blew, Norna addressed the spirit of the winds, in tones which seemed to resemble his own,—

“Thou, that over billows dark
Safely send'st the fisher's bark,—
Giving him a path and motion
Through the wilderness of ocean;
Thou, that when the billows brave ye,
O'er the shelves canst drive the navy,—
Did'st thou chafe as one neglected,
While thy brethren were respected?
To appease thee, see, I tear
This full grasp of grizzled hair;
Oft thy breath hath through it sung,
Softening to my magic tongue,—
Now, 't is thine to bid it fly
Through the wide expanse of sky,
'Mid the countless swarms to sail
Of wild-fowl wheeling on thy gale;
Take thy portion and rejoice,—
Spirit, thou hast heard my voice!”

Norna accompanied these words with the action which they described, tearing a lock of hair with vehemence from her head, and strewing it upon the wind as she continued her recitation. She then shut the casement, and again involved the chamber in the dubious twilight, which best suited her cha-

racter and occupation. The melted lead was once more emptied into the water, and the various whimsical conformations which it received from the operation were examined with great care by the sibyl, who at length seemed to intimate, by voice and gesture, that her spell had been successful. She selected from the fused metal a piece about the size of a small nut, bearing in shape a close resemblance to that of the human heart, and approaching Minna, again spoke in song,—

"She who sits by haunted well,
Is subject to the nixie's spell;
She who walks on lonely beach,
To the mermaid's charmed speech;
She who walks round ring of green,
Offends the peevish fairy queen;
And she who takes rest in the dwarfie's cave,
A weary weird of woe shall have.

"By ring, by spring, by cave, by shore,
Minna Troil has braved all this and more:
And yet hath the root of her sorrow and ill
A source that's more deep and more mystical still."

Minna, whose attention had been latterly something disturbed by reflections on her own secret sorrow, now suddenly recalled it, and looked eagerly on Norna as if she expected to learn from her rhymes something of deep interest. The northern sibyl, meanwhile, proceeded to pierce the piece of lead, which bore the form of a heart, and to fix in it a piece of gold wire, by which it might be attached to a chain or necklace. She then proceeded in her rhyme.—

"Thou art within a demon's hold,
More wise than Haims, more strong than Troll;
No syren sings so sweet as he,—
No fay springs lighter on the lea;
No elfin power hath half the art
To soothe, to move, to wring the heart,—
Life-blood from the cheek to drain,
Drench the eye, and dry the vein.
Maiden, ere we farther go,
Dost thou note me, ay or no?"

Minna replied in the same rhythmical manner, which, in jest and earnest, was frequently used by the ancient Scandinavians,—

"I mark thee, my mother, both word, look, and sign;
Speak on with the riddle—to read it be mine."

"Now, Heaven and every saint be praised!" said Magnus; "they are the first words to the purpose, which she hath spoken these many days."

"And they are the last which she shall speak for many a month," said Norna, incensed at the interruption, "if you again break the progress of my spell. Turn your faces to the wall, and look not hitherward again, under penalty of my severe displeasure. You, Magnus Troil, from hard-hearted audacity of spirit, and you, Brenda, from wanton and idle disbelief in that which is beyond your bounded comprehension, are unworthy to look on this mystic work; and the glance of your eyes mingles with, and weakens the spell; for the powers cannot brook distrust."

Unaccustomed to be addressed in a tone so peremptory, Magnus would have made some angry reply; but reflecting that the health of Minna was at

stake, and considering that she who spoke was a woman of many sorrows, he suppressed his anger, bowed his head, shrugged his shoulders, assumed the prescribed posture, averting his head from the table, and turning towards the wall. Brenda did the same, on receiving a sign from her father, and both remained profoundly silent.

Norna then addressed Minna once more,—

"Mark me! for the word I speak
Shall bring the colour to thy cheek.
This leaden heart, so light of cost,
The symbol of a treasure lost,
Thou shalt wear in hope and in peace,
That the cause of your sickness and sorrow may cease,
When crimson foot meets crimson hand
In the Martyrs' Aisle, and in Orkney-land."

Minna coloured deeply at the last couplet, intimating, as she failed not to interpret it, that Norna was completely acquainted with the secret cause of her sorrow. The same conviction led the maiden to hope in the favourable issue, which the sibyl seemed to prophesy; and not venturing to express her feelings in any manner more intelligible, she pressed Norna's withered hand with all the warmth of affection, first to her breast and then to her bosom, bedewing it at the same time with her tears.

With more of human feeling than she usually exhibited, Norna extricated her hand from the grasp of the poor girl, whose tears now flowed freely, and then, with more tenderness of manner than she had yet shown, she knotted the leaden heart to a chain of gold, and hung it around Minna's neck, singing, as she performed that last branch of the spell,—

"Be patient, be patient, for patience hath power
To ward us in danger, like mantle in shower;
A fairy gift you best may hold
In a chain of fairy gold;
The chain and the gift are each a true token,
That not without warrant old Norna has spoken;
But thy nearest and dearest must never behold them,
Till time shall accomplish the truths I have told them."

The verses being concluded, Norna carefully arranged the chain around her patient's neck so as to hide it in her bosom, and thus ended the spell,—a spell which, at the moment I record these incidents, it is known, has been lately practised in Zetland, where any decline of health, without apparent cause, is imputed by the lower orders to a demon having stolen the heart from the body of the patient, and where the experiment of supplying the deprivation by a leaden one, prepared in the manner described, has been resorted to within these few years. In a metaphorical sense, the disease may be considered as a general one in all parts of the world; but, as this simple and original remedy is peculiar to the isles of Thule, it were unpardonable not to preserve it at length, in a narrative connected with Scottish antiquities.

A second time Norna reminded her patient, that if she showed, or spoke of, the fairy gifts, their virtue would be lost—a belief so common as to be received into the superstitions of all nations. Lastly, unbuttoning the collar which she had just fastened, she showed her a link of the gold chain, which Minna

instantly recognized as that formerly given by Norna to Mordaunt Mertoun. This seemed to intimate he was yet alive, and under Norna's protection; and she gazed on her with the most eager curiosity. But the sibyl imposed her finger on her lips in token of silence, and a second time involved the chain in those folds which modestly and closely veiled one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the kindest, bosoms in the world.

Norna then extinguished the lighted charcoal, and, as the water hissed upon the glowing embers, commanded Magnus and Brenda to look around, and behold her task accomplished.

CHAPTER XXIX.

See yonder woman, whom our swains revere,
And dread in secret, while they take her counsel
When sweetheart shall be kind, or when cross dame
shall die;
Where lurks the thief who stole the silver tankard,
And how the pestilent murrain may be cured.—
This sage adviser 's mad, stark mad, my friend;
Yet, in her madness, hath the art and cunning
To wring fool's secrets from their inmost bosoms,
And pay inquirers with the coin they gave her.

Old Play.

It seemed as if Norna had indeed full right to claim the gratitude of the udaller for the improved condition of his daughter's health. She once more threw open the window, and Minna, drying her eyes and advancing with affectionate confidence, threw herself on her father's neck, and asked his forgiveness for the trouble she had of late occasioned to him. It is unnecessary to add, that this was at once granted, with a full, though rough burst of parental tenderness, and as many close embraces as if his child had been just rescued from the jaws of death. When Magnus had dismissed Minna from his arms, to throw herself into those of her sister, and express to her, rather by kisses and tears than in words, the regret she entertained for her late wayward conduct, the udaller thought proper, in the meantime, to pay his thanks to their hostess, whose skill had proved so efficacious. But scarce had he come out with, "Much respected kinswoman, I am but a plain old Norseman,"—when she interrupted him, by pressing her finger on her lips.

"There are those around us," she said, "who must hear no mortal voice, witness no sacrifice to mortal feelings—there are times when they mutiny even against me, their sovereign mistress, because I am still shrouded in the flesh of humanity. Fear, therefore, and be silent. I, whose deeds have raised me from the low-sheltered valley of life, where dwell its social wants and common charities;—I, who have bereft the Giver of the Gift which he gave, and stand alone on a cliff of immeasurable height, detached from earth, save from the small portion that supports my miserable tread—I alone am fit to cope with these sullen mates. Fear not, therefore, but yet be not too bold, and let this night to you be one of fasting and of prayer."

If the udaller had not, before the commencement of the operation, been disposed to dispute the commands of the sibyl, it may be well believed he was

less so, now that it had terminated to all appearance so fortunately. So he sat down in silence, and seized upon a volume which lay near him as a sort of desperate effort to divert ennui, for on no other occasion had Magnus been known to have recourse to a book for that purpose. It chanced to be a book much to his mind, being the well-known work of Olaus Magnus, upon the manners of the ancient northern nations. The book is unluckily in the Latin language, and the Danske or Dutch were, either of them, much more familiar to the udaller. But then it was the fine edition, which contains representations of the war-chariots, fishing exploits, warlike exercises, and domestic employments, of the Scandinavians, executed on copper-plates; and thus the information which the work refused to the understanding, was addressed to the eye, which, as is well known both to old and young, answers the purpose of amusement as well, if not better.

Meanwhile the two sisters, pressed as close to each other's sides as two flowers on the same stalk, sat with their arms reciprocally passed over each other's shoulder, as if they feared some new and unforeseen cause of coldness was about to snatch them from each other's side, and interrupt the sister-like harmony which had been but just restored. Norna sat opposite to them, sometimes revolving the large parchment volume with which they had found her employed at their entrance, and sometimes gazing on the sisters with a fixed look, in which an interest of a kind unusually tender, seemed occasionally to disturb the stern and rigorous solemnity of her countenance. All was still and silent as death, and the subsiding emotions of Brenda had not yet permitted her to wonder whether the remaining hours of the evening were to be passed in the same manner, when the scene of tranquillity was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the dwarf Pacolet, or, as the udaller called him, Nicholas Strumpfer.

Norna darted an angry glance on the intruder, who seemed to deprecate her resentment by holding up his hands and uttering a babbling sound; then instantly resorting to his usual mode of conversation, he expressed himself by a variety of signs more rapidly upon his fingers, and as rapidly answered by his mistress, so that the young women, who had never heard of such an art, and now saw it practised by two beings so singular, almost conceived their mutual intelligence the work of enchantment. When they had ceased their intercourse, Norna turned to Magnus Troil with much haughtiness, and said, "How, my kinsman? have you so far forgot yourself, as to bring earthly food into the house of the Reimkennar, and make preparations in the dwelling of Power and of Despair, for refection, and wassail, and revelry?—Speak not—answer not," she said; "the duration of the cure which was wrought even now, depends on your silence and obedience—bandy but a single look or word with me, and the latter condition of that maiden shall be worse than the first."

This threat was an effectual charm upon the tongue of the udaller, though he longed to indulge it in vindication of his conduct.

"Follow me, all of you," said Norna, striding to the door of the apartment, and see that no one look

backwards—we leave not this apartment empty, though we, the children of mortality, be removed from it.”

She went out, and the udaller signed to his daughters to follow, and to obey her injunctions. The sibyl moved swifter than her guests down the rude descent (such it might rather be termed, than a proper staircase) which led to the lower apartment. Magnus and his daughters, when they entered the chamber, found their own attendants aghast at the presence and proceedings of Norna of the Fitful-head.

They had been previously employed in arranging the provisions which they had brought along with them, so as to present a comfortable cold meal, as soon as the appetite of the udaller, which was as regular as the return of tide, should induce him to desire some refreshment; and now they stood staring in fear and surprise, while Norna, seizing upon one article after another, and well supported by the zealous activity of Pacolet, flung their whole preparations out of the rude aperture which served for a window, and over the cliff, from which the ancient burgh arose, into the ocean, which raged and foamed beneath. Vifda (dried beef), hams, and pickled pork, flew after each other into the empty space, smoked geese were restored to the air, and cured fish to the sea, their native elements indeed, but which they were no longer capable of traversing; and the devastation proceeded so rapidly that the udaller could scarce secure from the wreck his silver drinking-cup; while the large leathern flask of brandy, which was destined to supply his favourite beverage, was sent to follow the rest of the supper, by the hands of Pacolet, who regarded, at the same time, the disappointed udaller with a malicious grin, as if, notwithstanding his own natural taste for the liquor, he enjoyed the disappointment and surprise of Magnus Troil still more than he would have relished sharing his enjoyment.

The destruction of the brandy-flask exhausted the patience of Magnus, who roared out, in a tone of no small displeasure, “Why, kinswoman, this is wasteful madness—where, and on what, would you have us sup?”

“Where you will,” answered Norna, “and on what you will—but not in my dwelling, and not on the food with which you have profaned it. Vex my spirit no more, but begone, every one of you! You have been here too long for my good, perhaps for your own.”

“How, kinswoman,” said Magnus, “would you make outcasts of us at this time of night, when even a Scotchman would not turn a stranger from the door?—Bethink you, dame, it is shame on your lineage for ever, if this squall of yours should force us to slip cables, and go to sea so scantily provided.”

“Be silent, and depart,” said Norna; “let it suffice you have got that for which you came. I have no harbourage for mortal guests, no provision to relieve human wants. There is beneath the cliff, a beach of the finest sand, a stream of water as pure as the well of Kildinguie, and the rocks bear dulse as wholesome as that of Guiydin; and well you wot, that the well of Kildinguie and the dulse of Guiy-

din will cure all maladies save Black Death.”*

“And well I wot,” said the udaller, “that I would eat corrupted sea-weed like a starling, or salted seal’s flesh like the men of Burraforth, or whilks, buckies, and lampits, like the poor sneaks of Stroma, rather than break wheat bread and drink red wine in a house where it is begrudged me.—And yet,” he said, checking himself, “I am wrong, very wrong, my cousin, to speak thus to you, and I should rather thank you for what you have done, than upbraid you for following your own ways. But I see you are impatient—we will be all under way presently.—And you, ye knaves,” addressing his servants, “that were in such hurry with your service before it was lacked, get out of doors with you presently, and manage to catch the ponies; for I see we must make for another harbour to-night, if we would not sleep with an empty stomach, and on a hard bed.”

The domestics of Magnus, already sufficiently alarmed at the violence of Norna’s conduct, scarce waited the imperious command of their master to evacuate her dwelling with all dispatch; and the udaller, with a daughter on each arm, was in the act of following them, when Norna said emphatically, “Stop!” They obeyed, and again turned towards her. She held out her hand to Magnus, which the placable udaller instantly folded in his own ample palm.

“Magnus,” she said, “we part by necessity, but, I trust, not in anger?”

“Surely not, cousin,” said the warm-hearted udaller, well nigh stammering in his hasty disclamation of all unkindness,—“most assuredly not. I never bear ill will to any one, much less to one of my own blood, and who has piloted me with her advice through many a rough tide, as I would pilot a boat betwixt Swona and Stroma, through all the waws, wells, and swelchies of the Pentland Frith.”

“Enough,” said Norna, “and now farewell, with such a blessing as I dare bestow—not a word more!—Maidens,” she added, “draw near, and let me kiss your brows.”

The sibyl was obeyed by Minna with awe, and by Brenda with fear; the one overmastered by the warmth of her imagination, the other by the natural timidity of her constitution. Norna then dismissed them, and in two minutes afterwards they found themselves beyond the bridge, and standing upon the rocky platform in front of the ancient Pictish burgh, which it was the pleasure of this sequestered female to inhabit. The night, for it was now fallen, was unusually serene. A bright twilight, which glimmered far over the surface of the sea, supplied the brief absence of the summer’s sun; and the waves seemed to sleep under its influence, so faint and slumberous was the sound with which one after another rolled on and burst against the foot of the cliff on which they stood. In front of them stood the rugged fortress, seeming, in the uniform greyness of the atmosphere, as aged, as shapeless, and as massive, as the rock on which it was founded. There was neither sight nor sound that indicated human habitation, save that from one rude shot-hole glimmered the flame of the feeble lamp by which the

* So at least says an Orkney proverb.

sibyl was probably pursuing her mystical and nocturnal studies, shooting upon the twilight, in which it was soon lost and confounded, a single line of tiny light; bearing the same proportion to that of the atmosphere, as the aged woman and her serf, the sole inhabitants of that desert, did to the solitude with which they were surrounded.

For several minutes, the party thus suddenly and unexpectedly expelled from the shelter where they had reckoned to spend the night, stood in silence, each wrapt in their own separate reflections. Minna, her thoughts fixed on the mystical consolation which she had received, in vain endeavoured to extract from the words of Norna a more distinct and intelligible meaning; and the udaller had not yet recovered his surprise at the extrusion to which he had been thus whimsically subjected, under circumstances that prohibited him from resenting as an insult, treatment, which, in all other respects, was so shocking to the genial hospitality of his nature, that he still felt like one disposed to be angry, if he but knew how to set about it. Brenda was the first who brought matters to a point, by asking whither they were to go, and how they were to spend the night? The question, which was asked in a tone, that, amidst its simplicity, had something dolorous in it, changed entirely the train of her father's ideas; and the unexpected perplexity of their situation now striking him in a comic point of view, he laughed till his very eyes ran over, while every rock around him rung, and the sleeping sea-fowl were startled from their repose, by the loud hearty explosions of his obstreperous hilarity.

The udaller's daughters, eagerly representing to their father the risk of displeasing Norna by this unlimited indulgence of his mirth, united their efforts to drag him to a farther distance from her dwelling. Magnus, yielding to their strength, which, feeble as it was, his own fit of laughter rendered him incapable of resisting, suffered himself to be pulled to a considerable distance from the burgh, and then escaping from their hands, and sitting down, or rather suffering himself to drop, upon a large stone which lay conveniently by the way-side, he again laughed so long and lustily, that his vexed and anxious daughters became afraid that there was something more than natural in these repeated convulsions.

At length his mirth exhausted both itself and the udaller's strength. He groaned heavily, wiped his eyes, and said, not without feeling some desire to renew his obstreperous cachinnation, "Now, by the bones of St Magnus, my ancestor and namesake, one would imagine that being turned out of doors, at this time of night, was nothing short of an absolutely exquisite jest; for I have shaken my sides till I am sore at it. There we sat, made snug for the night, and I made as sure of a good supper and a can as ever I had been of either,—and here we are all taken aback; and then poor Brenda's doleful voice, and melancholy question, of 'What is to be done, and where are we to sleep?' In good faith, unless one of those knaves, who must needs torment the poor woman by their trencher-work, before it was wanted, can make amends by telling us of some snug port under our lee, we have no other course for it but to steer through the twilight on the bearing of

Burgh-Westra, and rough it out as well as we can by the way. I am sorry but for you, girls; for many a cruize have I been upon when we were on shorter allowance than we are like to have now.—I would I had but secured a morsel for you, and a drop for myself; and then there had been but little to complain of."

Both sisters hastened to assure the udaller that they felt not the least occasion for food.

"Why, that is well," said Magnus: "and so being the case, I will not complain of my own appetite, though it is sharper than convenient. And the rascal, Nicholas Strumpfer,—what a leer the villain gave me as he started the good Nantz into the salt-water! He grinned, the knave, like a seal on a skerry.—Had it not been for vexing my poor kinswoman Norna, I would have sent his misbegotten body, and mis-shapen jolterhead, after my bonnie flask, as surely as Saint Magnus lies at Kirk-wall!"

By this time the servants returned with the ponies, which they had very soon caught—these sensible animals finding nothing so captivating in the pastures where they had been suffered to stray, as inclined them to resist the invitation again to subject themselves to saddle and bridle. The prospects of the party were also considerably improved by learning that the contents of their sumpter-pony's burthen had not been entirely exhausted,—a small basket having fortunately escaped the rage of Norna and Pacolet, by the rapidity with which one of the servants had caught up and removed it. The same domestic, an alert and ready-witted fellow, had observed upon the beach, not above three miles distant from the burgh, and about a quarter of a mile off their straight path, a deserted skeo, or fisherman's hut, and suggested that they should occupy it for the rest of the night, in order that the ponies might be refreshed, and the young ladies spend the night under cover from the night air.

When we are delivered from great and serious dangers, our mood is, or ought to be, grave, in proportion to the peril we have escaped, and the gratitude due to protecting Providence. But few things raise the spirits more naturally, or more harmlessly, than when means of extrication from any of the lesser embarrassments of life are suddenly presented to us; and such was the case in the present instance. The udaller, relieved from the apprehensions for his daughters suffering from fatigue, and himself from too much appetite and too little food, caroled Norse ditties, as he spurred Bergen through the twilight, with as much glee and gallantry as if the night-ride had been entirely a matter of his own free choice. Brenda lent her voice to some of his choruses, which were echoed in ruder notes by the servants, who, in that simple state of society, were not considered as guilty of any breach of respect by mingling their voices with the song. Minna, indeed, was as yet unequal to such an effort; but she compelled herself to assume some share in the general hilarity of the meeting; and, contrary to her conduct since the fatal morning which concluded the festival of Saint John, she seemed to take her usual interest in what was going on around her, and answered with kindness and readiness the repeated

inquiries concerning her health, with which the udaller every now and then interrupted his carol. And thus they proceeded by night, a happier party by far than they had been when they traced the same route on the preceding morning, making light of the difficulties of the way, and promising themselves shelter and a comfortable night's rest in the deserted hut which they were now about to approach, and which they expected to find in a state of darkness and solitude.

But it was the lot of the udaller that day to be deceived more than once in his calculations.

"And which way lies this cabin of yours, Laurie?" said the udaller, addressing the intelligent domestic of whom we just spoke.

"Yonder it should be," said Laurence Scholey, "at the head of the voe—but, by my faith, if it be the place, there are folks there before us—God and Saint Ronan send that they be canny company!"

In truth there was light in the deserted hut, strong enough to glimmer through every chink of the shingles and wreck-wood of which it was constructed, and to give the whole cabin the appearance of a smithy seen by night. The universal superstition of the Zetlanders seized upon Magnus and his escort.

"They are trows," said one voice.

"They are witches," murmured another.

"They are mermaids," muttered a third; "only hear their wild singing!"

All stopped; and, in effect, some notes of music were audible, which Brenda, with a voice that quivered a little, but yet had a turn of arch ridicule in its tone, pronounced to be the sound of a fiddle.

"Fiddle or fiend," said the udaller, who, if he believed in such nightly apparitions, as had struck terror into his retinue, certainly feared them not—"fiddle or fiend, may the devil wash me if a witch cheats me out of supper to-night, for the second time!"

So saying, he dismounted, clenched his trusty truncheon in his hand, and advanced towards the hut, followed by Laurence alone; the rest of his retinue continuing stationary on the beach, beside his daughters and the ponies.

CHAPTER XXX.

What ho, my jovial mates! come on! we'll frolic it
Like fairies frisking in the merry moonshine,
Seen by the curtal friar, who, from some christening
Or some blithe bridal, hies belated cell-ward—
He starts, and changes his bold bottle swagger
To churchman's pace professional, and, ransacking
His treacherous memory for some holy hymn,
Finds but the roundel of the midnight catch.

Old Play.

THE stride of the udaller relaxed nothing of its length or of its firmness as he approached the glimmering cabin, from which he now heard distinctly the sound of the fiddle. But, if still long and firm, his steps succeeded each other rather more slowly than usual; for, like a cautious, though a brave general, Magnus was willing to reconnoitre his enemy before assailing him. The trusty Laurence Scholey, who kept close behind his master, now whispered

into his ear, "So help me, sir, as I believe that the ghaist, if ghaist it be, that plays so bravely on the fiddle, must be the ghaist of Maister Claud Halcro, or his wraith at least; for never was bow drawn across thairm which brought out the gude auld spring of 'Fair and Lucky,' so like his ain."

Magnus was himself much of the same opinion; for he knew the blithe minstrelsy of the spirited little old man, and hailed the hut with a hearty hilloah, which was immediately replied to by the cheery note of his ancient messmate, and Halcro himself presently made his appearance on the beach.

The udaller now signed to his retinue to come up, whilst he asked his friend, after a kind greeting and much shaking of hands, "How the devil he came to sit there, playing old tunes in so desolate a place, like an owl whooping to the moon?"

"And tell me rather, fowde," said Claud Halcro, "how you came to be within hearing of me? ay, by my word, and with your bonny daughters too!—Jarto Minna and Jarto Brenda, I bid you welcome to these yellow sands—and there, shake hands, as glorious John, or some other body, says, upon the same occasion. And how came you here like two fair swans, making day out of twilight, and turning all you step upon to silver?"

"You shall know all about them presently," answered Magnus; "but what messmates have you got in the hut with you? I think I heard some one speaking."

"None," replied Claud Halcro, "but that poor creature, the factor, and my imp of a boy Giles. I—but come in—come in—here you will find us starving in comfort—not so much as a mouthful of sour sillocks to be had for love or money."

"That may be in a small part helped," said the udaller; "for though the best of our supper is gone over the Fitful Craggs to the sealchies and the dog-fish, yet we have got something in the kit still—Here, Laurie, bring up the vifda."

"Jokul, jokul!"* was Laurence's joyful answer; and he hastened for the basket, while the party entered the hut.

Here, in a cabin which smelled strongly of dried fish, and whose sides and roof were jet-black with smoke, they found the unhappy Triptolemus Yellowley, seated beside a fire made of dried sea-weed, mingled with some peats and wreck-wood; his sole companion a barefooted, yellow-haired Zetland boy, who acted occasionally as a kind of page to Claud Halcro, bearing his fiddle on his shoulders, saddling his pony, and rendering him similar duties of kindly observance. The disconsolate agriculturist, for such his visage betokened him, displayed little surprise, and less animation, at the arrival of the udaller and his companions, until, after the party had drawn close to the fire (a neighbourhood which the dampness of the night air rendered far from disagreeable), the panier was opened, and a tolerable supply of barley-bread and hung beef, besides a flask of brandy (no doubt smaller than that which the relentless hand of Pacolet had emptied into the ocean), gave assurances of a tolerable supper.

* *Jokul*—Yes, sir; a Norse expression, still in common use.

Then, indeed, the worthy factor grinned, chuckled, rubbed his hands, and inquired after all friends at Burgh-Westra.

When they had all partaken of this needful refreshment, the udaller repeated his inquiries at Halcro, and more particularly at the factor, how they came to be nestled in such a remote corner at such an hour of night.

"Maister Magnus Troil," said Triptolemus, when a second cup had given him spirits to tell his tale of woe, "I would not have you think that it is a little thing that disturbs me. I came of that grain that takes a sair wind to shake it. I have seen many a Martinmas and many a Whitsunday in my day, whilk are the times peculiarly grievous to those of my craft, and I could aye bide the bang; but I think I am like to be dung ower a' thegither in this damned country of yours—Gude forgie me for swearing—but evil communication corrupteth good manners."

"Now, Heaven guide us," said the udaller, "what is the matter with the man? Why, man, if you will put your plough into new land, you must look to have it hank on a stone now and then—You must set us an example of patience, seeing you come here for our improvement."

"And the de'il was in my feet when I did so," said the factor; "I had better have set myself to improve the cairn on Cloch-na-ben."

"But what is it, after all," said the udaller, "that has befallen you?—what is it that you complain of?"

"Of everything that has chanced to me since I landed on this island, which I believe was accursed at the very creation," said the agriculturist, "and assigned as a fitting station for sorners, thieves, whores (I beg the ladies' pardon), witches, bitches, and all manner of evil spirits."

"By my faith, a goodly catalogue," said Magnus; "and there has been the day, that, if I had heard you give out the half of it, I should have turned improver myself, and have tried to amend your manners with a cudgel."

"Bear with me," said the factor, "Maister Fowde, or Maister Udaller, or whatever else they may call you, and as you are strong be pitiful, and consider the luckless lot of any inexperienced person who lights upon this earthly paradise of yours. He asks for drink, they bring him sour whey—no disparagement to your brandy, fowde, which is excellent—You ask for meat, and they bring you sour fish that Satan might choke upon—You call your labourers together, and bid them work; it proves Saint Magnus's day, or Saint Ronan's day, or some infernal saint or other's—or else, perhaps, they have come over the bed with the wrong foot foremost, or they have seen an owl, or a rabbit has crossed them, or they have dreamed of a roasted horse—in short, nothing is to be done—Give them a spade, and they work as if it burnt their fingers; but set them to dancing, and see when they will tire of funking and flinging."

"And why should they, poor bodies," said Claud Halcro, "as long as there are good fiddlers to play to them?"

"Ay, ay," said Triptolemus, shaking his head,

"you are a proper person to uphold them in such a humour. Well, to proceed:—I till a piece of my best ground; down comes a sturdy beggar that wants a kale-yard, or a plant-a-cruive, as you call it, and he claps down an enclosure in the middle of my bit shot of corn, as lightly as if he was baith laird and tenant; and gainsay him wha likes, there he plants his kale-plants! I sit down to my sorrowful dinner, thinking to have peace and quietness there at least; when in comes one, two, three, four, or half-a-dozen of skelping long lads, from some foolery or anither, misca' me for barring my ain door against them, and eat up half of what my sister's providence—and she is not over bountiful—has provided for my dinner. Then in comes a witch, with an ell-wand in her hand, and she raises the wind or lays it, whichever she likes, majors up and down my house as if she was mistress of it, and I am bounden to thank Heaven if she carries not the broadside of it away with her!"

"Still," said the fowde, "this is no answer to my question—how the foul fiend I come to find you at moorings here?"

"Have patience, worthy sir," replied the afflicted factor, "and listen to what I have to say, for I fancy it will be as well to tell you the whole matter. You must know, I once thought that I had gotten a small godsend, that might have made all these matters easier."

"How! a godsend! Do you mean a wreck, Master Factor?" exclaimed Magnus; "shame upon you, that should have set example to others!"

"It was no wreck," said the factor; "but, if you must needs know, it chanced that as I raised an hearth-stane in one of the old chambers at Stourburgh (for my sister is minded that there is little use in mair fire-places about a house but one, and I wanted the stane to knock bear upon),—when, what should I light on but a horn full of old coins, silver the maist feck of them, but wi' a bit sprinkling of gold amang them too. Weel, I thought this was a dainty windfa', and so thought Babie, and we were the mair willing to put up with a place where there were siccan braw nest-eggs—and we slade down the stane cannily over the horn, which seemed to me to be the very cornucopia, or horn of abundance; and for farther security, Babie wad visit the room maybe twenty times in the day, and mysell at an orra time, to the boot of a' that."

"On my word, and a very pretty amusement," said Claud Halcro, "to look over a horn of one's own silver. I question if glorious John Dryden ever enjoyed such a pastime in his life—I am sure I never did."

"Yes, but you forget, Jarto Claud," said the udaller, "that the factor was only counting over the money for my lord the chamberlain. As he is so keen for his lordship's rights in whales and wrecks, he would not surely forget him in treasure-trove."

"A-hem! a-hem! a-he—he—he!" ejaculated Triptolemus, seized at the moment with an awkward fit of coughing,—“no doubt, my lord's right in the matter would have been considered, being in the hand of one, though I say it, as just as can be found in Angus-shire. But mark what happened of late! One day, as I went up to see that all was safe and

snug, and just to count out the share that should have been his lordship's—for surely the labourer, as one may call the finder, is worthy of his hire—nay, some learned men say, that when the finder, in point of trust and in point of power, representeth the *dominus*, or lord superior, he taketh the whole; but let that pass, as a kittle question *in apicibus juris*, as we wont to say at Saint Andrews—Well, sir and ladies, when I went to the upper chamber, what should I see but an ugsome, ill-shaped, and most uncouth dwarf, that wanted but hoofs and horns to have made an utter devil of him, counting over the very hornfull of siller! I am no timorous man, Master Fowde, but, judging that I should proceed with caution in such a matter—for I had reason to believe that there was devilry in it—I accosted him in Latin (whilk it is maist becoming to speak to aught whilk taketh upon it as a goblin), and conjured him *in nomine*, and so forth, with such words as my poor learning could furnish of a sudden, whilk, to say truth, were not so many, nor altogether so purely latineezed as might have been, had I not been few years at college, and many at the pleugh. Well, sirs, he started at first, as one that heareth that which he expects not; but presently recovering himself, he wawls on me with his grey een, like a wild-cat, and opens his mouth, whilk resembled the mouth of an oven, for the de'il a tongue he had in it, that I could spy, and took upon his ugly self, altogether the air and bearing of a bull-dog, whilk I have seen loosed at a fair upon a mad staig; whereupon I was something daunted, and withdrew myself to call upon sister Babie, who fears neither dog nor devil, when there is in question the little penny siller. And truly she raise to the fray as I hae seen the Lindsays and Ogilvies bristle up, when Donald Mac-Donnoch, or the like, made a start down frae the Highlands on the braes of Islay. But an auld useless carline, called Tronda Dronsdaughter (they might call her Drone the sell o' her, without farther addition), flung herself right in my sister's gate, and yelloched and skirled, that you would have thought her a whole generation of hounds; whereupon I judged it best to make ae yoking of it, and stop the pleugh until I got my sister's assistance. Whilk when I had done, and we mounted the stair to the apartment in which the said dwarf, devil, or other apparition, was to be seen, dwarf, horn, and siller, were as clean gane as if the cat had lickit the place where I saw them."

Here Triptolemus paused in his extraordinary narration, while the rest of the party looked upon each other in surprise, and the udaller muttered to Claud Halcro—"By all tokens, this must have been either the devil or Nicholas Strumpfer; and, if it were him, he is more of a goblin than e'er I gave him credit for, and shall be apt to rate him as such in future." Then addressing the factor, he inquired—"Saw ye nought how this dwarf of yours parted company?"

"As I shall answer it, no," answered Triptolemus, with a cautious look around him, as if daunted by the recollection; "neither I, nor Babie, who had her wits more about her, not having seen this unseemly vision, could perceive any way by whilk he made evasion. Only Tronda said she saw him flee forth

VOL. III.

of the window of the west roundel of the auld house, upon a dragon, as she averred. But, as the dragon is held a fabulous animal, I suld pronounce her averment to rest upon *deceptio visus*."

"But may we not ask farther," said Brenda, stimulated by curiosity to know as much of her cousin Norna's family as was possible, "how all this operated upon Master Yellowley, so as to occasion his being in this place at so unseasonable an hour?"

"Seasonable it must be, Mistress Brenda, since it brought us into your sweet company," answered Claud Halcro, whose mercurial brain far outstripped the slow conceptions of the agriculturist, and who became impatient of being so long silent. "To say the truth, it was I, Mistress Brenda, who recommended to our friend the factor, whose house I chanced to call at just after this mischance (and where, by the way, owing doubtless to the hurry of their spirits, I was but poorly received), to make a visit to our other friend at Fitful-head, well judging from certain points of the story, at which my other and more particular friend than either (looking at Magnus) may chance to form a guess, that they who break a head are the best to find a plaster. And as our friend the factor scrupled travelling on horseback, in respect of some tumbles from our ponies"—

"Which are incarnate devils," said Triptolemus, aloud; muttering under his breath, "like every live thing that I have found in Zetland."

"Well, fowde," continued Halcro, "I undertook to carry him to Fitful-head in my little boat, which Giles and I can manage as if it were an admiral's barge full manned; and Master Triptolemus Yellowley will tell you how seaman-like I piloted him to the little haven, within a quarter of a mile of Norna's dwelling."

"I wish to Heaven you had brought me as safe back again," said the factor.

"Why, to be sure," replied the minstrel, "I am, as glorious John says,—

A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger when the waves go high,
I seek the storm—but, for a calm unit,
Will steer too near the sands, to show my wit."

"I showed little wit in intrusting myself to your charge," said Triptolemus; "and you still less when you upset the boat at the throat of the voe, as you call it, when even the poor bairn, that was mair than half drowned, told you that you were carrying too much sail; and then ye wad fasten the rape to the bit stick on the boat-side, that ye might have time to play on the fiddle."

"What!" said the udaller, "make fast the sheets to the thwart? a most unseamanlike practice, Claud Halcro."

"And sae came of it," replied the agriculturist; "for the neist blast (and we are never lang without ane in these parts) whomled us as a gudewife would whomle a bowie, and ne'er a thing wad Maister Halcro save but his fiddle. His puir bairn swam out like a water-spaniel, and I swattered hard for my life, wi' the help of ane of the oars; and here we are, comfortless creatures, that, till a good wind blew you here, had naething to eat but a mouthful

of Norway rusk, that has mair saw-dust than rye-meal in it, and tastes liker turpentine than anything else."

"I thought we heard you very merry," said Brenda, "as we came along the beach."

"Ye heard a fiddle, Mistress Brenda," said the factor; "and maybe ye may think there can be nae dearth, Miss, where that is skirling. But then it was Maister Claud Halcro's fiddle, whilk, I am apt to think, wad skirl at his father's death-bed, or at his ain, sae lang as his fingers could pinch the thairm. And it was nae sma' aggravation to my misfortune to have him bumming a' sorts of springs, Norse and Scots, Highland and Lawland, English and Italian, in my lug, as if nothing had happened that was amiss, and we all in such stress and perplexity."

"Why, I told you sorrow would never right the boat, factor," said the thoughtless minstrel, "and I did my best to make you merry; if I failed, it was neither my fault nor my fiddle's. I have drawn the bow across it before glorious John Dryden himself."

"I will hear no stories about glorious John Dryden," answered the udaller, who dreaded Halcro's narratives as much as Triptolemus did his music. "I will hear nought of him, but one story to every three bowls of punch,—it is our old paction, you know. But tell me, instead, what said Norna to you about your errand?"

"Ay, there was anither fine up-shot," said Master Yellowley. "She wadna look at us, or listen to us; only she bothered our acquaintance, Master Halcro here, who thought he could have sae much to say wi' her, with about a score of questions about your family and household estate, Master Magnus Troil; and when she had gotten a' she wanted out of him, I thought she wad hae dung him ower the craig, like an empty pea-cod."

"And for yourself?" said the udaller.

"She wadna listen to my story, nor hear sae much as a word that I had to say," answered Triptolemus; "and sae much for them that seek to witches and familiar spirits."

"You needed not to have had recourse to Norna's wisdom, Master Factor," said Minna, not unwilling, perhaps, to stop his railing against the friend who had so lately rendered her service; the youngest child in Orkney could have told you, that fairy treasures, if they are not wisely employed for the good of others, as well as of those to whom they are imparted, do not dwell long with their possessors."

"Your humble servant to command, Mistress Minnie," said Triptolemus; "I thank ye for the hint,—and I am blithe that you have gotten your wits—I beg pardon, I meant your health—into the barn-yard again. For the treasure, I neither used nor abused it,—they that live in the house with my sister Babie wad find it hard to do either!—and as for speaking of it, whilk they say muckle offends them whom we in Scotland call good neighbours, and you call drows, the face of the auld Norse kings on the coins themselves might have spoken as much about it as ever I did."

"The factor," said Claud Halcro, not unwilling to seize the opportunity of revenging himself on Trip-

tolemus, for disgracing his seamanship and disparaging his music,—“the factor was so scrupulous, as to keep the thing quiet even from his master, the lord chamberlain; but, now that the matter has ta'en wind, he is likely to have to account to his master for that which is no longer in his possession; for the lord chamberlain will be in no hurry, I think, to believe the story of the dwarf. Neither do I think (winking to the udaller), that Norna gave credit to a word of so odd a story; and I dare say that was the reason that she received us, I must needs say, in a very dry manner. I rather think she knew that Triptolemus, our friend here, had found some other hiding-hole for the money, and that the story of the goblin was all his own invention. For my part, I will never believe there was such a dwarf to be seen as the creature Master Yellowley describes, until I set my own eyes on him.”

"Then you may do so at this moment," said the factor; "for, by—(he muttered a deep asseveration as he sprung on his feet in great horror), there the creature is!"

All turned their eyes in the direction in which he pointed, and saw the hideous mis-shapen figure of Pacolet, with his eyes fixed and glaring at them through the smoke. He had stolen upon their conversation unperceived, until the factor's eye lighted upon him in the manner we have described. There was something so ghastly in his sudden and unexpected appearance, that even the udaller, to whom his form was familiar, could not help starting. Neither pleased with himself for having testified this degree of emotion, however slight, nor with the dwarf who had given cause to it, Magnus asked him sharply, what was his business there? Pacolet replied by producing a letter which he gave to the udaller, uttering a sound resembling the word *shogh*.

"That is the Highlandman's language," said the udaller—"didst thou learn that, Nicholas, when you lost your own?"

Pacolet nodded, and signed to him to read his letter.

"That is no such easy matter by fire-light, my good friend," replied the udaller; "but it may concern Minna, and we must try."

Brenda offered her assistance, but the udaller answered, "No, no, my girl,—Norna's letters must be read by those they are written to. Give the knave, Strumpfer, a drop of brandy the while, though he little deserves it at my hands, considering the grin with which he sent the good Nantz down the crag this morning, as if it had been as much ditch-water."

"Will you be this honest gentleman's cup-bearer—his Ganymede, friend Yellowley, or shall I?" said Claud Halcro, aside to the factor; while Magnus Troil, having carefully wiped his spectacles, which he produced from a large copper-case, had disposed them on his nose, and was studying the epistle of Norna.

"I would not touch him, or go near him, for all the Carse of Gowrie," said the factor, whose fears were by no means entirely removed, though he saw that the dwarf was received as a creature of flesh and blood by the rest of the company; "but I pray

you to ask him what he has done with my horn of coins?"

The dwarf, who heard the question, threw back his head, and displayed his enormous throat, pointing to it with his finger.

"Nay, if he has swallowed them, there is no more to be said," replied the factor; "only I hope he will thrive on them as a cow on wet clover. He is dame Norna's servant it's like,—such man, such mistress! But if theft and witchcraft are to go unpunished in this land, my lord must find another factor; for I have been used to live in a country where men's worldly gear was kept from infang and outfang thief, as well as their immortal souls from the claws of the de'il and his cummers,—sain and save us!"

The agriculturist was perhaps the less reserved in expressing his complaints, that the udaller was for the present out of hearing, having drawn Claud Halcro apart into another corner of the hut.

"And tell me," said he, "friend Halcro, what errand took thee to Sumburgh, since I reckon it was scarce the mere pleasure of sailing in partnership with yonder barnacle?"

"In faith, fowde," said the bard, "and if you will have the truth, I went to speak to Norna on your affairs."

"On my affairs?" replied the udaller; "on what affairs of mine?"

"Just touching your daughter's health. I heard that Norna refused your message, and would not see Eric Scambester. Now, said I to myself, I have scarce joyed in meat, or drink, or music, or aught else, since Jarto Minna has been so ill; and I may say, literally as well as figuratively, that my day and night have been made sorrowful to me. In short, I thought I might have some more interest with old Norna than another, as scalds and wise women were always accounted something akin; and I undertook the journey with the hope to be of some use to my old friend and his lovely daughter."

"And it was most kindly done of you, good warm-hearted Claud," said the udaller, shaking him warmly by the hand,—“I ever said you showed the good old Norse heart amongst all thy fiddling and thy folly.—Why, man, never wince for the matter, but be blithe that thy heart is better than thy head. Well,—and I warrant you got no answer from Norna?"

"None to purpose," replied Claud Halcro; "but she held me close to question about Minna's illness too,—and I told her how I had met her abroad the other morning in no very good weather, and how her sister Brenda said she had hurt her foot;—in short, I told her all and everything I knew."

"And something more besides, it would seem," said the udaller; "for I, at least, never heard before that Minna had hurt herself."

"O, a scratch! a mere scratch!" said the old man; "but I was startled about it—terrified lest it had been the bite of a dog, or some hurt from a venomous thing. I told all to Norna, however."

"And what," answered the udaller, "did she say, in the way of reply?"

"She bade me begone about my business, and told me that the issue would be known at the Kirkwall fair; and said just the like to this noodle of a factor

—it was all that either of us got for our labour," said Halcro.

"That is strange," said Magnus. "My kinswoman writes me in this letter not to fail going thither with my daughters. This fair runs strongly in her head;—one would think she intended to lead the market, and yet she has nothing to buy or to sell there which I know of. And so you came away as wise as you went, and swamped your boat at the mouth of the voe?"

"Why, how could I help it?" said the poet. "I had set the boy to steer, and as the flaw came suddenly off shore, I could not let go the tack and play on the fiddle at the same time. But it is all well enough—salt-water never harmed Zetlander, so he could get out of it; and, as Heaven would have it, we were within man's depth of the shore, and chancing to find this skeo, we should have done well enough, with shelter and fire, and are much better than well with your good cheer and good company. But it wears late, and Night and Day must be both as sleepy as old Midnight can make them. There is an inner crib here, where the fishers slept,—somewhat fragrant with the smell of their fish, but that is wholesome. They shall bestow themselves there, with the help of what cloaks you have, and then we will have one cup of brandy, and one stave of glorious John, or some little trifle of my own, and so sleep as sound as cobblers."

"Two glasses of brandy, if you please," said the udaller, "if our stores do not run dry; but not a single stave of glorious John, or of any one else to-night."

And this being arranged and executed agreeably to the peremptory pleasure of the udaller, the whole party consigned themselves to slumber for the night, and on the next day departed for their several habitations, Claud Halcro having previously arranged with the udaller, that he would accompany him and his daughters on their proposed visit to Kirkwall.

CHAPTER XXXI.

By this hand, thou think'st me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff, for obduracy and persistency. Let the end try the man. . . . Albeit I could tell to thee (as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend), I could be sad, and sad indeed too.

Henry IV. Part II.

WE must now change the scene from Zetland to Orkney, and request our readers to accompany us to the ruins of an elegant, though ancient structure, called the Earl's Palace. These remains, though much dilapidated, still exist in the neighbourhood of the massive and venerable pile, which Norwegian devotion dedicated to Saint Magnus the Martyr, and, being contiguous to the Bishop's Palace, which is also ruinous, the place is impressive, as exhibiting vestiges of the mutations both in church and state which have affected Orkney, as well as countries more exposed to such convulsions. Several parts of these ruinous buildings might be selected (under suitable modifications) as the model of a Gothic mansion, providing architects would be contented rather to imitate what is really beautiful in that species of

building, than to make a medley of the caprices of the order, confounding the military, ecclesiastical, and domestic styles of all ages at random, with additional fantasies and combinations of their own device, "all formed out of the builder's brain."

The Earl's Palace forms three sides of an oblong square, and has, even in its ruins, the air of an elegant yet massive structure, uniting, as was usual in the residence of feudal princes, the character of a palace and of a castle. A great banqueting-hall, communicating with several large rounds, or projecting turret-rooms, and having at either end an immense chimney, testifies the ancient northern hospitality of the Earls of Orkney, and communicates, almost in the modern fashion, with a gallery, or withdrawing-room of corresponding dimensions, and having, like the hall, its projecting turrets. The lordly hall is lighted by a fine Gothic window of shafted stone at one end, and is entered by a spacious and elegant staircase, consisting of three flights of stone steps. The exterior ornaments and proportions of the ancient building are also very handsome; but, being totally unprotected, this remnant of the pomp and grandeur of earls, who assumed the license as well as the dignity of petty sovereigns, is now fast crumbling to decay, and has suffered considerably since the date of our story.

With folded arms and downcast looks, the pirate Cleveland was pacing slowly the ruined hall which we have just described; a place of retirement which he had probably chosen, because it was distant from public resort. His dress was considerably altered from that which he usually wore in Zetland, and seemed a sort of uniform, richly laced, and exhibiting no small quantity of embroidery; a hat with a plume, and a small sword, very handsomely mounted, then the constant companion of every one who assumed the rank of a gentleman, showed his pretensions to that character. But if his exterior was so far improved, it seemed to be otherwise with his health and spirits. He was pale, and had lost both the fire of his eye and the vivacity of his step, and his whole appearance indicated melancholy of mind, or suffering of body, or a combination of both evils.

As Cleveland thus paced these ancient ruins, a young man, of a light and slender form, whose showy dress seemed to have been studied with care, yet exhibited more extravagance than judgment or taste, whose manner was a janty affectation of the free and easy rake of the period, and the expression of whose countenance was lively, with a cast of effrontery, tripped up the staircase, entered the hall, and presented himself to Cleveland, who merely nodded to him, and pulling his hat deeper over his brows, resumed his solitary and discontented promenade.

The stranger adjusted his own hat, nodded in return, took snuff, with the air of a *petit maître*, from a richly chased gold box, offered it to Cleveland as he passed, and being repulsed rather coldly, replaced the box in his pocket, folded his arms in his turn, and stood looking with fixed attention on his motions whose solitude he had interrupted. At length Cleveland stopped short, as if impatient of being longer the subject of his observation, and said abruptly,

"Why can I not be left alone for half an hour, and what the devil is it that you want?"

"I am glad you spoke first," answered the stranger, carelessly; "I was determined to know whether you were Clement Cleveland, or Cleveland's ghost, and they say ghosts never take the first word, so I now set it down for yourself in life and limb; and here is a fine old hurly-house you have found out for an owl to hide himself in at mid-day, or a ghost to revisit the pale glimpses of the moon, as the divine Shakspeare says."

"Well, well," answered Cleveland, abruptly, "your jest is made, and now let us have your earnest."

"In earnest, then, Captain Cleveland," replied his companion, "I think you know me for your friend."

"I am content to suppose so," replied Cleveland.

"It is more than supposition," replied the young man; "I have proved it—proved it both here and elsewhere."

"Well, well," answered Cleveland, "I admit you have been always a friendly fellow—and what then?"

"Well, well—and what then?" replied the other; "this is but a brief way of thanking folks. Look you, captain, here is Benson, Barlow, Dick Fletcher, and a few others of us who wished you well, have kept your old comrade Captain Goffe in these seas upon the look-out for you, when he and Hawkins, and the greater part of the ship's company, would fain have been down on the Spanish main, and at the old trade."

"And I wish to God that you had all gone about your business," and Cleveland, "and left me to my fate."

"Which would have been to be informed against and hanged, captain, the first time that any of these Dutch or English rascals, whom you have lightened of their cargoes, came to set their eyes upon you; and no place more likely to meet with seafaring men than in these islands. And here, to screen you from such a risk, we have been wasting our precious time here, till folks are grown very peery; and when we have no more goods or money to spend amongst them, the fellows will be for grabbing the ship."

"Well then, why do you not sail off without me?" said Cleveland—"There has been fair partition, and all have had their share—let all do as they like. I have lost my ship, and having been once a captain, I will not go to sea under command of Goffe or any other man. Besides, you know well enough that both Hawkins and he bear me ill-will for keeping them from sinking the Spanish brig, with the poor devils of negroes on board."

"Why, what the foul fiend is the matter with thee?" said his companion; "Are you Clement Cleveland, our own old true-hearted Clem of the Cleugh, and do you talk of being afraid of Hawkins and Goffe, and a score of such fellows, when you have myself, and Barlow, and Dick Fletcher, at your back? When was it we deserted you, either in council or in fight, that you should be afraid of our flinching now? And as for serving under Goffe, I hope it is no new thing for gentlemen of fortune who

are going on the account, to change a captain now and then. Let us alone for that, captain you shall be; for death rock me asleep if I serve under that fellow Goffe, who is as very a blood-hound as ever sucked bitch—No, no, I thank you—my captain must have a little of the gentleman about him, howsoever. Besides, you know, it was you who first dipped my hands in the dirty water, and turned me from a stroller by land, to a rover by sea.”

“Alas, poor Bunce!” said Cleveland, “you owe me little thanks for that service.”

“That is as you take it,” replied Bunce; “for my part, I see no harm in levying contributions on the public either one way or t’other. But I wish you would forget that name of Bunce, and call me Altamont, as I have often desired you to do. I hope a gentleman of the roving trade has as good a right to have an alias as a stroller, and I never stepped on the boards but what I was Altamont at the least.”

“Well, then, Jack Altamont,” replied Cleveland, “since Altamont is the word”—

“Yes, but, captain, *Jack* is not the word, though Altamont be so. Jack Altamont?—why, ’tis a velvet coat with paper lace—Let it be Frederick, captain; Frederick Altamont is all of a piece.”

“Frederick be it then, with all my heart,” said Cleveland; “and pray tell me, which of your names will sound best at the head of the Last Speech, Confession, and Dying Words of John Bunce, *alias* Frederick Altamont, who was this morning hanged at Execution-dock for the crime of Piracy upon the high seas.”

“Faith, I cannot answer that question, without another can of grog, captain; so if you will go down with me to Bet Haldane’s on the quay, I will bestow some thought on the matter, with the help of a right pipe of Trinidad. We will have the gallon bowl filled with the best stuff you ever tasted, and I know some smart wenches who will help us to drain it. But you shake your head—you’re not i’ the vein?—Well then, I will stay with you; for by this hand, Clem, you shift me not off. Only I will ferret you out of this burrow of old stones, and carry you into sunshine and fair air.—Where shall we go?”

“Where you will,” said Cleveland, “so that you keep out of the way of our own rascals, and all others.”

“Why then,” replied Bunce, “you and I will go up to the Hill of Whitford, which overlooks the town, and walk together as gravely and honestly as a pair of well employed attorneys.”

As they proceeded to leave the ruinous castle, Bunce, turning back to look at it, thus addressed his companion:—

“Hark ye, captain, doest thou know who last inhabited this old cock-loft?”

“An Earl of the Orkneys, they say,” replied Cleveland.

“And are you avised what death he died of?” said Bunce; “for I have heard that it was of a tight neck-collar—a hempen fever, or the like.”

“The people here do say,” replied Cleveland, “that his lordship, some hundred years ago, had the mishap to become acquainted with the nature of a loop and a leap in the air”

“Why, la ye there now!” said Bunce; “there was some credit in being hanged in those days, and in such worshipful company. And what might his lordship have done to deserve such promotion?”

“Plundered the liege subjects, they say,” replied Cleveland; “slain and wounded them, fired upon his majesty’s flag, and so forth.”

“Near akin to a gentleman rover, then,” said Bunce, making a theatrical bow towards the old building; “and, therefore, my most potent, grave, and reverend Signior Earl, I crave leave to call you my loving cousin, and bid you most heartily adieu. I leave you in the good company of rats and mice, and so forth, and I carry with me an honest gentleman, who, having of late had no more heart than a mouse, is now desirous to run away from his profession and friends like a rat, and would therefore be a most fitting denizen of your earlship’s palace.”

“I would advise you not to speak so loud, my good friend, Frederick Altamont, or John Bunce,” said Cleveland; “when you were on the stage, you might safely rant as loud as you listed; but, in your present profession, of which you are so fond, every man speaks under correction of the yard-arm, and a running noose.”

The comrades left the little town of Kirkwall in silence, and ascended the Hill of Whitford, which raises its brow of dark heath, uninterrupted by enclosures or cultivation of any kind, to the northward of the ancient Burgh of Saint Magnus. The plain at the foot of the hill was already occupied by numbers of persons who were engaged in making preparations for the fair of Saint Olla, to be held upon the ensuing day, and which forms a general rendezvous to all the neighbouring islands of Orkney, and is even frequented by many persons from the more distant archipelago of Zetland. It is, in the words of the proclamation, “a free mercat and fair, holden at the good Burgh of Kirkwall on the third of August, being Saint Ollaw’s day,” and continuing for an indefinite space thereafter, extending from three days to a week, and upwards. The fair is of great antiquity, and derives its name from Olaus, Olave, Ollaw, the celebrated monarch of Norway, who, rather by the edge of his sword than any milder argument, introduced christianity into those isles, and was respected as the patron of Kirkwall some time before he shared that honour with Saint Magnus the Martyr.

It was no part of Cleveland’s purpose to mingle in the busy scene which was here going on; and, turning their route to the left, they soon ascended into undisturbed solitude, save where the grouse, more plentiful in Orkney, perhaps, than in any other part of the British dominions, rose in covey, and went off before them. Having continued to ascend till they had well nigh reached the summit of the conical hill, both turned round, as with one consent, to look at and admire the prospect beneath.

The lively bustle which extended between the foot of the hill and the town, gave life and variety to that part of the scene; then was seen the town itself, out of which arose, like a great mass, superior in proportion as it seemed to the whole burgh, the ancient cathedral of Saint Magnus, of the heaviest order of Gothic architecture, but grand, solemn, and

stately, the work of a distant age, and of a powerful hand. The quay, with the shipping, lent additional vivacity to the scene; and not only the whole beautiful bay, which lies betwixt the promontories of Inganess and Quanterness, at the bottom of which Kirkwall is situated, but all the sea, so far as visible, and in particular the whole strait betwixt the island of Shapinsha and that called Pomona, or the Mainland, was covered and enlivened by a variety of boats and small vessels, freighted from distant islands to convey passengers or merchandise to the fair of Saint Ollaw.

Having attained the point by which this fair and busy prospect was most completely commanded, each of the strangers, in seaman fashion, had recourse to his spy-glass, to assist the naked eye in considering the bay of Kirkwall, and the numerous vessels by which it was traversed. But the attention of the two companions seemed to be arrested by different objects. That of Bunce, or Altamont, as he chose to call himself, was riveted to the armed sloop, where, conspicuous by her square rigging and length of beam, with the English jack and pennon, which they had the precaution to keep flying, she lay among the merchant vessels, as distinguished from them by the trim neatness of her appearance, as a trained soldier amongst a crowd of clowns.

"Yonder she lies," said Bunce; "I wish to God she was in the bay of Honduras—you, captain, on the quarter-deck, I your lieutenant, and Fletcher quarter-master, and fifty stout fellows under us—I should not wish to see these blasted heaths and rocks again for a while!—And captain you shall soon be. The old brute Goffe gets drunk as a lord every day, swaggers, and shoots, and cuts, among the crew; and, besides, he has quarreled with the people here so damnably, that they will scarce let water or provisions go on board of us, and we expect an open breach every day."

As Bunce received no answer, he turned short round on his companion, and, perceiving his attention otherwise engaged, exclaimed,—“What the devil is the matter with you? or what can you see in all that trumpery small-craft, which is only loaded with stock-fish, and ling, and smoked geese, and tubs of butter that is worse than tallow—the cargoes of the whole lumped together would not be worth the flash of a pistol.—No, no, give me such a chase as we might see from the mast-head off the island of Trinidad. Your don, rolling as deep in the water as a grampus, deep-loaden with rum, sugar, and bales of tobacco, and all the rest ingots, moidores, and gold dust; then set all sail, clear the deck, stand to quarters, up with the Jolly Roger*—we near her—we make her out to be well manned and armed”——

"Twenty guns on her lower deck," said Cleveland.

"Forty, if you will," retorted Bunce, "and we have but ten mounted—never mind. The don blazes away—never mind yet, my brave lads—run her alongside, and on board with you—to work, with

* The pirates gave this name to the black flag, which, with many horrible devices to enhance its terrors, was their favourite ensign.

your grenadoes, your cutlasses, pole-axes, and pistols—The don cries *misericordia*, and we share the cargo without *co licencio*, *Seignior*."

"By my faith," said Cleveland, "thou takest so kindly to the trade, that all the world may see that no honest man was spoiled when you were made a pirate. But you shall not prevail on me to go farther in the devil's road with you; for you know yourself that what is got over his back is spent—you wot how. In a week, or a month at most, the rum and the sugar are out, the bales of tobacco have become smoke, the moidores, ingots, and gold dust, have got out of our hands, into those of the quiet, honest, conscientious folks who dwell at Port-Royal and elsewhere—wink hard on our trade as long as we have money, but not a jot beyond. Then we have cold looks, and it may be a hint is given to the judge marshal; for, when our pockets are worth nothing, our honest friends, rather than want, will make money upon our heads. Then comes a high gallows and a short halter, and so dies the gentleman rover. I tell thee, I will leave this trade; and, when I turn my glass from one of these barks and boats to another, there is not the worst of them which I would not row for life, rather than continue to be what I have been. These poor men make the sea a means of honest livelihood and friendly communication between shore and shore, for the mutual benefit of the inhabitants; but we have made it a road to the ruin of others, and to our own destruction here and in eternity.—I am determined to turn honest man, and use this life no longer!"

"And where will your honesty take up its abode, if it please you?" said Bunce.—“You have broken the laws of every nation, and the hand of the law will detect and crush you wherever you may take refuge—Cleveland, I speak to you more seriously than I am wont to do. I have had my reflections too, and they have been bad enough, though they lasted but a few minutes, to spoil me weeks of joviality. But here is the matter,—what can we do but go on as we have done, unless we have a direct purpose of adorning the yard-arm?"

"We may claim the benefit of the proclamation to those of our sort who come in and surrender," said Cleveland.

"Umph!" answered his companion, drily; "the date of that day of grace has been for some time over, and they may take the penalty or grant the pardon at their pleasure. Were I you, I would not put my neck in such a venture."

"Why, others have been admitted but lately to favour, and why should not I?" said Cleveland.

"Ay," replied his associate, "Harry Glasby and some others have been spared; but Glasby did what was called good service, in betraying his comrades, and retaking the Jolly Fortune; and that I think you would scorn, even to be revenged of the brute Goffe yonder."

"I would die a thousand times sooner," said Cleveland.

"I will be sworn for it," said Bunce; "and the others were fore-castle fellows—petty-larceny rogues, scarce worth the hemp it would have cost to hang them. But your name has stood too high amongst the gentlemen of fortune for you to get off so easily.

You are the prime buck of the herd, and will be marked accordingly."

"And why so, I pray you?" said Cleveland; "you know well enough my aim, Jack."

"Frederick, if you please," said Bunce.

"The devil take your folly!—Pr'ythee keep thy wit, and let us be grave for a moment."

"For a moment—be it so," said Bunce; "but I feel the spirit of Altamont coming fast upon me.—I have been a grave man for ten minutes already."

"Be so then for a little longer," said Cleveland: "I know, Jack, that you really love me; and, since we have come thus far in this talk, I will trust you entirely. Now tell me why should I be refused the benefit of this gracious proclamation? I have borne a rough outside, as thou knowest; but, in time of need, I can show the number of lives which I have been the means of saving, the property which I have restored to those who owned it, when, without my intercession, it would have been wantonly destroyed. In short, Bunce, I can show"—

"That you were as gentle a thief as Robin Hood himself," said Bunce; "and, for that reason, I, Fletcher, and the better sort amongst us, love you, as one who saves the character of us gentlemen rovers from utter reprobation.—Well, suppose your pardon made out, what are you to do next?—what class in society will receive you?—with whom will you associate?—Old Drake, in Queen Bess's time, could plunder Peru and Mexico without a line of commission to show for it, and, blessed be her memory, he was knighted for it on his return. And there was Hal Morgan, the Welchman, nearer our time, in the days of merry King Charles, brought all his gettings home, had his estate and his country-house, and who but he. But that is all ended now—once a pirate, and an outcast for ever. The poor devil may go and live, shunned and despised by every one, in some obscure sea-port, with such part of his guilty earnings as courtiers and clerks leave him—for pardons do not pass the seals for nothing;—and, when he takes his walk along the pier, if a stranger asks, who is the down-looking, swarthy, melancholy man, for whom all make way, as if he brought the plague in his person, the answer shall be, that is such a one, the pardoned pirate!—No honest man will speak to him—no woman of repute will give him her hand."

"Your picture is too highly coloured, Jack," said Cleveland, suddenly interrupting his friend; "there are women—there is one at least, that would be true to her lover, even if he were what you have described."

Bunce was silent for a moment, and looked fixedly at his friend. "By my soul!" he said, at length, "I begin to think myself a conjurer. Unlikely as it all was, I could not help suspecting from the beginning that there was a girl in the case. Why, this is worse than Prince Volscius in love, ha! ha! ha!"

"Laugh as you will," said Cleveland, "it is true;—there is a maiden who is contented to love me, pirate as I am; and I will fairly own to you, Jack, that, though I have oft at times detested our roving life, and myself for following it, yet I doubt if I could

have found resolution to make the break which I have now resolved on, but for her sake."

"Why, then, God-a-mercy!" replied Bunce, "there is no speaking sense to a madman; and love in one of your trade, captain, is little better than lunacy. The girl must be a rare creature, for a wise man to risk hanging for her. But harkye, may she not be a little touched, as well as yourself?—and is it not sympathy that has done it? She is, I understand, not one of our ordinary cockatrices, but a girl of conduct and character."

"Both are as undoubted as that she is the most beautiful and bewitching creature whom the eye ever opened upon," answered Cleveland.

"And she loves thee, knowing thee, most noble captain, to be a commander among those gentlemen of fortune, whom the vulgar call pirates?"

"Even so—I am assured of it," said Cleveland.

"Why, then," answered Bunce, "she is either mad in good earnest, as I said before, or she does not know what a pirate is."

"You are right in the last point," replied Cleveland. "She has been bred in such remote simplicity, and utter ignorance of what is evil, that she compares our occupation with that of the old northmen, who swept sea and haven with their victorious galleys, established colonies, conquered countries, and took the name of sea-kings."

"And a better one it is than that of pirate, and comes much to the same purpose, I dare say," said Bunce. "But this must be a mettled wench!—why did you not bring her aboard? methinks it was pity to baulk her fancy."

"And do you think," said Cleveland, "that I could so utterly play the part of a fallen spirit as to avail myself of her enthusiastic error, and bring an angel of beauty and innocence acquainted with such a hell as exists on board of yonder infernal ship of ours? I tell you, my friend, that, were all my former sins doubled in weight and in dye, such a villany would have outglared and outweighed them all."

"Why, then, Captain Cleveland," said his confidant, "methinks it was but a fool's part to come hither at all. The news must one day have gone abroad, that the celebrated pirate Captain Cleveland, with his good sloop the Revenge, had been lost on the Main-land of Zetland, and all hands perished; so you would have remained hid both from friend and enemy, and might have married your pretty Zetlander, and converted your sash and scarf into fishing-nets, and your cutlass into a harpoon, and swept the seas for fish instead of florins."

"And so I had determined," said the captain; "but a jagger, as they call them here, like a meddling, peddling thief as he is, brought down intelligence to Zetland of your lying here, and I was fain to set off, to see if you were the consort of whom I had told them, long before I thought of leaving the roving trade."

"Ay," said Bunce, "and so far you judged well. For, as you had heard of our being at Kirkwall, so we should have soon learned that you were at Zetland; and some of us for friendship, some for hatred, and some for fear of your playing Harry Glasby upon us, would have come down for the purpose of getting you into our company again."

"I suspected as much," said the captain, "and therefore was fain to decline the courteous offer of a friend, who proposed to bring me here about this time. Besides, Jack, I recollected, that, as you say, my pardon will not pass the seals without money, my own was waxing low—no wonder, thou knowest I was never a churl of it—And so"—

"And so you came for your share of the cobs?" replied his friend—"It was wisely done; and we shared honourably—so far Goffie has acted up to articles, it must be allowed. But keep your purpose of leaving him close in your breast, for I dread his playing you some dog's trick or other; for he certainly thought himself sure of your share, and will hardly forgive your coming alive to disappoint him."

"I fear him not," said Cleveland, "and he knows that well. I would I were as well clear of the consequences of having been his comrade, as I hold myself to be of all those which may attend his ill-will. Another unhappy job I may be troubled with—I hurt a young fellow, who has been my plague for some time, in an unhappy brawl that chanced the morning I left Zetland."

"Is he dead?" asked Bunce: "It is a more serious question here, than it would be on the Grand Caimains or the Bahama Isles, and where a brace or two of fellows may be shot in a morning, and no more heard of, or asked about them, than if they were so many wood-pigeons. But here it may be otherwise; so I hope you have not made your friend immortal."

"I hope not," said the captain, "though my anger has been fatal to those who have given me less provocation. To say the truth, I was sorry for the lad notwithstanding, and especially as I was forced to leave him in mad keeping."

"In mad keeping?" said Bunce; "why, what means that?"

"You shall hear," replied his friend. "In the first place, you are to know, this young man came suddenly on me while I was trying to gain Minna's ear, for a private interview before I set sail, that I might explain my purpose to her. Now to be broken in on by the accursed rudeness of this young fellow at such a moment"—

"The interruption deserved death," said Bunce, "by all the laws of love and honour!"

"A truce with your ends of plays, Jack, and listen one moment.—The brisk youth thought proper to retort, when I commanded him to be gone. I am not, thou knowest, very patient, and enforced my commands with a blow, which he returned as roundly. We struggled, till I became desirous that we should part at any rate, which I could only effect by a stroke of my poniard, which, according to old use, I have, thou knowest, always about me. I had scarce done this when I repented; but there was no time to think of anything save escape and concealment, for, if the house rose on me, I was lost; as the fiery old man, who is head of the family, would have done justice on me had I been his brother. I took the body hastily on my shoulders to carry it down to the sea-shore, with the hasty purpose of throwing it into a riva, as they call them, or chasm of great depth, where it would have been long enough in being discovered. This done, I intended

to jump into the boat which I had lying ready, and set sail for Kirkwall. But, as I was walking hastily towards the beach with my burthen, the poor young fellow groaned, and so apprised me that the wound had not been instantly fatal. I was by this time well concealed amongst the rocks, and, far from desiring to complete my crime, I laid the young man on the ground, and was doing what I could to staunch the blood, when suddenly an old woman stood before me. She was a person whom I had frequently seen while in Zetland, and to whom they ascribe the character of a sorceress, or, as the negroes say, an Obi woman. She demanded the wounded man of me, and I was too much pressed for time to hesitate complying with her request. More she was about to say to me, when we heard the voice of a silly old man, belonging to the family, singing at some distance. She then pressed her finger on her lip as a sign of secrecy, whistled very low, and, a shapeless, deformed brute of a dwarf coming to her assistance, they carried the wounded man into one of the caverns with which the place abounds, and I got to my boat and to sea with all expedition. If that old hag be, as they say, connected with the King of the Air, she favoured me that morning with a turn of her calling; for not even the West Indian tornadoes, which we have weathered together, made a wilder racket than the squall that drove me so far out of our course, that, without a pocket-compass, which I chanced to have about me, I should never have recovered the Fair Isle, for which we run, and where I found a brig which brought me to this place. But, whether the old woman meant me weal or woe, here we came at length in safety from the sea, and here I remain at land, in doubts and difficulties of more kinds than one."

"O the devil take the Sumburgh-head," said Bunce, "or whatever they call the rock that you knocked our clever little Revenge against!"

"Do not say I knocked her on the rock," said Cleveland; "have I not told you fifty times, if the cowards had not taken to their boat, though I showed them the danger, and told them they would all be swamped, which happened the instant they cast off the painter, she would have been afloat at this moment? Had they stood by me and the ship, their lives would have been saved; had I gone with them, mine would have been lost; who can say which is for the best?"

"Well," replied his friend, "I know your case now, and can the better help and advise. I will be true to you, Clement, as the blade to the hilt; but I cannot think that you should leave us. As the old Scottish song says, 'Wae's my heart that we should sunder.'—But come, you will aboard with us to-day, at any rate?"

"I have no other place of refuge," said Cleveland, with a sigh.

He then once more ran his eyes over the bay, directed his spy-glass upon several of the vessels which traversed its surface, in hopes, doubtless, of discerning the vessel of Magnus Troil, and then followed his companion down the hill in silence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I strive like to the vessel in the tide-way,
Which, lacking favouring breeze, hath not the power
To stem the powerful current.—Even so,
Resolving daily to forsake my vices,
Habit, strong circumstance, renewed temptation,
Sweep me to sea again.—O heavenly breath,
Fill thou my sails, and aid the feeble vessel,
Which ne'er can reach the blessed port without thee!

'Tis Odds when Evens meet.

CLEVELAND, with his confidant Bunce, descended the hill for a time in silence, until at length the latter renewed their conversation.

"You have taken this fellow's wound more on your conscience than you need, captain—I have known you do more, and think less on't."

"Not on such slight provocation, Jack," replied Cleveland. "Besides, the lad saved my life; and, say that I requited him the favour, still we should not have met on such evil terms; but I trust that he may receive aid from that woman, who has certainly strange skill in simples."

"And over simpletons, captain," said his friend, "in which class I must e'en put you down, if you think more on this subject. That you should be made a fool of by a young woman, why, it is many an honest man's case;—but to puzzle your pate about the mummeries of an old one, is far too great a folly to indulge a friend in. Talk to me of your Minna, since you so call her, as much as you will; but you have no title to trouble your faithful squire-errant with your old mumping magician. And now here we are once more amongst the booths and tents, which these good folks are pitching—let us look, and see whether we may not find some fun and frolic amongst them. In merry England, now, you would have seen, on such an occasion, two or three bands of strollers, as many fire-eaters and conjurers, as many shows of wild beasts; but, amongst these grave folks, there is nothing but what savours of business and of commodity—no, not so much as a single squall from my merry gossip Punch and his rib Joan."

As Bunce thus spoke, Cleveland cast his eyes on some very gay clothes, which, with other articles, hung out upon one of the booths, that had a good deal more of ornament and exterior decoration than the rest. There was in front a small sign of canvas painted, announcing the variety of goods which the owner of the booth, Bryce Snailsfoot, had upon sale, and the reasonable prices at which he proposed to offer them to the public. For the farther gratification of the spectator, the sign bore on the opposite side an emblematic device, resembling our first parents in their vegetable garments, with this legend—

Poor sinners whom the snake deceives,
Are fain to cover them with leaves.
Zetland hath no leaves, 't is true,
Because that trees are none, or few;
But we have flax and taits of woo,
For linen cloth and wadmaal blue:
And we have many of foreign knacks
Of finer waft than woo or flax.

VOL. III

Ye gallant Lambmas lads,* appear,
And bring your Lambmas sisters here;
Bryce Snailsfoot spares not cost or care,
To pleasure every gentle pair.

While Cleveland was perusing these goodly rhymes, which brought to his mind Claud Halcro, to whom, as the poet-laureat of the island, ready with his talent alike in the service of the great and small, they probably owed their origin, the worthy proprietor of the booth, having cast eye upon him, began with hasty and trembling hand to remove some of the garments, which, as the sale only commenced upon the ensuing day, he had exposed either for the purpose of airing them, or to excite the admiration of the spectators.

"By my word, captain," whispered Bunce to Cleveland, "you must have had that fellow under your clutches one day, and he remembers one gripe of your talons, and fears another. See how fast he is packing his wares out of sight so soon as he set eyes on you."

"His wares!" said Cleveland, on looking more attentively at his proceedings; "By Heaven, they are my clothes which I left in a chest at Jarlshof when the Revenge was lost there.—Why, Bryce Snailsfoot, thou thief, dog, and villain, what means this? Have you not made enough of us by cheap buying and dear selling, that you have seized on my trunk and wearing apparel?"

Bryce Snailsfoot, who probably would otherwise not have been willing to see his friend the captain, was now by the vivacity of his attack obliged to pay attention to him. He first whispered to his little foot page, by whom, as we have already noticed, he was usually attended, "Run to the town-council-house, jarto, and tell the provost and baillies they maun send some of their officers speedily, for here is like to be wild wark in the fair."

So having said, and having seconded his commands by a push on the shoulder of his messenger, which sent him spinning out of the shop as fast as heels could carry him, Bryce Snailsfoot turned to his old acquaintance, and with that amplification of words and exaggeration of manner, which in Scotland is called "making a phrase," he ejaculated—"The Lord be gude to us! the worthy Captain Cleveland, that we were all sae grieved about, returned to relieve our hearts again! Wat have my cheeks been for you (here Bryce wiped his eyes), and blithe am I now to see you restored to your sorrowing friends."

"My sorrowing friends, you rascal!" said Cleveland; "I will give you better cause for sorrow than ever you had on my account, if you do not tell me instantly where you stole all my clothes."

"Stole!" ejaculated Bryce, casting up his eyes to heaven; "now the powers be gude to us!—the poor

* It was anciently a custom at Saint Ollaw's fair at Kirkwall, that the young people of the lower class, and of either sex, associated in pairs for the period of the fair, during which the couple were termed Lambmas brother and sister. It is easy to conceive that the exclusive familiarity arising out of this custom was liable to abuse, the rather that it is said little scandal was attached to the indiscretions which it occasioned.

gentleman has lost his reason in that weary gale of wind."

"Why, you insolent rascal!" said Cleveland, grasping the cane which he carried, "do you think to bamboozle me with your impudence? As you would have a whole head on your shoulders, and your bones in a whole skin one minute longer, tell me where the devil you stole my wearing apparel."

Bryce Snailsfoot ejaculated once more a repetition of the word "Stole! Now Heaven be gude to us!" but at the same time, conscious that the captain was likely to be sudden in execution, cast an anxious look to the town, to see the loitering aid of the civil power advance to his rescue.

"I insist on an instant answer," said the captain, with upraised weapon, "or else I shall beat you to a mummy, and throw out all your frippery upon the common."

Meanwhile, Master John Bunce, who considered the whole affair as an excellent good jest, and not the worse one that it made Cleveland very angry, seized hold of the captain's arm, and, without any idea of ultimately preventing him from executing his threats, interfered just so much as was necessary to protract a discussion so amusing.

"Nay, let the honest man speak," he said, "mess-mate; he has as fine a cozening face as ever stood on a knavish pair of shoulders, and his are the true flourishes of eloquence, in the course of which men snip the cloth an inch too short. Now, I wish you to consider that you are both of a trade,—he measures bales by the yard, and you by the sword,—and so I will not have him chopped up till he has had a fair chase."

"You are a fool!" said Cleveland, endeavouring to shake his friend off.—"Let me go; for, by Heaven, I will be foul of him!"

"Hold him fast," said the pedlar, "good dear merry gentleman, hold him fast!"

"Then say something for yourself," said Bunce; "use your gob-box, man; patter away, or, by my soul, I will let him loose on you!"

"He says I stole these goods," said Bryce, who now saw himself run so close, that pleading to the charge became inevitable. "Now, how could I steal them, when they are mine by fair and lawful purchase?"

"Purchase! you beggarly vagrant!" said Cleveland; "from whom did you dare to buy my clothes? or who had the impudence to sell them?"

"Just that worthy professor Mrs Swertha, the housekeeper at Jarlshof, who acted as your executor," said the pedlar; "and a grieved heart she had."

"And so she was resolved to make a heavy pocket of it, I suppose," said the captain; "but how did she dare to sell the things left in her charge?"

"Why, she acted all for the best, good woman!" said the pedlar, anxious to protract the discussion until the arrival of succour; "and, if you will but hear reason, I am ready to account with you for the chest and all that it holds."

"Speak out then, and let us have none of thy damnable evasions," said Captain Cleveland; "if you show ever so little purpose of being somewhat honest for once in thy life, I will not beat thee."

"Why, you see, noble captain," said the pedlar,

—and then muttered to himself, "plague on Pate Paterson's cripple knee, they will be waiting on him, hirpling, useless body!" then resumed aloud—"The country, ye see, is in great perplexity,—great perplexity indeed,—much perplexity truly. There was your honour missing, that was loved by great and small—clean missing—nowhere to be heard of—a lost man—umquhile—dead—defunct."

"You shall find me alive to your cost, you scoundrel!" said the irritable captain.

"Weel, but take patience,—ye will not hear a body speak," said the jagger.—"Then there was the lad Mordaunt Mertoun"—

"Ha!" said the captain, "what of him?"

"Cannot be heard of," said the pedlar; "clean and clear tint, a gone youth; fallen, it is thought, from the craig into the sea—he was aye venturous. I have had dealings with him for furs and feathers, whilk he swapped against powder and shot, and the like; and now he has worn out from among us—clean retired—utterly vanished, like the last puff of an auld wife's tobacco pipe."

"But what is all this to the captain's clothes, my dear friend?" said Bunce; "I must presently beat you myself until you come to the point."

"Weel, weel,—patience, patience," said Bryce, waving his hand; "you will get all time enough. Weel, there are two folks gane, as I said, forbye the distress at Burgh-Westra about Mistress Minna's sad ailment"—

"Bring not her into your buffoonery, sirrah," said Cleveland, in a tone of anger, not so loud, but far deeper and more concentrated than he had hitherto used; "for, if you name her with less than reverence, I will crop the ears out of your head, and make you swallow them on the spot!"

"He, he, he!" faintly laughed the jagger; "that were a pleasant jest! you are pleased to be witty. But, to say naething of Burgh-Westra, there is the carle at Jarlshof, he that was the auld Mertoun, Mordaunt's father, whom men thought as fast bound to the place he dwelt in as the Sumburgh-head it-sell, naething maun serve him but he is lost as weel as the lave about whom I have spoken. And there's Magnus Troil (wi' favour be he named), taking horse; and there is pleasant Maister Claud Halcro taking boat, whilk he steers worst of any man in Zetland, his head running on rambling rhymes; and the factor body is on the stir—the Scots factor,—him that is aye speaking of dykes and delving, and such unprofitable wark, which has naething of merchandise in it, and he is on the lang trot too; so that ye might say, upon a manner, the tae half of the Main-land of Zetland is lost, and the other is running to and fro seeking it—awfu' times!"

Captain Cleveland had subdued his passion, and listened to this tirade of the worthy man of merchandise, with impatience indeed, yet not without the hope of hearing something that might concern him. But his companion was now become impatient in his turn:—"The clothes!" he exclaimed, "the clothes, the clothes, the clothes!" accompanying each repetition of the words with a flourish of his cane, the dexterity of which consisted in coming mighty near the jagger's ears without actually touching him.

The jagger, shrinking from each of these demonstrations, continued to exclaim, "Nay, sir—good sir—worthy sir—for the clothes—I found the worthy dame in great distress on account of her old maister, and on account of her young maister, and on account of worthy Captain Cleveland; and because of the distress of the worthy fowde's family, and the trouble of the great fowde himself,—and because of the factor, and in respect of Claud Halcro, and on other accounts and respects. Also we mingled our sorrows and our tears with a bottle, as the holy text hath it, and called in the ranzelman to our council, a worthy man, Neil Ronaldson by name, who hath a good reputation."

Here another flourish of the cane came so very near that it partly touched his ear. The jagger started back, and the truth, or that which he desired should be considered as such, bolted from him without more circumlocution; as a cork, after much unnecessary buzzing and fizzing, springs forth from a bottle of spruce beer.

"In brief, what the de'il mair would you have of it?—the woman sold me the kist of clothes—they are mine by purchase, and that is what I will live and die upon."

"In other words," said Cleveland, "this greedy old hag had the impudence to sell what was none of hers; and you, honest Bryce Snailsfoot, had the assurance to be purchaser."

"Oo dear, captain," said the conscientious pedlar, "what wad ye hae had twa poor folk to do? There was yoursell gane that aught the things, and Maister Mordaunt was gane that had them in keeping, and the things were but damply put up, where they were rotting with moth and mould, and"——

"And so this old thief sold them, and you bought them, I suppose, just to keep them from spoiling," said Cleveland.

"Weel then," said the merchant, "I'm thinking, noble captain, that wad be just the gate of it."

"Well then, hark ye, you impudent scoundrel," said the captain. "I do not wish to dirty my fingers with you, or to make any disturbance in this place"——

"Good reason for that, captain—aha!" said the jagger, slily.

"I will break your bones if you speak another word," replied Cleveland. "Take notice—I offer you fair terms—give me back the black leathern pocket-book with the lock upon it, and the purse with the doubloons, with some few of the clothes I want, and keep the rest in the devil's name."

"Doubloons!!!"—exclaimed the jagger, with an exaltation of voice intended to indicate the utmost extremity of surprise,—“What do I ken of doubloons? my dealing was for doublets, and not for doubloons.—If there were doubloons in the kist, doubtless Swertha will have them in safe keeping for your honour—the damp wouldna harm the gold, ye ken."

"Give me back my pocket-book and my goods, you rascally thief," said Cleveland, "or without a word more I will beat your brains out!"

The wily jagger, casting his eye around him, saw that succour was near, in the shape of a party of officers, six in number; for several rencontres with

the crew of the pirate had taught the magistrates of Kirkwall to strengthen their police parties when these strangers were in question.

"Ye had better keep the *thief* to suit yoursell, honoured captain," said the jagger, emboldened by the approach of the civil power; "for wha kens how a' these fine goods and bonnie-dies were come by?"

This was uttered with such provoking slyness of look and tone, that Cleveland made no farther delay, but, seizing upon the jagger by the collar dragged him over his temporary counter, which was, with all the goods displayed thereon, overset in the scuffle; and, holding him with one hand, inflicted on him with the other a severe beating with his cane. All this was done so suddenly and with such energy, that Bryce Snailsfoot, though rather a stout man, was totally surprised by the vivacity of the attack, and made scarce any other effort at extricating himself than by roaring for assistance like a bull-calf. The "loitering aid" being at length come up, the officers made an effort to seize on Cleveland, and by their united exertions succeeded in compelling him to quit hold of the pedlar, in order to defend himself from their assault. This he did with infinite strength, resolution, and dexterity, being at the same time well seconded by his friend Jack Bunce, who had seen with infinite glee the drubbing sustained by the pedlar, and now combated tightly to save his companion from the consequences. But, as there had been for some time a growing feud between the town's-people and the crew of the Rover, the former, provoked by the insolent deportment of the seamen, had resolved to stand by each other, and to aid the civil power upon such occasions of riot as should occur in future, and so many assistants came up to the rescue of the constables, that Cleveland, after fighting most manfully, was at length brought to the ground and made prisoner. His more fortunate companion had escaped by speed of foot, as soon as he saw that the day must needs be determined against them.

The proud heart of Cleveland, which, even in its perversion, had in its feelings something of original nobleness, was like to burst, when he felt himself borne down in this unworthy brawl—dragged into the town as a prisoner, and hurried through the streets towards the council-house, where the magistrates of the burgh were then seated in council. The probability of imprisonment, with all its consequences, rushed also upon his mind, and he cursed an hundred times the folly which had not rather submitted to the pedlar's knavery, than involved him in so perilous an embarrassment.

But, just as they approached the door of the council-house, which is situated in the middle of the little town, the face of matters was suddenly changed by a new and unexpected incident.

Bunce, who had designed, by his precipitate retreat, to serve as well his friend as himself, had bided him to the haven, where the boat of the Rover was then lying, and called the cockswain and boat's crew to the assistance of Cleveland. They now appeared on the scene—fierce desperadoes, as became their calling, with features bronzed by the tropical sun under which they had pursued it. They rushed at once amongst the crowd, laying about them with

their stretchers; and, forcing their way up to Cleveland, speedily delivered him from the hands of the officers, who were totally unprepared to resist an attack so furious and so sudden, and carried him off in triumph towards the quay,—two or three of their number facing about from time to time to keep back the crowd, whose efforts to recover the prisoner were the less violent, that most of the seamen were armed with pistols and cutlasses, as well as with the less lethal weapons which alone they had as yet made use of.

They gained their boat in safety, and jumped into it, carrying along with them Cleveland, to whom circumstances seemed to offer no other refuge, and pushed off for their vessel, singing in chorus to their oars an old ditty, of which the natives of Kirkwall could only hear the first stanza:—

“ Thus said the Rover
To his gallant crew,
‘ Up with the black flag,
Down with the blue!—
Fire on the main-top,
Fire on the bow,
Fire on the gun-deck,
Fire down below.’ ”

The wild chorus of their voices was heard long after the words ceased to be intelligible.—And thus was the pirate Cleveland again thrown almost involuntarily amongst those desperate associates, from whom he had so often resolved to detach himself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Parental love, my friend, has power o’er wisdom,
And is the charm, which, like the falconer’s lure,
Can bring from heaven the highest soaring spirits.—
So, when famed Prospero doff’d his magic robe,
It was Miranda pluck’d it from his shoulders.

Old Play.

OUR wandering narrative must now return to Mordaunt Mertoun.—We left him in the perilous condition of one who has received a severe wound, and we now find him in the situation of a convalescent—pale, indeed, and feeble, from the loss of much blood, and the effects of a fever which had followed on the injury, but so far fortunate, that the weapon, having glanced on the ribs, had only occasioned a great effusion of blood, without touching on any vital part, and was now well nigh healed; so efficacious were the vulnerary plants and salves with which it had been treated by the sage Norna of Fitful-head.

The matron and her patient now sat together in a dwelling in a remote island. He had been transported, during his illness, and ere he had perfect consciousness, first to her singular habitation near Fitful-head, and thence to her present abode, by one of the fishing-boats on the station of Burgh-Westra. For such was the command possessed by Norna over the superstitious character of her countrymen, that she never failed to find faithful agents to execute her commands, whatever these happened to be; and, as her orders were generally given under injunctions of the strictest secrecy, men reciprocally

wondered at occurrences, which had in fact been produced by their own agency, and that of their neighbours, and in which, had they communicated freely with each other, no shadow of the marvelous would have remained.

Mordaunt was now seated by the fire, in an apartment indifferently well furnished, having a book in his hand, which he looked upon from time to time with signs of ennui and impatience; feelings which at length so far overcame him, that, flinging the volume on the table, he fixed his eyes on the fire, and assumed the attitude of one who is engaged in unpleasant meditation.

Norna, who sat opposite to him, and appeared busy in the composition of some drug or unguent, anxiously left her seat, and, approaching Mordaunt, felt his pulse, making at the same time the most affectionate inquiries whether he felt any sudden pain, and where it was seated. The manner in which Mordaunt replied to these earnest inquiries, although worded so as to express gratitude for her kindness, while he disclaimed any feeling of indisposition, did not seem to give satisfaction to the Pythoness.

“ Ungrateful boy!” she said, “for whom I have done so much; you whom I have rescued, by my power and skill, from the very gates of death,—are you already so weary of me, that you cannot refrain from showing how desirous you are to spend, at a distance from me, the very first intelligent days of the life which I have restored to thee?”

“ You do me injustice, my kind preserver,” replied Mordaunt; “I am not tired of your society; but I have duties which recal me to ordinary life.”

“ Duties!” repeated Norna; “and what duties can or ought to interfere with the gratitude which you owe to me?—Duties! Your thoughts are on the use of your gun, or on clambering among the rocks in quest of sea-fowl. For these exercises your strength doth not yet fit you; and yet these are the duties to which you are so anxious to return!”

“ Not so, my good and kind mistress,” said Mordaunt.—“To name one duty, out of many, which makes me seek to leave you, now that my strength permits, let me mention that of a son to his father.”

“ To your father!” said Norna, with a sort of laugh that had something in it almost frantic. “O! you know not how we can, in these islands, at once cancel such duties! And, for your father,” she added, proceeding more calmly, “what has he done for you, to deserve the regard and duty you speak of?—Is he not the same, who, as you have long since told me, left you for so many years poorly nourished, among strangers, without inquiring whether you were alive or dead, and only sending, from time to time, supplies in such fashion as men relieve the leprous wretch to whom they fling alms from a distance? And, in these later years, when he had made you the companion of his misery, he has been, by starts your pedagogue, by starts your tormentor, but never, Mordaunt, never your father.”

“ Something of truth there is in what you say,” replied Mordaunt: “My father is not fond; but he is, and has ever been, effectively kind. Men have not their affections in their power; and it is a child’s duty to be grateful for the benefits which he receives, even when coldly conferred. My father has

conferred instruction on me, and I am convinced he loves me. He is unfortunate; and, even if he loved me not"—

"And he does *not* love you," said Norna, hastily; "he never loved anything, or any one, save himself. He is unfortunate, but well are his misfortunes deserved.—O Mordaunt, you have one parent only,—one parent, who loves you as the drops of the heart-blood!"

"I know I have but one parent," replied Mordaunt; "my mother has been long dead.—But your words contradict each other."

"They do not—they do not," said Norna, in a paroxysm of the deepest feeling; "you have but one parent. Your unhappy mother is not dead—I would to God that she were! but she is not dead. Thy mother is the only parent that loves thee; and I—I, Mordaunt," throwing herself on his neck, "am that most unhappy—yet most happy mother."

She closed him in a strict and convulsive embrace; and tears, the first, perhaps, which she had shed for many years, burst in torrents as she sobbed on his neck. Astonished at what he heard, felt, and saw,—moved by the excess of her agitation, yet disposed to ascribe this burst of passion to insanity,—Mordaunt vainly endeavoured to tranquillize the mind of this extraordinary person.

"Ungrateful boy!" she said, "who but a mother would have watched over thee as I have watched? From the instant I saw thy father, when he little knew by whom he was observed, a space now many years back, I knew him well; and, under his charge, I saw you, then a stripling,—while Nature, speaking loud in my bosom, assured me, thou wert blood of my blood, and bone of my bone. Think how often you have wondered to see me, when least expected, in your places of pastime and resort! Think how often my eye has watched you on the giddy precipices, and muttered those charms which subdue the evil demons, who show themselves to the climber on the giddiest point of his path, and force him to quit his hold! Did I not hang around thy neck, in pledge of thy safety, that chain of gold, which an elfin king gave to the founder of our race? Would I have given that dear gift to any but to the son of my bosom?—Mordaunt, my power has done that for thee that a mere mortal mother would dread to think of.—I have conjured the mermaid at midnight, that thy bark might be prosperous on the haaf! I have hushed the winds, and navies have flapped their empty sails against the mast in inactivity, that you might safely indulge your sport upon the crags!"

Mordaunt, perceiving that she was growing yet wilder in her talk, endeavoured to frame an answer which should be at once indulgent, soothing, and calculated to allay the rising warmth of her imagination.

"Dear Norna," he said, "I have indeed many reasons to call you mother, who have bestowed so many benefits upon me; and from me you shall ever receive the affection and duty of a child. But the chain you mentioned, it has vanished from my neck—I have not seen it since the ruffian stabbed me."

"Alas! and can you think of it at this moment?" said Norna, in a sorrowful accent.—"But be it so:

—and know, it was I took it from thy neck, and tied it around the neck of her who is dearest to you; in token that the union betwixt you, which has been the only earthly wish which I have had the power to form, shall yet, even yet, be accomplished—ay, although hell should open to forbid the banns!"

"Alas!" said Mordaunt, with a sigh, "you remember not the difference betwixt our situation—her father is wealthy, and of ancient birth."

"Not more wealthy than will be the heir of Norna of Fitful-head," answered the Pythoness—"not of better or more ancient blood than that which flows in thy veins, derived from thy mother, the descendant of the same Jarls and sea-kings from whom Magnus boasts his origin.—Or doest thou think, like the pedant and fanatic strangers who have come amongst us, that thy blood is dishonoured because my union with thy father did not receive the sanction of a priest?—Know, that we were wedded after the ancient manners of the Norse—our hands were clasped within the circle of Odin, with such deep vows of eternal fidelity, as even the laws of these usurping Scots would have sanctioned as equivalent to a blessing before the altar. To the offspring of such a union, Magnus has nought to object. It was weak, it was criminal on my part, but it conveyed no infamy to the birth of my son."

The composed and collected manner in which Norna argued these points began to impose upon Mordaunt an incipient belief in the truth of what she said; and, indeed, she added so many circumstances, satisfactorily and rationally connected with each other, as seemed to confute the notion that her story was altogether the delusion of that insanity which sometimes showed itself in her speech and actions. A thousand confused ideas rushed upon him, when he supposed it possible that the unhappy person before him might actually have a right to claim from him the respect and affection due to a parent from a son. He could only surmount them by turning his mind to a different, and scarce less interesting topic, resolving within himself to take time for farther inquiry and mature consideration, ere he either rejected or admitted the claim which Norna preferred upon his affection and duty. His benefactress at least, she undoubtedly was, and he could not err in paying her, as such, the respect and attention due from a son to a mother; and so far, therefore, he might gratify Norna without otherwise standing committed.

"And do you then really think, my mother (since so you bid me term you)," said Mordaunt, "that the proud Magnus Troil may, by any inducement, be prevailed upon to relinquish the angry feelings which he has of late adopted towards me, and to permit my addresses to his daughter Brenda?"

"Brenda?" repeated Norna—"who talks of Brenda?—it is of Minna that I spoke to you."

"But it was of Brenda that I thought," replied Mordaunt, "of her that I now think, and of her alone that I will ever think."

"Impossible, my son!" replied Norna. "You cannot be so dull of heart, so poor of spirit, as to prefer the idle mirth and housewife simplicity of the younger sister, to the deep feeling and high mind of the noble-spirited Minna? Who would stoop to

gather the lowly violet, that might have the rose for stretching out his hand?"

"Some think the lowliest flowers are the sweetest," replied Mordaunt, "and in that faith will I live and die."

"You dare not tell me so," answered Norna, fiercely; then, instantly changing her tone, and taking his hand in the most affectionate manner, she proceeded:—"You must not—you will not tell me so, my dear son—You will not break a mother's heart in the very first hour in which she has embraced her child!—Nay, do not answer, but hear me. You must wed Minna—I have bound around her neck a fatal amulet, on which the happiness of both depends. The labours of my life have for years had this direction. Thus it must be, and not otherwise—Minna must be the bride of my son!"

"But is not Brenda equally near, equally dear to you?" replied Mordaunt.

"As near in blood," said Norna, "but not so dear, no, not half so dear, in affection. Minna's mild, yet high and contemplative spirit, renders her a companion meet for one, whose ways, like mine, are beyond the ordinary paths of this world. Brenda is a thing of common and ordinary life, an idle laugh and scoffer, who would level art with ignorance, and reduce power to weakness, by disbelieving and turning into ridicule whatever is beyond the grasp of her shallow intellect."

"She is, indeed," answered Mordaunt, "neither superstitious nor enthusiastic, and I love her the better for it. Remember also, my mother, that she returns my affection, and that Minna, if she loves any one, loves the stranger Cleveland."

"She does not—she dares not," answered Norna, "nor dares he pursue her farther. I told him, when first he came to Burgh-Westra, that I destined her for you."

"And to that rash annunciation," said Mordaunt, "I owe this man's persevering enmity—my wound, and well nigh the loss of my life. See, my mother, to what point your intrigues have already conducted us, and, in Heaven's name, prosecute them no farther."

It seemed as if this reproach struck Norna with the force, at once, and vivacity of lightning; for she struck her forehead with her hand, and seemed about to drop from her seat. Mordaunt, greatly shocked, hastened to catch her in his arms, and, though scarce knowing what to say, attempted to utter some incoherent expressions.

"Spare me, Heaven, spare me!" were the first words which she muttered; "do not let my crime be avenged by his means.—Yes, young man," she said, after a pause, "you have dared to tell what I dared not tell myself.—You have pressed that upon me, which, if it be truth, I cannot believe, and yet continue to live."

Mordaunt in vain endeavoured to interrupt her with protestations of his ignorance how he had offended or grieved her, and of his extreme regret that he had unintentionally done either. She proceeded, while her voice trembled wildly, with vehemence.

"Yes! you have touched on that dark suspicion which poisons the consciousness of my power,"—the

sole boon which was given me in exchange for innocence and for peace of mind! Your voice joins that of the demon which, even while the elements confess me their mistress, whispers to me, 'Norna, this is but delusion—your power rests but in the idle belief of the ignorant, supported by a thousand petty artifices of your own.'—This is what Brenda says—this is what you would say; and false, scandalously false, as it is, there are rebellious thoughts in this wild brain of mine (touching her forehead with her finger as she spoke), that, like an insurrection in an invaded country, arise to take part against their distressed sovereign.—Spare me, my son!" she continued, in a voice of supplication, "spare me!—the sovereignty of which your words would deprive me, is no enviable exaltation. Few would covet to rule over gibbering ghosts, and howling winds, and raging currents. My throne is a cloud, my sceptre a meteor, my realm is only peopled with fantasies; but I must either cease to be, or continue to be the mightiest as well as the most miserable of beings!"

"Do not speak thus mournfully, my dear and unhappy benefactress," said Mordaunt, much affected; "I will think of your power, whatever you would have me believe. But, for your own sake, view the matter otherwise. Turn your thoughts from such agitating and mystical studies—from such wild subjects of contemplation, into another and a better channel. Life will again have charms, and religion will have comforts for you."

She listened to him with some composure, as if she weighed his counsel, and desired to be guided by it; but, as he ended, she shook her head and exclaimed—

"It cannot be. I must remain the dreaded—the mystical—the Reim-kennar—the controler of the elements, or I must be no more. I have no alternative, no middle station. My post must be high on yon lofty head-land, where never stood human foot save mine—or I must sleep at the bottom of the unfathomable ocean, its white billows booming over my senseless corpse. The parricide shall never also be denounced as the impostor."

"The parricide!" echoed Mordaunt, stepping back in horror.

"Yes, my son!" answered Norna, with a stern composure, even more frightful than her former impetuosity, "within these fatal walls my father met his death by my means. In yonder chamber was he found a livid and lifeless corpse. Beware of filial disobedience, for such are its fruits."

So saying, she arose and left the apartment, where Mordaunt remained alone to meditate at leisure upon the extraordinary communication which he had received. He himself had been taught by his father a disbelief in the ordinary superstitions of Zetland; and he now saw that Norna, however ingenious in duping others, could not altogether impose on herself. This was a strong circumstance in favour of her sanity of intellect; but, on the other hand, her imputing to herself the guilt of parricide, seemed so wild and improbable, as, in Mordaunt's opinion, to throw much doubt upon her other assertions.

He had leisure enough to make up his mind on these particulars, for no one approached the solitary

dwelling, of which Norna, her dwarf, and he himself, were the sole inhabitants. The island in which it stood is rude, bold, and lofty, or rather, indeed, consists entirely of three hills—one huge mountain divided into three summits, with the chasms, rents, and valleys, which descend from its summit to the sea, while its crest, rising to great height, and shivered into rocks which seem almost inaccessible, intercepts the mists as they drive from the Atlantic, and, often obscured from the human eye, forms the dark and unmolested retreat of hawks, eagles, and other birds of prey.

The soil of the island is wet, mossy, cold, and unproductive, presenting a sterile and desolate appearance, excepting where the sides of small rivulets, or mountain ravines, are fringed with dwarf bushes of birch, hazel, and wild currant, some of them so tall as to be denominated trees, in that bleak and bare country.

But the view of the sea-beach, which was Mordaunt's favourite walk, when his convalescent state began to permit him to take exercise, had charms which compensated the wild appearance of the interior. A broad and beautiful sound, or strait, divides this lonely and mountainous island from Pomona, and in the centre of that sound lies, like a tablet composed of emerald, the beautiful and verdant little island of Græmsay. On the distant mainland is seen the town or village of Stromness, the excellence of whose haven is generally evinced by a considerable number of shipping in the roadstead, and, from the bay growing narrower, and lessening as it recedes, runs inland into Pomona, where its tide fills the fine sheet of water called the Loch of Stennis.

On this beach Mordaunt was wont to wander for hours, with an eye not insensible to the beauties of the view, though his thoughts were agitated with the most embarrassing meditations on his own situation. He was resolved to leave the island as soon as the establishment of his health should permit him to travel; yet gratitude to Norna, of whom he was at least the adopted, if not the real son, would not allow him to depart without her permission, even if he could obtain means of conveyance, of which he saw little probability. It was only by importunity that he extorted from his hostess a promise, that, if he would consent to regulate his motions according to her directions, she would herself convey him to the capital of the Orkney Islands, when the approaching fair of Saint Ollaw should take place there.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Hark to the insult loud, the bitter sneer,
The fierce threat answering to the brutal jeer;
Oaths fly like pistol-shots, and vengeful words
Clash with each other like conflicting swords.—
The robbers' quarrel by such sounds is shown,
And true men have some chance to gain their own.

Captivity, a Poem.

WHEN Cleveland, borne off in triumph from his assailants in Kirkwall, found himself once more on board the pirate-vessel, his arrival was hailed with

hearty cheers by a considerable part of the crew, who rushed to shake hands with him, and offer their congratulations on his return; for the situation of a buccaneer captain raised him very little above the level with the lowest of his crew, who, in all social intercourse, claimed the privilege of being his equal.

When his faction, for so these clamorous friends might be termed, had expressed their own greetings, they hurried Cleveland forward to the stern, where Goffe, their present commander, was seated on a gun, listening in a sullen and discontented manner to the shout which announced Cleveland's welcome. He was a man betwixt forty and fifty, rather under the middle size, but so very strongly made, that his crew used to compare him to a sixty-four cut down. Black-haired, bull-necked, and beetle-browed, his clumsy strength and ferocious countenance contrasted strongly with the manly figure and open countenance of Cleveland, in which even the practice of his atrocious profession had not been able to eradicate a natural grace of motion and generosity of expression. The two piratical captains looked upon each other for some time in silence, while the partisans of each gathered around him. The elder part of the crew were the principal adherents of Goffe, while the young fellows, amongst whom Jack Bunce was a principal leader and agitator, were in general attached to Cleveland.

At length Goffe broke silence,—“You are welcome aboard, Captain Cleveland.—Smash my taffrail! I suppose you think yourself commodore yet! but that was over, by G—, when you lost your ship, and be d—d!”

And here, once for all, we may take notice, that it was the gracious custom of this commander to mix his words and oaths in nearly equal proportions, which he was wont to call *shotting* his discourse. As we delight not, however, in the discharge of such artillery, we will only indicate by a space like this — the places in which these expletives occurred; and thus, if the reader will pardon a very poor pun, we will reduce Captain Goffe's volley of sharp-shot into an explosion of blank cartridges. To his insinuations that he was come on board to assume the chief command, Cleveland replied, that he neither desired, nor would accept, any such promotion, but would only ask Captain Goffe for a cast of the boat, to put him ashore in one of the other islands, as he had no wish either to command Goffe, or to remain in a vessel under his orders.

“And why not under my orders, brother?” demanded Goffe, very austere; “— — — are you too good a man, — — — with your cheese-toaster and your gib there, — — to serve under my orders, and be d—d to you, where there are so many gentlemen that are elder and better seamen than yourself?”

“I wonder which of these capital seamen it was,” said Cleveland, coolly, “that laid the ship under the fire of yon six-gun battery, that could blow her out of the water, if they had a mind, before you could either cut or slip? Elder and better sailors than I may like to serve under such a lubber, but I beg to be excused for my own share, captain—that's all I have got to tell you.”

“By G—, I think you are both mad!” said Haw-

kins the boatswain—"a meeting with sword and pistol may be devilish good fun in its way, when no better is to be had; but who the devil that had common sense, amongst a set of gentlemen in our condition, would fall a-quarreling with each other, to let these duck-winged, web-footed islanders have a chance of knocking us all upon the head!"

"Well said, old Hawkins!" said Derrick the quarter-master, who was an officer of very considerable importance among these rovers; "I say, if the two captains won't agree to live together quietly, and club both heart and head to defend the vessel, why, d—n me, depose them both, say I, and chuse another in their stead!"

"Meaning yourself, I suppose, Master Quarter-master!" said Jack Bunce; "but that cock won't fight.—He that is to command gentlemen, should be a gentleman himself, I think; and I give my vote for Captain Cleveland, as spirited and as gentleman-like a man as ever daff'd the world aside, and bid it pass!"

"What! *you* call yourself a gentleman, I warrant!" retorted Derrick; "why, ——— your eyes! a tailor would make a better out of the worst suit of rags in your strolling wardrobe!—It is a shame for men of spirit to have such a Jack-a-dandy scare-crow on board!"

Jack Bunce was so incensed at these base comparisons, that, without more ado, he laid his hand on his sword. The carpenter, however, and boatswain, interfered, the former brandishing his broad axe, and swearing he would put the skull of the first who should strike a blow past clouting, and the latter reminding them, that, by their articles, all quarreling, striking, or more especially fighting, on board, was strictly prohibited; and that, if any gentlemen had a quarrel to settle, they were to go ashore, and decide it with cutlass and pistol in the sight of two of their messmates.

"I have no quarrel with any one, ———!" said Goffe, sullenly; "Captain Cleveland has wandered about among the islands here, amusing himself, ———! and we have wasted our time and property in waiting for him, when we might have been adding twenty or thirty thousand dollars to the stock-purse. However, if it pleases the rest of the gentlemen-adventurers, I shall not grumble about it, ———!"

"I propose," said the boatswain, "that there should be a general council called in the great cabin, according to our articles, that we may consider what course we are to hold in this matter."

A general assent followed the boatswain's proposal; for every one found his own account in these general councils, in which each of the rovers had a free vote. By far the greater part of the crew only valued this franchise, as it allowed them, upon such solemn occasions, an unlimited quantity of liquor—a right which they failed not to exercise to the uttermost, by way of aiding their deliberations. But a few amongst the adventurers, who united some degree of judgment with the daring and profligate character of their profession, were wont, at such periods, to limit themselves within the bounds of comparative sobriety, and by these, under the apparent form of a vote of the general council, all things of moment relating to the voyage and undertakings

of the pirates, were in fact determined. The rest of the crew, when they recovered from their intoxication, were easily persuaded that the resolution adopted had been the legitimate effort of the combined wisdom of the whole senate.

Upon the present occasion, the debauch had proceeded until the greater part of the crew were, as usual, displaying inebriation in all its most brutal and disgraceful shapes—swearing empty and unmeaning oaths—venting the most horrid imprecations in the mere gaiety of their heart—singing songs, the ribaldry of which was only equaled by their profaneness; and, from the middle of this earthly hell, the two captains, together with one or two of their principal adherents, as also the carpenter and boatswain, who always took a lead on such occasions, had drawn together into a pandemonium, or privy council of their own, to consider what was to be done; for, as the boatswain metaphorically observed, they were in a narrow channel, and behoved to keep sounding the tide-way.

When they began their consultations, the friends of Goffe remarked, to their great displeasure, that he had not observed the wholesome rule to which we have just alluded; but that, in endeavouring to drown his mortification at the sudden appearance of Cleveland, and the reception he met with from the crew, the elder captain had not been able to do so without overflowing his reason at the same time. His natural sullen taciturnity had prevented this from being observed until the council began its deliberations, when it proved impossible to hide it.

The first person who spoke was Cleveland, who said, that, so far from wishing the command of the vessel, he desired no favour at any one's hand, except to land him upon some island or holm at a distance from Kirkwall, and leave him to shift for himself.

The boatswain remonstrated strongly against this resolution. "The lads," he said, "all knew Cleveland, and could trust his seamanship, as well as his courage; besides, he never let the grog get quite uppermost, and was always in proper trim, either to sail the ship, or to fight the ship, whereby she was never without some one to keep her course when he was on board.—And, as for the noble Captain Goffe," continued the mediator, "he is as stout a heart as ever broke biscuit, and that I will uphold him; but then, when he has his grog aboard—I speak it to his face—he is so d—d funny with his cranks and his jests, that there is no living with him. You all remember how nigh he had run the ship on that cursed Horse of Copinsha, as they call it, just by way of frolic; and then you know how he fired off his pistol under the table, when we were at the great council, and shot Jack Jenkins in the knee, and cost the poor devil his leg, with his pleasantry."

"Jack Jenkins was not a chip the worse," said the carpenter; "I took the leg off with my saw as well as any loblolly-boy in the land could have done—heated my broad axe, and seared the stump—ay, by ———! and made a jury-leg that he shambles about with as well as ever he did—for Jack could never cut a feather."*

* A ship going fast through the sea is said to cut a feather, alluding to the ripple which she throws off from her bows.

"You are a clever fellow, carpenter!" replied the boatswain, "a d—d clever fellow! but I had rather you tried your saw and red-hot axe upon the ship's knee-timbers than on mine, sink me!—But that here is not the case—The question is, if we shall part with Captain Cleveland here, who is a man of thought and action, whereby it is my belief it would be heaving the pilot overboard when the gale is blowing on a lee-shore. And, I must say, it is not the part of a true heart to leave his mates, who have been here waiting for him till they have missed stays. Our water is well nigh out, and we have junketed till provisions are low with us. We cannot sail without provisions—we cannot get provisions without the good will of the Kirkwall folks. If we remain here longer, the Halcyon frigate will be down upon us—she was seen off Peterhead two days since,—and we shall hang up at the yard-arm to be sun-dried. Now, Captain Cleveland will get us out of the hobble, if any can. He can play the gentleman with these Kirkwall folks, and knows how to deal with them on fair terms, and foul too, if there be occasion for it."

"And so you would turn honest Captain Goffe a-grazing, would ye?" said an old weather-beaten pirate, who had but one eye; "what though he has his humours, and made my eye drowse the glim in his fancies and frolics, he is as honest a man as ever walked a quarter-deck, for all that; and d—n me, but I stand by him so long as t'other lantern is lit!"

"Why, you would not hear me out," said Hawkins; "a man might as well talk to so many negers!—I tell you, I propose that Cleveland shall only be captain from one, *post meridiem*, to five, *a. m.*, during which time Goffe is always drunk."

The captain of whom he last spoke gave sufficient proof of the truth of his words, by uttering an inarticulate growl, and attempting to present a pistol at the mediator Hawkins.

"Why, look ye now!" said Derrick, "there is all the sense he has, to get drunk on council-day, like one of these poor silly fellows!"

"Ay," said Bunce, "drunk as Davy's sow, in the face of the field, the fray, and the senate!"

"But, nevertheless," continued Derrick, "it will never do to have two captains in the same day. I think week about might suit better—and let Cleveland take the first turn."

"There are as good here as any of them," said Hawkins; "howsomdever, I object nothing to Captain Cleveland, and I think he may help us into deep water as well as another."

"Ay," exclaimed Bunce, "and a better figure he will make at bringing these Kirkwallers to order than his sober predecessor!—So, Captain Cleveland for ever!"

"Stop, gentlemen," said Cleveland, who had hitherto been silent; "I hope you will not chuse me captain without my own consent?"

"Ay, by the blue vault of heaven will we," said Bunce, "if it be *pro bono publico*!"

"But hear me, at least," said Cleveland—"I do consent to take command of the vessel, since you wish it, and because I see you will ill get out of the scrape without me."

VOL. III.

"Why then, I say, Cleveland for ever, again!" shouted Bunce.

"Be quiet, pr'ythee, dear Bunce!—honest Altamont!" said Cleveland.—"I undertake the business on this condition; that, when I have got the ship cleared for her voyage, with provisions, and so forth, you will be content to restore Captain Goffe to the command, as I said before, and put me ashore somewhere, to shift for myself—You will then be sure it is impossible I can betray you, since I will remain with you to the last moment."

"Ay, and after the last moment too, by the blue vault! or I mistake the matter," muttered Bunce to himself.

The matter was now put to the vote; and so confident were the crew in Cleveland's superior address and management, that the temporary deposition of Goffe found little opposition even among his own partisans, who reasonably enough observed, "he might at least have kept sober to look after his own business—E'en let him put it to rights again himself next morning, if he will."

But when the next morning came, the drunken part of the crew, being informed of the issue of the deliberations of the council, to which they were virtually held to have assented, showed such a superior sense of Cleveland's merits, that Goffe, sulky and malcontent as he was, judged it wisest for the present to suppress his feelings of resentment until a safer opportunity for suffering them to explode, and to submit to the degradation which so frequently took place among a piratical crew.

Cleveland, on his part, resolved to take upon him, with spirit and without loss of time, the task of extricating his ship's company from their perilous situation. For this purpose, he ordered the boat, with the purpose of going ashore in person, carrying with him twelve of the stoutest and best men of the ship's company, all very handsomely appointed (for the success of their nefarious profession had enabled the pirates to assume nearly as gay dresses as their officers), and, above all, each man being sufficiently armed with cutlass and pistols, and several having pole-axes and poniards.

Cleveland himself was gallantly dressed in a blue coat, lined with crimson silk, and laced with gold very richly, crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, a velvet cap, richly embroidered, with a white feather, white silk stockings, and red-heeled shoes, which were the extremity of finery among the gallants of the day. He had a gold chain several times folded round his neck, which sustained a whistle of the same metal, the ensign of his authority. Above all, he wore a decoration peculiar to those daring depredators, who, besides one, or perhaps two, brace of pistols at their belt, had usually two additional brace, of the finest mounting and workmanship, suspended over their shoulders in a sort of sling or scarf of crimson ribbon. The hilt and mounting of the captain's sword corresponded in value to the rest of his equipment, and his natural good mien was so well adapted to the whole equipment, that, when he appeared on deck, he was received with a general shout by the crew, who, as in other popular societies, judged a great deal by the eye.

Cleveland took with him in the boat, amongst others, his predecessor in office, Goffe, who was also very richly dressed, but who, not having the advantage of such an exterior as Cleveland's, looked like a boorish clown in the dress of a courtier, or rather like a vulgar-faced footpad decked in the spoils of some one whom he had murdered, and whose claim to the property of his garments is rendered doubtful in the eyes of all who look upon him, by the mixture of awkwardness, remorse, cruelty, and insolence, which clouds his countenance. Cleveland probably chose to take Goffe ashore with him, to prevent his having any opportunity, during his absence, to debauch the crew from their allegiance. In this guise they left the ship, and, singing to their oars, while the water foamed higher at the chorus, soon reached the quay of Kirkwall.

The command of the vessel was in the meantime intrusted to Bunce, upon whose allegiance Cleveland knew that he might perfectly depend, and, in a private conversation with him of some length, he gave him directions how to act in such emergencies as might occur.

These arrangements being made, and Bunce having been repeatedly charged to stand upon his guard alike against the adherents of Goffe and any attempt from the shore, the boat put off. As she approached the harbour, Cleveland displayed a white flag, and could observe that their appearance seemed to occasion a good deal of bustle and alarm. People were seen running to and fro, and some of them appeared to be getting under arms. The battery was manned hastily, and the English colours displayed. These were alarming symptoms, the rather that Cleveland knew, that, though there were no artillery-men in Kirkwall, yet there were many sailors perfectly competent to the management of great guns, and willing enough to undertake such service in case of need.

Noting these hostile preparations with a heedful eye, but suffering nothing like doubt or anxiety to appear on his countenance, Cleveland ran the boat right for the quay, on which several people, armed with muskets, rifles, and fowling-pieces, and others with half-pikes and whaling-knives, were now assembled, as if to oppose his landing. Apparently, however, they had not positively determined what measures they were to pursue; for, when the boat reached the quay, those immediately opposite bore back, and suffered Cleveland and his party to leap ashore without hindrance. They immediately drew up on the quay, excepting two, who, as their captain had commanded, remained in the boat, which they put off to a little distance; a manœuvre which, while it placed the boat (the only one belonging to the sloop) out of danger of being seized, indicated a sort of careless confidence in Cleveland and his party, which was calculated to intimidate their opponents.

The Kirkwallers, however, showed the old northern blood, put a manly face upon the matter, and stood upon the quay, with their arms shouldered, directly opposite to the rovers, and blocking up against them the street which leads to the town.

Cleveland was the first who spoke, as the parties stood thus looking upon each other.—“How is this,

gentlemen burghers?” he said; “are you Orkney folks turned Highlandmen, that you are all under arms so early this morning? or have you manned the quay to give me that honour of a salute, upon taking the command of my ship?”

The burghers looked on each other, and one of them replied to Cleveland—“We do not know who you are; it was that other man,” pointing to Goffe, “who used to come ashore as captain.”

“That other gentleman is my mate, and commands in my absence,” said Cleveland;—“but what is that to the purpose? I wish to speak with your lord mayor, or whatsoever you call him.”

“The provost is sitting in council with the magistrates,” answered the spokesman.

“So much the better,” replied Cleveland.—“Where do their worships meet?”

“In the council-house,” answered the other.

“Then make way for us, gentlemen, if you please, for my people and I are going there.”

There was a whisper among the town's-people; but several were unresolved upon engaging in a desperate, and perhaps an unnecessary conflict, with desperate men; and the more determined citizens formed the hasty reflection that the strangers might be more easily mastered in the house, or perhaps in the narrow streets which they had to traverse, than when they stood drawn up and prepared for battle upon the quay. They suffered them, therefore, to proceed unmolested; and Cleveland, moving very slowly, keeping his people close together, suffering no one to press upon the flanks of his little detachment, and making four men, who constituted his rear-guard, turn round and face to the rear from time to time, rendered it, by his caution, a very dangerous task to make any attempt upon them.

In this manner they ascended the narrow street, and reached the council-house, where the magistrates were actually sitting, as the citizen had informed Cleveland. Here the inhabitants began to press forward, with the purpose of mingling with the pirates, and availing themselves of the crowd in the narrow entrance, to secure as many as they could, without allowing them room for the free use of their weapons. But this also had Cleveland foreseen, and, ere entering the council-room, he caused the entrance to be cleared and secured, commanding four of his men to face down the street, and as many to confront the crowd who were thrusting each other from above. The burghers recoiled back from the ferocious, swarthy, and sunburned countenances, as well as the leveled arms, of these desperadoes, and Cleveland, with the rest of his party, entered the council-room, where the magistrates were sitting in council, with very little attendance. These gentlemen were thus separated effectually from the citizens, who looked to them for orders, and were perhaps more completely at the mercy of Cleveland, than he, with his little handful of men, could be said to be at that of the multitude by whom they were surrounded.

The magistrates seemed sensible of their danger; for they looked upon each other in some confusion, when Cleveland thus addressed them:—

"Good morrow, gentlemen,—I hope there is no unkindness betwixt us. I am come to talk with you about getting supplies for my ship yonder in the roadstead—we cannot sail without them."

"Your ship, sir?" said the provost, who was a man of sense and spirit,—“how do we know that you are her captain?"

"Look at me," said Cleveland, "and you will, I think, scarce ask the question again."

The magistrate looked at him, and accordingly did not think proper to pursue that part of the inquiry, but proceeded to say—"And, if you are her captain, whence comes she, and where is she bound for? You look too much like a man-of-war's man to be master of a trader, and we know that you do not belong to the British navy."

"There are more men-of-war on the sea than sail under the British flag," replied Cleveland; "but say that I were commander of a free-trader here, willing to exchange tobacco, brandy, gin, and such like, for cured fish and hides, why, I do not think I deserve so very bad usage from the merchants of Kirkwall as to deny me provisions for my money?"

"Look you, captain," said the town-clerk, "it is not that we are so very strait-laced neither—for, when gentlemen of your cloth come this way, it is as weel, as I tauld the provost, just to do as the collier did when he met the devil,—and that is, to have naething to say to them, if they have naething to say to us;—and there is the gentleman," pointing to Goffe, "that was captain before you, and may be captain after you,"—"The cuckold speaks truth in that," muttered Goffe,—“he knows well how handsomely we entertained him, till he and his men took upon them to run through the town like hellicat devils.—I see one of them there!—that was the very fellow that stopped my servant-wench on the street, as she carried the lantern home before me, and insulted her before my face!"

"If it please your noble mayorship's honour and glory," said Derrick, the fellow at whom the town-clerk pointed, "it was not I that brought to the bit of a tender that carried the lantern in the poop—it was quite a different sort of a person."

"Who was it then, sir?" said the provost.

"Why, please your majesty's worship," said Derrick, making several sea bows, and describing as nearly as he could the exterior of the worthy magistrate himself, "he was an elderly gentleman,—Dutch-built, round in the stern, with a white wig and a red nose—very like your majesty, I think;" then, turning to a comrade, he added, "Jack, don't you think the fellow that wanted to kiss the pretty girl with the lantern t'other night, was very like his worship?"

"By G—, Tom Derrick," answered the party appealed to, "I believe it is the very man!"

"This is insolence which we can make you repent of, gentlemen!" said the magistrate, justly irritated at their effrontery; "you have behaved in this town, as if you were in an Indian village at Madagascar. You yourself, captain, if captain you be, were at the head of another riot, no farther since than yesterday. We will give you no provisions till we know better whom we are supplying. And do not think to bully us; when I shake this handkerchief

out at the window, which is at my elbow, your ship goes to the bottom. Remember she lies under the guns of our battery."

"And how many of these guns are honeycombed, Mr Mayor?" said Cleveland. He put the question by chance; but instantly perceived, from a sort of confusion which the provost in vain endeavoured to hide, that the artillery of Kirkwall was not in the best order. "Come, come, Mr Mayor," he said, "bullying will go down with us as little as with you. Your guns yonder will do more harm to the poor old sailors who are to work them, than to our sloop; and if we bring a broadside to bear on the town, why, your wives' crockery will be in some danger. And then to talk to us of seamen being a little frolicsome ashore, why, when are they otherwise? You have the Greenland whalers playing the devil among you every now and then; and the very Dutchmen cut capers in the streets of Kirkwall, like porpoises before a gale of wind. I am told you are a man of sense, and I am sure you and I could settle this matter in the course of a five minutes' palaver."

"Well, sir," said the provost, "I will hear what you have to say, if you will walk this way."

Cleveland accordingly followed him into a small interior apartment, and, when there, addressed the provost thus: "I will lay aside my pistols, sir, if you are afraid of them."

"Damn your pistols," answered the provost, "I have served the king, and fear the smell of powder as little as you do."

"So much the better," said Cleveland, "for you will hear me the more coolly.—Now, sir, let us be what perhaps you suspect us, or let us be anything else, what, in the name of Heaven, can you get by keeping us here, but blows and bloodshed? For which, believe me, we are much better provided than you can pretend to be. The point is a plain one—you are desirous to be rid of us—we are desirous to be gone.—Let us have the means of departure, and we leave you instantly."

"Look ye, captain," said the provost, "I thirst for no man's blood. You are a pretty fellow, as there were many among the buccaneers in my time—but there is no harm in wishing you a better trade. You should have the stores and welcome, for your money, so you would make these seas clear of you. But then, here lies the rub. The Halcyon frigate is expected here in these parts immediately; when she hears of you she will be at you; for there is nothing the White Lapelle loves better than a rover—you are seldom without a cargo of dollars. Well, he comes down, gets you under his stern,"—

"Blows us into the air, if you please," said Cleveland.

"Nay, that must be as *you* please, captain," said the provost; "but then, what is to come of the good town of Kirkwall, that has been packing and peeling with the king's enemies? The burgh will be laid under a round fine, and it may be that the provost may not come off so easily."

"Well, then," said Cleveland, "I see where your pinch lies. Now, suppose that I run round this island of yours, and get into the roadstead at Stromness? We could get what we want put on board there, without Kirkwall or the provost seeming to

have any hand in it; or, if it should be ever questioned, your want of force, and our superior strength, will make a sufficient apology."

"That may be," said the provost; "but if I suffer you to leave your present station, and go elsewhere, I must have some security that you will not do harm to the country."

"And we," said Cleveland, "must have some security on our side, that you will not detain us, by dribbling out our time till the *Halcyon* is on the coast. Now, I am myself perfectly willing to continue on shore as a hostage, on the one side, providing you will give me your word not to betray me, and send some magistrate, or person of consequence, aboard the sloop, where his safety will be a guarantee for mine."

The provost shook his head, and intimated it would be difficult to find a person willing to place himself as hostage in such a perilous condition; but said he would propose the arrangement to such of the council as were fit to be trusted with a matter of such weight.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I left my poor plough to go ploughing the deep!

DIBDIN.

WHEN the provost and Cleveland had returned into the public council-room, the former retired a second time with such of his brethren as he thought proper to advise with; and, while they were engaged in discussing Cleveland's proposal, refreshments were offered to him and his people. These the captain permitted his people to partake of, but with the greatest precaution against surprisal, one party relieving the guard, whilst the others were at their food.

He himself, in the meanwhile, walked up and down the apartment, and conversed upon indifferent subjects, with those present, like a person quite at his ease.

Amongst these individuals he saw, somewhat to his surprise, Triptolemus Yellowley, who, chancing to be at Kirkwall, had been summoned by the magistrates, as representative, in a certain degree, of the lord chamberlain, to attend council on this occasion. Cleveland immediately renewed the acquaintance which he had formed with the agriculturist at Burgh-Westra, and asked him his present business in Orkney.

"Just to look after some of my little plans, Captain Cleveland. I am weary of fighting with the wild beasts at Ephesus yonder, and I just cam ower to see how my orchard was thriving, whilk I had planted four or five miles from Kirkwall, it may be a year bygane, and how the bees were thriving, whereof I had imported nine skeps, for the improvement of the country, and for the turning of the heather-bloom into wax and honey."

"And they thrive, I hope?" said Cleveland, who, however little interested in the matter, sustained the conversation, as if to break the chilly and embarrassed silence which hung upon the company assembled.

"Thrive!" replied Triptolemus, "they thrive like everything else in this country, and that is the backward way."

"Want of care, I suppose?" said Cleveland.

"The contrary, sir, quite and clean the contrary," replied the factor; "they died of ower muckle care, like Lucky Christie's chickens.—I asked to see the skeps, and cunning and joyful did the fallow look who was to have taken care of them—'Had there been onybody in charge but mysell,' he said, 'ye might have seen the skeps, or whatever you ca' them; but there wad hae been as mony solan-geese as flees in them, if it hadna been for my four quarters; for I watched them so closely, that I saw them a' creeping out at the little holes one sunny morning, and if I had not stopped the leak on the instant with a bit clay, the de'il a bee, or flee, or whatever they are, would have been left in the skeps, as ye ca' them!'—In a word, sir, he had clagged up the hives, as if the puir things had had the pestilence, and my bees were as dead as if they had been smeaked—and so ends my hope, *generandi gloria mellis*, as Virgilius hath it."

"There is an end of your mead, then," replied Cleveland; "but what is your chance of cider?—How does the orchard thrive?"

"O captain! this same Solomon of the Orcadian Ophir—I am sure no man need to send thither to fetch either talents of gold or talents of sense!—I say, this wise man had watered the young apple-trees, in his great tenderness, with hot water, and they are perished, root and branch! But what avails grieving?—And I wish you would tell me, instead, what is all the din that these good folks are making about pirates? and what for are all these ill-looking men, that are armed like so mony Highlandmen, assembled in the judgment-chamber?—for I am just come from the other side of the island, and I have heard nothing distinct about it.—And now I look at you yourself, captain, I think you have mair of these foolish pistolets about you than should suffice an honest man in quiet times!"

"And so I think too," said the pacific triton, old Haagen, who had been an unwilling follower of the daring Montrose; "if you had been in the Glen of Edderachyllis, when we were sae sair worried by Sir John Worry"—

"You have forgot the whole matter, neighbour Haagen," said the factor; "Sir John Urry was on your side, and was ta'en with Montrose; by the same token, he lost his head!"

"Did he?" said the triton.—"I believe you may be right; for he changed sides mair than ance, and wha kens whilk he died for?—But always he was there, and so was I;—a fight there was, and I never wish to see another!"

The entrance of the provost here interrupted their desultory conversation.—"We have determined," he said, "captain, that your ship shall go round to Stromness, or Scalpa-flow, to take in stores, in order that there may be no more quarrels between the fair folks and your seamen. And as you wish to stay on shore to see the fair, we intend to send a respectable gentleman on board your vessel to pilot her round the Main-land, as the navigation is but ticklish."

"Spoken like a quiet and sensible magistrate, Mr Mayor," said Cleveland, "and no otherwise than as I expected.—And what gentleman is to honour our quarter-deck during my absence?"

"We have fixed that too, Captain Cleveland," said the provost; "you may be sure we were each more desirous than another to go upon so pleasant a voyage, and in such good company; but being fair time, most of us have some affairs in hand—I myself, in respect of my office, cannot be well spared—the eldest baillie's wife is lying-in—the treasurer does not agree with the sea—two baillies have the gout—the other two are absent from town—and the other fifteen members of council are all engaged on particular business."

"All that I can tell you, Mr Mayor," said Cleveland, raising his voice, "is, that I expect"—

"A moment's patience, if you please, captain," said the provost, interrupting him—"So that we have come to the resolution that our worthy Mr Triptolemus Yellowley, who is factor to the lord chamberlain of these islands, shall, in respect of his official situation, be preferred to the honour and pleasure of accompanying you."

"Me!" said the astonished Triptolemus; "what the devil should I do going on your voyages?—my business is on dry land."

"The gentlemen want a pilot," said the provost, whispering to him, "and there is no eviting to give them one."

"Do they want to go bump on shore, then?" said the factor—"how the devil should I pilot them, that never touched rudder in my life?"

"Hush!—hush!—be silent!" said the provost; "if the people of this town heard ye say such a word, your utility, and respect, and rank, and everything else, is clean gone!—No man is anything with us island folks, unless he can hand, reef, and steer;—besides, it is but a mere form, and we will send old Pate Sinclair to help you. You will have nothing to do but to eat, drink, and be merry all day."

"Eat and drink!" said the factor, not able to comprehend exactly why this piece of duty was pressed upon him so hastily, and yet not very capable of resisting or extricating himself from the toils of the more knowing provost—"Eat and drink!—that is all very well; but, to speak truth, the sea does not agree with me any more than with the treasurer; and I have always a better appetite for eating and drinking ashore."

"Hush! hush! hush!" again said the provost, in an under tone of earnest expostulation; "would you actually ruin your character out and out?—A factor of the high chamberlain of the isles of Orkney and Zetland, and not like the sea!—you might as well say you are a Highlander, and do not like whisky!"

"You must settle it somehow, gentlemen," said Captain Cleveland; "it is time we were under way.—Mr Triptolemus Yellowley, are we to be honoured with your company?"

"I am sure, Captain Cleveland," stammered the factor, "I would have no objection to go anywhere with you—only"—

"He has no objection," said the provost, catching at the first limb of the sentence, without awaiting the conclusion.

"He has no objection," cried the treasurer.

"He has no objection," sung out the whole four baillies together; and the fifteen councillors, all catching up the same phrase of assent, repeated it in chorus, with the additions of—"good man"—"public-spirited"—"honourable gentleman"—"burgh eternally obliged"—"where will you find such a worthy factor?" and so forth.

Astonished and confused at the praises with which he was overwhelmed on all sides, and in no shape understanding the nature of the transaction that was going forward, the astounded and overwhelmed agriculturist became incapable of resisting the part of the Kirkwall Curtius thus insidiously forced upon him, and was delivered up by Captain Cleveland to his party, with the strictest injunctions to treat him with honour and attention. Goffe and his companions began now to lead him off, amid the applauses of the whole meeting, after the manner in which the victim of ancient days was garlanded and greeted by shouts, when consigned to the priests, for the purpose of being led to the altar as a sacrifice for the commonweal. It was while they thus conducted, and in a manner forced him out of the council-chamber, that poor Triptolemus, much alarmed at finding that Cleveland, in whom he had some confidence, was to remain behind the party, tried, when just going out at the door, the effect of one remonstrating bellow.—"Nay, but, provost!—Captain!—Baillies!—Treasurer!—Councillors!—if Captain Cleveland does not go aboard to protect me, it is nae bargain, and go I will not, unless I am trailed with cart-ropes!"

His protest was, however, drowned in the unanimous chorus of the magistrates and councillors returning him thanks for his public spirit—wishing him a good voyage—and praying to Heaven for his happy and speedy return. Stunned and overwhelmed, and thinking, if he had any distinct thoughts at all, that remonstrance was vain, where friends and strangers seemed alike determined to carry the point against him, Triptolemus, without farther resistance, suffered himself to be conducted into the street, where the pirate's boat's crew, assembling around him, began to move slowly towards the quay, many of the town's-folks following out of curiosity, but without any attempt at interference or annoyance; for the pacific compromise which the dexterity of the first magistrate had achieved, was unanimously approved of as a much better settlement of the disputes betwixt them and the strangers, than might have been attained by the dubious issue of an appeal to arms.

Meanwhile, as they went slowly along, Triptolemus had time to study the appearance, countenance, and dress, of those into whose hands he had been thus delivered, and began to imagine that he read in their looks, not only the general expression of a desperate character, but some sinister intentions directed particularly towards himself. He was alarmed by the truculent looks of Goffe, in particular, who, holding his arm with a gripe which resembled in delicacy of touch the compression of a smith's vice, cast on him from the outer corner of his eye oblique glances, like those which the eagle throws upon the prey which she has clutched ere yet she proceeds

to plume it. At length Yellowley's fears got so far the better of his prudence, that he fairly asked his terrible conductor, in a sort of crying whisper, "Are you going to murder me, captain, in the face of the laws baith of God and man?"

"Hold your peace, if you are wise," said Goffe, who had his own reasons for desiring to increase the panic of his captive; "we have not murdered a man these three months, and why should you put us in mind of it?"

"You are but joking, I hope, good worthy captain," replied Triptolemus. "This is worse than witches, dwarfs, dirking of whales, and cowering of cobs, put all together!—this is an away-ganging crop, with a vengeance!—What good, in Heaven's name, would murdering me do to you?"

"We might have some pleasure in it at least," said Goffe.—"Look these fellows in the face, and see if you see one among them that would not rather kill a man than let it alone?—But we will speak more of that when you have first had a taste of the bilboes—unless, indeed, you come down with a handsome round handful of Chili boards* for your ransom."

"As I shall live by bread, captain," answered the factor, "that misbegotten dwarf has carried off the whole hornful of silver!"

"A cat-and-nine-tails will make you find it again," said Goffe, gruffly; "flogging and pickling is an excellent receipt to bring a man's wealth into his mind—twisting a bow-string round his skull till the eyes start a little, is a very good way too."

"Captain," replied Yellowley, stoutly, "I have no money—seldom can improvers have.—We turn pasture to tillage, and barley into aits, and heather into green-sward, and the poor yarpha, as the benighted creatures here call their peat-bogs, into baittle grass-land; but we seldom make anything of it that comes back to our ain pouch—The carles and the cart-avers make it all, and the carles and the cart-avers eat it all, and the de'il clink down with it!"

"Well, well," said Goffe, "if you be really a poor fellow, as you pretend, I'll stand your friend;" then, inclining his head so as to reach the ear of the factor, who stood on tip-toe with anxiety, "If you love your life, do not enter the boat with us."

"But how am I to get away from you, while you hold me so fast by the arm, that I could not get off if the whole year's crop of Scotland depended on it?"

"Hark ye, you gudgeon," said Goffe, "just when you come to the water's edge, and when the fellows are jumping in and taking their oars, slue yourself round suddenly to the larboard—I will let go your arm—and then cut and run for your life!"

Triptolemus did as he was desired, Goffe's willing hand relaxed the grasp as he had promised, the agriculturist trundled off like a foot-ball that had just received a strong impulse from the foot of one of the players, and, with a celerity which surprised himself as well as all beholders, fled through the town of Kirkwall. Nay, such was the impetus of his retreat, that, as if the grasp of the pirate was still open to pounce upon him, he never stopped till

he had traversed the whole town, and attained the open country on the other side. They who had seen him that day—his hat and wig lost in the sudden effort he had made to bolt forward, his cravat awry, and his waistcoat unbuttoned,—and who had an opportunity of comparing his round spherical form and short legs with the portentous speed at which he scoured through the street, might well say, that if fury ministers arms, fear confers wings.

There was no pursuit after the agriculturist; and though a musket or two were presented, for the purpose of sending a leaden messenger after him, yet Goffe, turning peace-maker for once in his life, so exaggerated the dangers that would attend a breach of the truce with the people of Kirkwall, that he prevailed upon the boat's crew to forbear any active hostilities, and to pull off for their vessel with all dispatch.

The burghers, who regarded the escape of Triptolemus as a triumph on their side, gave the boat three cheers, by way of an insulting farewell; while the magistrates, on the other hand, entertained great anxiety respecting the probable consequences of this breach of articles between them and the pirates; and, could they have seized upon the fugitive very privately, instead of complimenting him with a civic feast in honour of the agility which he displayed, it is likely they might have delivered the run-away hostage once more into the hands of his foemen. But it was impossible to set their face publicly to such an act of violence, and therefore they contented themselves with closely watching Cleveland, whom they determined to make responsible for any aggression which might be attempted by the pirates. Cleveland, on his part, easily conjectured that the motive which Goffe had for suffering the hostage to escape, was to leave him answerable for all consequences; and, relying more on the attachment and intelligence of his friend and adherent, Frederick Altamont, alias Jack Bunce, than on anything else, expected the result with considerable anxiety, since the magistrates, though they continued to treat him with civility, plainly intimated they would regulate his treatment by the behaviour of the crew, though he no longer commanded them.

It was not, however, without some reason that he reckoned on the devoted fidelity of Bunce; for no sooner did that trusty adherent receive from Goffe, and the boat's crew, the news of the escape of Triptolemus, than he immediately concluded it had been favoured by the late captain, in order that, Cleveland being either put to death or consigned to hopeless imprisonment, Goffe might be called upon to resume the command of the vessel.

"But the drunken old boatswain shall miss his mark," said Bunce to his confederate Fletcher; "or else I am contented to quit the name of Altamont, and be called Jack Bunce, or Jack Duncie, if you like it better, to the end of the chapter."

Availing himself accordingly of a sort of nautical eloquence, which his enemies termed slack-jaw, Bunce set before the crew, in a most animated manner, the disgrace which they had sustained, by their captain remaining, as he was pleased to term it, in the bilboes, without any hostage to answer for his safety; and succeeded so far, that, besides ex-

* Commonly called by landmen Spanish dollars.

citing a good deal of discontent against Goffe, he brought the crew to the resolution of seizing the first vessel of a tolerable appearance, and declaring that the ship, crew, and cargo, should be dealt with according to the usage which Cleveland should receive on shore. It was judged at the same time proper to try the faith of the Orcadians, by removing from the roadstead of Kirkwall, and going round to that of Stromness, where, according to the treaty betwixt Provost Torfe and Captain Cleveland, they were to victual their sloop. They resolved, in the meantime, to intrust the command of the vessel to a council, consisting of Goffe, the boatswain, and Bunce himself, until Cleveland should be in a situation to resume his command.

These resolutions having been proposed and acceded to, they weighed anchor, and got their sloop under way, without experiencing any opposition or annoyance from the battery, which relieved them of one important apprehension incidental to their situation.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Clap on more sail, pursue, up with your lights,
Give fire—she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all.

SHAKESPEARE.

A VERY handsome brig, which, with several other vessels, was the property of Magnus Troil, the great Zetland udaller, had received on board that magnate himself, his two lovely daughters, and the facetious Claud Halcro, who, for friendship's sake chiefly, and the love of beauty proper to his poetical calling, attended them on their journey from Zetland to the capital of Orkney, to which Norna had referred them, as the place where her mystical oracles should at length receive a satisfactory explanation.

They passed, at a distance, the tremendous cliffs of the lonely spot of earth called the Fair Isle, which, at an equal distance from either archipelago, lies in the sea which divides Orkney from Zetland; and at length, after some baffling winds, made the Start of Sanda. Off the head-land so named, they became involved in a strong current, well known, by those who frequent these seas, as the Roost of the Start, which carried them considerably out of their course, and, joined to an adverse wind, forced them to keep on the east side of the island of Stronsa, and, finally, compelled them to lie by for the night in Papa Sound, since the navigation in dark or thick weather, amongst so many low islands, is neither pleasant nor safe.

On the ensuing morning they resumed their voyage under more favourable auspices; and, coasting along the island of Stronsa, whose flat, verdant, and comparatively fertile shores, formed a strong contrast to the dun hills and dark cliffs of their own islands, they doubled the cape called the Lamb-head, and stood away for Kirkwall.

They had scarce opened the beautiful bay betwixt Pomona and Shapinsha, and the sisters were admiring the massive church of Saint Magnus, as it was first seen to rise from amongst the inferior buildings of Kirkwall, when the eyes of Magnus, and of

Claud Halcro, were attracted by an object which they thought more interesting. This was an armed sloop, with her sails set, which had just left the anchorage in the bay, and was running before the wind by which the brig of the udaller was beating in.

"A tight thing that, by my ancestors' bones!" said the old udaller; "but I cannot make out of what country, as she shows no colours. Spanish built, I should think her."

"Ay, ay," said Claud Halcro, "she has all the look of it. She runs before the wind that we must battle with, which is the wonted way of the world. As glorious John says,—

With roomy deck, and guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves."

Brenda could not help telling Halcro, when he had spouted this stanza with great enthusiasm, "that though the description was more like a first-rate than a sloop, yet the simile of the sea-wasp served but indifferently for either."

"A sea-wasp?" said Magnus, looking with some surprise as the sloop, shifting her course, suddenly bore down on them: "Egad, I wish she may not show us presently that she has a sting!"

What the udaller said in jest, was fulfilled in earnest; for, without hoisting colours, or hailing, two shots were discharged from the sloop, one of which ran dipping and dancing upon the water, just a-head of the Zetlander's bows, while the other went through his main-sail.

Magnus caught up a speaking-trumpet, and hailed the sloop, to demand what she was, and what was the meaning of this unprovoked aggression. He was only answered by the stern command,—“Down top-sails instantly, and lay your main-sail to the mast—you shall see who we are presently.”

There were no means within the reach of possibility by which obedience could be evaded, where it would instantly have been enforced by a broadside; and, with much fear on the part of the sisters and Claud Halcro, mixed with anger and astonishment on that of the udaller, the brig lay-to to wait the commands of the captors.

The sloop immediately lowered a boat, with six armed hands, commanded by Jack Bunce, which rowed directly for their prize. As they approached her, Claud Halcro whispered to the udaller,—“If what we hear of buccaneers be true, these men, with their silk scarfs and vests, have the very cut of them.”

“My daughters! my daughters!” muttered Magnus to himself, with such an agony as only a father could feel.—“Go down below, and hide yourselves, girls, while I”—

He threw down his speaking-trumpet, and seized on a handspike, while his daughters, more afraid of the consequences of his fiery temper to himself than of anything else, hung round him, and begged him to make no resistance. Claud Halcro united his entreaties, adding, “It were best to pacify the fellows with fair words. They might,” he said, “be Dunkirkers, or insolent man-of-war’s men on a frolic.”

“No, no,” answered Magnus, “it is the sloop

which the jagger told us of. But I will take your advice—I will have patience for these girls' sakes; yet"—

He had no time to conclude the sentence, for Bunce jumped on board with his party, and drawing his cutlass, struck it upon the companion-ladder, and declared the ship was theirs.

"By what warrant or authority do you stop us on the high seas?" said Magnus.

"Here are half-a-dozen of warrants," said Bunce, showing the pistols which were hung round him, according to a pirate-fashion already mentioned; "chuse which you like, old gentleman, and you shall have the perusal of it presently."

"That is to say, you intend to rob us?" said Magnus.—"So be it—we have no means to help it—only be civil to the women, and take what you please from the vessel. There is not much, but I will and can make it worth more, if you use us well."

"Civil to the women!" said Fletcher, who had also come on board with the gang—"when were we else than civil to them? ay, and kind to boot?—Look here, Jack Bunce!—what a trim-going little thing here is! By G—, she shall make a cruise with us, come of old Squaretoes what will!"

He seized upon the terrified Brenda with one hand, and insolently pulled back with the other the hood of the mantle in which she had muffled herself.

"Help, father!—help, Minna!" exclaimed the affrighted girl; unconscious, at the moment, that they were unable to render her assistance.

Magnus again uplifted the handspike, but Bunce stopped his hand—"Avast, father!" he said, "or you will make a bad voyage of it presently.—And you, Fletcher, let go the girl!"

"And, d—n me! why should I let her go?" said Fletcher.

"Because I command you, Dick," said the other, "and because I'll make it a quarrel else.—And now let me know, beauties, is there one of you bears that queer heathen name of Minna, for which I have a certain sort of regard?"

"Gallant sir!" said Halcro, "unquestionably it is because you have some poetry in your heart."

"I have had enough of it in my mouth in my time," answered Bunce; "but that day is by, old gentleman—however, I shall soon find out which of these girls is Minna.—Throw back your mufflings from your faces, and don't be afraid, my Lindamiras: no one here shall meddle with you to do you wrong. On my soul, two pretty wenches!—I wish I were at sea in an egg-shell, and a rock under my lee-bow, if I would wish a better leaguer-lass than the worst of them!—Hark you, my girls; which of you would like to swing in a rover's hammock?—you should have gold for the gathering!"

The terrified girls clung close together, and grew pale at the bold and familiar language of the desperate libertine.

"Nay, don't be frightened," said he; "no one shall serve under the noble Altamont but by her own free choice—there is no pressing amongst gentlemen of fortune. And do not look so shy upon me neither, as if I spoke of what you never thought of before. One of you, at least, has heard of Captain Cleveland, the rover."

Brenda grew still paler, but the blood mounted at once in Minna's cheeks, on hearing the name of her lover thus unexpectedly introduced; for the scene was in itself so confounding, that the idea of the vessel's being the consort of which Cleveland had spoken at Burgh-Westra, had occurred to no one save the udaller.

"I see how it is," said Bunce, with a familiar nod, "and I will hold my course accordingly.—You need not be afraid of any injury, father," he added, addressing Magnus familiarly; "and though I have made many a pretty girl pay tribute in my time, yet yours shall go ashore without either wrong or ransom."

"If you will assure me of that," said Magnus, "you are as welcome to the brig and cargo, as ever I made man welcome to a can of punch."

"And it is no bad thing that same can of punch," said Bunce, "if we had any one here that could mix it well."

"I will do it," said Claud Halcro, "with any man that ever squeezed lemon—Eric Scambester, the punch-maker of Burgh-Westra, being alone excepted."

"And you are within a grapnel's length of him too," said the udaller.—"Go down below, my girls," he added, "and send up the rare old man, and the punch-bowl."

"The punch-bowl!" said Fletcher; "I say, the bucket, d—n me!—Talk of bowls in the cabin of a paltry merchantman, but not to gentlemen-strollers—rovers, I would say," correcting himself, as he observed that Bunce looked sour at the mistake.

"And I say these two pretty girls shall stay on deck, and fill my can," said Bunce; "I deserve some attendance, at least, for all my generosity."

"And they shall fill mine too," said Fletcher—"they shall fill it to the brim!—and I will have a kiss for every drop they spill—broil me, if I won't!"

"Why, then, I tell you, you shan't!" said Bunce; "for I'll be d—d if any one shall kiss Minna but one, and that's neither you nor I; and her other little bit of a consort shall 'scape for company;—there are plenty of willing wenches in Orkney.—And so now I think on it, these girls shall go down below, and bolt themselves into the cabin; and we shall have the punch up here on deck, *al fresco*, as the old gentleman proposes."

"Why, Jack, I wish you knew your own mind," said Fletcher; "I have been your messmate these two years, and I love you; and yet flay me like a wild bullock, if you have not as many humours as a monkey!—And what shall we have to make a little fun of, since you have sent the girls down below?"

"Why, we will have Master Punch-maker here," answered Bunce, "to give us toasts, and sing us songs.—And, in the meantime, you there, stand by sheets and tacks, and get her under way!—and you, steersman, as you would keep your brains in your skull, keep her under the stern of the sloop.—If you attempt to play us any trick, I will scuttle your scone as if it were an old calabash!"

The vessel was accordingly got under way, and moved slowly on in the wake of the sloop, which, as had been previously agreed upon, held her course not to return to the Bay of Kirkwall, but for an ex-

cellent roadstead called Inganess Bay, formed by a promontory which extends to the eastward two or three miles from the Orcadian metropolis, and where the vessels might conveniently lie at anchor, while the rovers maintained any communication with the magistrates which the new state of things seemed to require.

Meantime Claud Halcro had exerted his utmost talents in compounding a bucketful of punch for the use of the pirates, which they drank out of large cans; the ordinary seamen, as well as Bunce and Fletcher, who acted as officers, dipping them into the bucket with very little ceremony, as they came and went upon their duty. Magnus, who was particularly apprehensive that liquor might awaken the brutal passions of these desperadoes, was yet so much astonished at the quantities which he saw them drink, without producing any visible effect upon their reason, that he could not help expressing his surprise to Bunce himself, who, wild as he was, yet appeared by far the most civil and conversable of his party, and whom he was, perhaps, desirous to conciliate, by a compliment of which all boon toppers know the value.

"Bones of Saint Magnus!" said the udaller, "I used to think I took off my can like a gentleman; but to see your men swallow, captain, one would think their stomachs were as bottomless as the hole of Laifell in Foula, which I have sounded myself with a line of an hundred fathoms."

"In our way of life, sir," answered Bunce, "there is no stint till the duty calls, or the puncheon is drunk out."

"By my word, sir," said Claud Halcro, "I believe there is not one of your people but could drink out the mickle bicker of Scarpa, which was always offered to the Bishop of Orkney brimful of the best bummock that ever was brewed."

"If drinking could make them bishops," said Bunce, "I should have a reverend crew of them; but, as they have no other clerical qualities about them, I do not propose that they shall get drunk to-day; so we will cut our drink with a song."

"And I'll sing it, by——!" said or swore Dick Fletcher, and instantly struck up the old ditty—

"It was a ship, and a ship of fame,
Launch'd off the stocks, bound for the main,
With an hundred and fifty brisk young men,
All picked and chosen every one."

"I would sooner be keel-hauled than hear that song over again," said Bunce; "and confound your lantern jaws, you can squeeze nothing else out of them."

"By——," said Fletcher, "I will sing my song, whether you like it or no;" and again he sung, with the doleful tone of a north-easter whistling through sheet and shrouds,

"Captain Glen was our captain's name;
A very gallant and brisk young man;
As bold a sailor's e'er went to sea,
And we were bound for High Barbary."

"I tell you again," said Bunce, "we will have none of your screech-owl music here; and I'll be d—d if you shall sit here and make that infernal noise."

VOL. III.

"Why then, I'll tell you what," said Fletcher, getting up, "I'll sing when I walk about, and I hope there is no harm in that, Jack Bunce." And so getting up from his seat, he began to walk up and down the sloop, croaking out his long and disastrous ballad.

"You see how I manage them," said Bunce, with a smile of self-applause—"allow that fellow two strides on his own way, and you make a mutineer of him for life. But I tie him strict up, and he follows me as kindly as a fowler's spaniel after he has got a good beating.—And now your toast and your song, sir," addressing Halcro; "or rather your song without your toast. I have got a toast for myself. Here is success to all roving blades, and confusion to all honest men!"

"I should be sorry to drink that toast, if I could help it," said Magnus Troil.

"What! you reckon yourself one of the honest folks, I warrant?" said Bunce.—"Tell me your trade, and I'll tell you what I think of it. As for the punchmaker here, I knew him at first glance to be a tailor, who has, therefore, no more pretensions to be honest, than not to be mangy. But you are some High Dutch skipper, I warrant me, that tramples on the cross when he is in Japan, and denies his religion for a day's gain."

"No," replied the udaller, "I am a gentleman of Zetland."

"O, what!" retorted the satirical Mr Bunce, "you are come from the happy climate where gin is a groat a-bottle, and where there is day-light for ever?"

"At your service, captain," said the udaller, suppressing with much pain some disposition to resent these jests on his country, although under every risk, and at all disadvantage.

"At my service!" said Bunce—"Ay, if there was a rope stretched from the wreck to the beach, you would be at my service to cut the hawser, make *flotsome* and *jetsome* of ship and cargo, and well if you did not give me a rap on the head with the back of the cutty-axe; and you call yourself honest? But never mind—here goes the aforesaid toast—and do you sing me a song, Master Fashioner; and look it be as good as your punch."

Halcro, internally praying for the powers of a new Timotheus, to turn his strain and check his pride, as glorious John had it, began a heart-soothing ditty with the following lines:—

"Maidens fresh as fairest rose,
Listen to this lay of mine."

"I will hear nothing of maidens or roses," said Bunce; "it puts me in mind what sort of a cargo we have got on board; and, by——, I will be true to my messmate and my captain as long as I can.—And now I think on't, I'll have no more punch either—that last cup made innovation, and I am not to play Cassio to-night—and if I drink not, nobody else shall."

So saying, he manfully kicked over the bucket, which, notwithstanding the repeated applications made to it, was still half full, got up from his seat, shook himself a little to rights, as he expressed it, cocked his hat, and, walking the quarter-deck with

an air of dignity, gave, by word and signal, the orders for bringing the ships to anchor, which were readily obeyed by both, Goffe being then, in all probability, past any rational state of interference.

The udaller, in the meantime, condoled with Halcro on their situation. "It is bad enough," said the tough old Norseman; "for these are rank rogues—and yet, were it not for the girls, I should not fear them. That young vapouring fellow, who seems to command, is not such a born devil as he might have been."

"He has queer humours, though," said Halcro; "and I wish we were loose from him. To kick down a bucket half full of the best punch ever was made, and to cut me short in the sweetest song I ever wrote,—I promise you, I do not know what he may do next—it is next door to madness."

Meanwhile, the ships being brought to anchor, the valiant Lieutenant Bunce called upon Fletcher, and, resuming his seat by his unwilling passengers, he told them they should see what message he was about to send to the wittols of Kirkwall, as they were something concerned in it. "It shall run in Dick's name," he said, "as well as in mine. I love to give the poor young fellow a little countenance now and then—don't I, Dick, you d—d stupid ass?"

"Why, yes, Jack Bunce," said Dick, "I can't say but as you do—only you are always bullocking one about something or other too—but, howsomdever, d'ye see?"

"Enough said—belay your jaw, Dick," said Bunce, and proceeded to write his epistle, which, being read aloud, proved to be of the following tenor: "For the Mayor and Aldermen of Kirkwall—Gentlemen, As, contrary to your good faith given, you have not sent us on board a hostage for the safety of our captain remaining on shore at your request, these come to tell you, we are not thus to be trifled with. We have already in our possession, a brig, with a family of distinction, its owners and passengers; and as you deal with our captain, so will we deal with them in every respect. And as this is the first, so assure yourselves it shall not be the last damage which we will do to your town and trade, if you do not send on board our captain, and supply us with stores according to treaty."

"Given on board the brig Mergoose of Burgh-Westra, lying in Inganess Bay. Witness our hands, commanders of the Fortune's Favourite, and gentlemen adventurers."

He then subscribed himself Frederick Altamont, and handed the letter to Fletcher, who read the said subscription with much difficulty; and, admiring the sound of it very much, swore he would have a new name himself, and the rather that Fletcher was the most crabbed word to spell and conster, he believed, in the whole dictionary. He subscribed himself, accordingly, Timothy Tugmutton.

"Will you not add a few lines to the coxcombs?" said Bunce, addressing Magnus.

"Not I," returned the udaller, stubborn in his ideas of right and wrong, even in so formidable an emergency. "The magistrates of Kirkwall know their duty, and were I they"—But here the recollection that his daughters were at the mercy of

these ruffians, blanked the bold visage of Magnus Troil, and checked the defiance which was just about to issue from his lips.

"D—n me," said Bunce, who easily conjectured what was passing in the mind of his prisoner—"that pause would have told well on the stage—it would have brought down pit, box, and gallery, egad, as Bayes has it."

"I will hear nothing of Bayes," said Claud Halcro (himself a little elevated), "it is an impudent satire on glorious John; but he tickled Buckingham off for it—"

In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various—"

"Hold your peace," said Bunce, drowning the voice of the admirer of Dryden in louder and more vehement asseveration, "the 'Rehearsal' is the best farce ever was written—and I'll make him kiss the gunner's daughter that denies it. D—n me, I was the best Prince Prettyman ever walked the boards—"

Sometimes a fisher's son, sometimes a prince.

But let us to business.—Hark ye, old gentleman (to Magnus), you have a sort of sulkiness about you, for which some of my profession would cut your ears out of your head, and broil them for your dinner with red pepper. I have known Goffe do so to a poor devil, for looking sour and dangerous when he saw his sloop go to Davy Jones' locker with his only son on board. But I'm a spirit of another sort; and if you or the ladies are ill used, it shall be the Kirkwall people's fault, and not mine, and that's fair; and so you had better let them know your condition, and your own circumstances, and so forth,—and that's fair too."

Magnus thus exhorted, took up the pen, and attempted to write; but his high spirit so struggled with his paternal anxiety, that his hand refused its office. "I cannot help it," he said, after one or two illegible attempts to write—"I cannot form a letter, if all our lives depended upon it."

And he could not, with his utmost efforts, so suppress the convulsing emotions which he experienced, but that they agitated his whole frame. The willow which bends to the tempest, often escapes better than the oak which resists it; and so, in great calamities, it sometimes happens, that light and frivolous spirits recover their elasticity and presence of mind sooner than those of a loftier character. In the present case, Claud Halcro was fortunately able to perform the task which the deeper feelings of his friend and patron refused. He took the pen, and, in as few words as possible, explained the situation in which they were placed, and the cruel risks to which they were exposed, insinuating at the same time, as delicately as he could express it, that, to the magistrates of the county, the life and honour of its citizens should be a dearer object than even the apprehension or punishment of the guilty; taking care, however, to qualify the last expression as much as possible, for fear of giving umbrage to the pirates.

Bunce read over the letter, which fortunately met

his approbation ; and, on seeing the name of Claud Halcro at the bottom, he exclaimed, in great surprise and with more energetic expressions of asseveration than we chuse to record—"Why, you are the little fellow that played the fiddle to old Manager Gadabout's company, at Hogs-Norton, the first season I came out there ! I thought I knew your catch-word of glorious John."

At another time this recognition might not have been very grateful to Halcro's minstrel pride ; but as matters stood with him, the discovery of a golden mine could not have made him more happy. He instantly remembered the very hopeful young performer who came out in Don Sebastian, and judiciously added, that the muse of glorious John had never received such excellent support during the time that he was first (he might have added, and only) violin to Mr Gadabout's company.

"Why, yes," said Bunce, "I believe you are right—I think I might have shaken the scene as well as Booth or Betterton either. But I was destined to figure on other boards (striking his foot upon the deck), and I believe I must stick by them, till I find no board at all to support me. But now, old acquaintance, I will do something for you—slue yourself this way a bit—I would have you solus." They leaned over the taffrail, while Bunce whispered with more seriousness than he usually showed, "I am sorry for this honest old heart of Norway pine—blight me if I am not—and for the daughters too—besides, I have my own reasons for befriending one of them. I can be a wild fellow to a willing lass of the game ; but to such decent and innocent creatures—d—n me, I am Scipio at Numantia, and Alexander in the tent of Darius. You remember how I touch off Alexander ? (here he started into heroics)

"Thus from the grave I rise to save my love ;
All draw your swords, with wings of lightning move.
When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay—
'T is beauty calls, and glory shows the way."

Claud Halcro failed not to bestow the necessary commendations on his declamation, declaring, that, in his opinion as an honest man, he had always thought Mr Altamont's giving that speech far superior in tone and energy to Betterton.

Bunce, or Altamont, wrung his hand tenderly. "Ah, you flatter me, my dear friend," he said ; "yet, why had not the public some of your judgment !—I should not then have been at this pass. Heaven knows, my dear Mr Halcro—Heaven knows with what pleasure I could keep you on board with me, just that I might have one friend who loves as much to hear, as I do to recite, the choicest pieces of our finest dramatic authors. The most of us are beasts—and, for the Kirkwall hostage yonder, he uses me, egad, as I use Fletcher, I think, and huffs me the more, the more I do for him. But how delightful it would be in a tropic night, when the ship was hanging on the breeze, with a broad and steady sail, for me to rehearse Alexander, with you for my pit, box, and gallery ! Nay (for you are a flower of the muses as I remember), who knows but you and I might be the means of inspiring, like Orpheus and Eurydice, a pure taste into our companions, and softening their manners, while we excited their better feelings?"

This was spoken with so much unction, that Claud Halcro began to be afraid he had both made the actual punch over potent, and mixed too many bewitching ingredients in the cup of flattery which he had administered ; and that, under the influence of both potions, the sentimental pirate might detain him by force, merely to realize the scenes which his imagination presented. The conjuncture was, however, too delicate to admit of any active effort on Halcro's part, to redeem his blunder, and therefore he only returned the tender pressure of his friend's hand, and uttered the interjection "alas !" in as pathetic a tone as he could.

Bunce immediately resumed : "You are right, my friend, these are but vain visions of felicity, and it remains but for the unhappy Altamont to serve the friend to whom he is now to bid farewell. I have determined to put you and the two girls ashore, with Fletcher for your protection ; and so call up the young women, and let them be gone before the devil get aboard of me, or of some one else. You will carry my letter to the magistrates, and second it with your own eloquence, and assure them, that if they hurt but one hair of Cleveland's head, there will be the devil to pay, and no pitch hot."

Relieved at heart by this unexpected termination of Bunce's harangue, Halcro descended the companion-ladder two steps at a time, and knocking at the cabin door, could scarce find intelligible language enough to say his errand. The sisters hearing, with unexpected joy, that they were to be set ashore, muffled themselves in their cloaks, and, when they learned that the boat was hoisted out, came hastily on deck, when they were apprised for the first time, to their great horror, that their father was still to remain on board of the pirate.

"We will remain with him at every risk," said Minna—"we may be of some assistance to him, were it but for an instant—we will live and die with him."

"We will aid him more surely," said Brenda, who comprehended the nature of their situation better than Minna, "by interesting the people of Kirkwall to grant these gentlemen's demands."

"Spoken like an angel of sense and beauty," said Bunce ; "and now away with you ; for, d—n me, if this is not like having a lighted linstock in the powder-room—if you speak another word more, confound me if I know how I shall bring myself to part with you."

"Go, in God's name, my daughters," said Magnus. "I am in God's hands ; and when you are gone I shall care little for myself—and I shall think and say as long as I live, that this good gentleman deserves a better trade.—Go—go—away with you"—for they yet lingered in unwillingness to leave him.

"Stay not to kiss," said Bunce, "for fear I be tempted to ask my share. Into the boat with you—yet stop an instant." He drew the three captives apart—"Fletcher," said he, "will answer for the rest of the fellows, and will see you safe off the sea-beach. But how to answer for Fletcher, I know not, except by trusting Mr Halcro with this little guarantee."

He offered the minstrel a small double-barreled pistol, which, he said, was loaded with a brace of

balls. Minna observed Halcro's hand tremble as he stretched it out to take the weapon. "Give it to me, sir," she said, taking it from the outlaw; "and trust to me for defending my sister and myself."

"Bravo, bravo!" shouted Bunce. "There spoke a wench worthy of Cleveland, the King of Rovers."

"Cleveland!" repeated Minna, "do you then know that Cleveland, whom you have twice named?"

"Know him! Is there a man alive," said Bunce, "that knows better than I do the best and stoutest fellow ever stepped betwixt stem and stern? When he is out of the bilboes, as please Heaven he shall soon be, I reckon to see you come on board of us, and reign queen of every sea we sail over.—You have got the little guardian, I suppose you know how to use it? If Fletcher behave ill to you, you need only draw up this piece of iron with your thumb, so—and if he persists, it is but crooking your pretty fore-finger thus, and I shall lose the most dutiful messmate that ever man had—though, d—n the dog, he will deserve his death if he disobeys my orders. And now, into the boat—but stay, one kiss for Cleveland's sake."

Brenda, in deadly terror, endured his courtesy, but Minna, stepping back with disdain, offered her hand. Bunce laughed, but kissed, with a theatrical air, the fair hand which she extended as a ransom for her lips, and at length the sisters and Halcro were placed in the boat, which rowed off under Fletcher's command.

Bunce stood on the quarter-deck, soliloquizing after the manner of his original profession. "Were this told at Port-Royal now, or at the Isle of Providence, or in the Petits Guaves, I wonder what they would say of me! Why, that I was a good-natured milksop—a Jack-a-lent—an ass.—Well, let them. I have done enough of bad to think about it; it is worth while doing one good action, if it were but for the rarity of the thing, and to put one in good humour with one's self." Then, turning to Magnus Troil, he proceeded—"by—, these are bona-robas, these daughters of yours. The eldest would make her fortune on the London boards. What a dashing attitude the wench had with her, as she seized the pistol!—d—n me, that touch would have brought the house down. What a Roxalana the jade would have made!" (for, in his oratory, Bunce, like Sancho's gossip, Thomas Cecial, was apt to use the most energetic word which came to hand, without accurately considering its propriety). "I would give my share of the next prize but to hear her spout,

Away, begone, and give a whirlwind room,
Or I will blow you up like dust.—Avaunt
Madness but meanly represents my rage.

And then, again, that little, soft, shy, tearful trembler, for Statira, to hear her recite,

He speaks the kindest words, and looks such things,
Vows with such passion, swears with so much grace,
That 't is a kind of heaven to be deluded by him.

What a play we might have run up!—I was a beast not to think of it before I sent them off—I to be Alexander—Claud Halcro, Lysimachus—this old

gentleman might have made a Clitus for a pinch. I was an idiot not to think of it!"

There was much in this effusion which might have displeased the udaller; but, to speak truth, he paid no attention to it. His eye, and, finally, his spy-glass, was employed in watching the return of his daughters to the shore. He saw them land on the beach, and, accompanied by Halcro, and another man (Fletcher, doubtless), he saw them ascend the acclivity, and proceed upon the road to Kirkwall, and he could even distinguish that Minna, as if considering herself as the guardian of the party, walked a little aloof from the rest, on the watch, as it seemed, against surprise, and ready to act as occasion should require. At length, as the udaller was just about to lose sight of them, he had the exquisite satisfaction to see the party halt, and the pirate leave them, after a space just long enough for a civil farewell, and proceed slowly back, on his return to the beach. Blessing the Great Being who had thus relieved him from the most agonizing fears which a father can feel, the worthy udaller, from that instant, stood resigned to his own fate, whatsoever that might be.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Over the mountains and under the waves,
Over the fountains and under the graves,
Over floods that are deepest,
Which Neptune obey,
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way.

Old Song.

THE parting of Fletcher from Claud Halcro and the sisters of Burgh-Westra, on the spot where it took place, was partly occasioned by a small party of armed men being seen at a distance in the act of advancing from Kirkwall, an apparition hidden from the udaller's spy-glass by the swell of the ground, but quite visible to the pirate, whom it determined to consult his own safety by a speedy return to his boat. He was just turning away, when Minna occasioned the short delay which her father had observed.

"Stop," she said; "I command you!—Tell your leader from me that whatever the answer may be from Kirkwall, he shall carry his vessel, nevertheless, round to Stromness; and, being anchored there, let him send a boat ashore for Captain Cleveland when he shall see a smoke on the Bridge of Broisgar."

Fletcher had thought, like his messmate Bunce, of asking a kiss, at least, for the trouble of escorting these beautiful young women; and, perhaps, neither the terror of the approaching Kirkwall men, nor of Minna's weapon, might have prevented his being insolent. But the name of his captain, and, still more, the unappalled, dignified, and commanding manner of Minna Troil, overawed him. He made a sea bow,—promised to keep a sharp look-out, and, returning to his boat, went on board with his message.

As Halcro and the sisters proceeded to advance towards the party whom they saw on the Kirkwall

road, and who, on their part, had halted as if to observe them, Brenda, relieved from the fears of Fletcher's presence, which had hitherto kept her silent, exclaimed, "Merciful Heaven!—Minna, in what hands have we left our dear father?"

"In the hands of brave men," said Minna, steadily—"I fear not for him."

"As brave as you please," said Claud Halcro, "but very dangerous rogues for all that.—I know that fellow Altamont, as he calls himself, though that is not his right name neither, as deboshed a dog as ever made a barn ring with blood and blank verse. He began with Barnwell, and everybody thought he would end with the gallows, like the last scene in *Venice Preserved*."

"It matters not," said Minna—"the wilder the waves, the more powerful is the voice that rules them. The name alone of Cleveland ruled the mood of the fiercest amongst them."

"I am sorry for Cleveland," said Brenda, "if such are his companions,—but I care little for him in comparison to my father."

"Reserve your compassion for those who need it," said Minna, "and fear nothing for our father.—God knows, every silver hair on his head is to me worth the treasure of an unsunned mine; but I know that he is safe while in yonder vessel, and I know that he will be soon safe on shore."

"I would I could see it," said Claud Halcro; "but I fear the Kirkwall people, supposing Cleveland to be such as I dread, will not dare to exchange him against the udaller. The Scots have very severe laws against theft-boot, as they call it."

"But who are those on the road before us?" said Brenda; "and why do they halt there so jealously?"

"They are a patrol of the militia," answered Halcro. "Glorious John touches them off a little sharply,—but then John was a jacobite,—

Mouths without hands, maintain'd at vast expense,
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence;
Stout once a-month, they march a blustering band,
And ever, but in time of need, at hand.

I fancy they halted just now, taking us, as they saw us on the brow of the hill, for a party of the sloop's men, and, now they can distinguish that you wear petticoats, they are moving on again."

They came on accordingly, and proved to be, as Claud Halcro had suggested, a patrol sent out to watch the motions of the pirates, and to prevent their attempting descents to damage the country.

They heartily congratulated Claud Halcro, who was well known to more than one of them, upon his escape from captivity; and the commander of the party, while offering every assistance to the ladies, could not help condoling with them on the circumstances in which their father stood, hinting, though in a delicate and doubtful manner, the difficulties which might be in the way of his liberation.

When they arrived at Kirkwall, and obtained an audience of the provost and one or two of the magistrates, these difficulties were more plainly insisted upon.—"The Halcyon frigate is upon the coast," said the provost; "she was seen off Duncans-bay Head; and, though I have the deepest respect for Mr Troil of Burgh-Westra, yet I shall be

answerable to law if I release from prison the captain of this suspicious vessel, on account of the safety of any individual who may be unhappily endangered by his detention. This man is now known to be the heart and soul of these buccaneers, and am I at liberty to send him aboard, that he may plunder the country, or perhaps go fight the king's ship?—for he has impudence enough for anything."

"Courage enough for anything, you mean, Mr Provost," said Minna, unable to restrain her displeasure.

"Why, you may call it as you please, Miss Troil," said the worthy magistrate; "but, in my opinion, that sort of courage which proposes to fight singly against two, is little better than a kind of practical impudence."

"But our father?" said Brenda, in a tone of the most earnest entreaty—"our father—the friend, I may say the father, of his country—to whom so many look for kindness, and so many for actual support—whose loss would be the extinction of a beacon in a storm—will you indeed weigh the risk which he runs, against such a trifling thing as letting an unfortunate man from prison, to seek his unhappy fate elsewhere?"

"Miss Brenda is right," said Claud Halcro; "I am for let-a-be for let-a-be, as the boys say; and never fash about a warrant of liberation, provost, but just take a fool's counsel, and let the goodman of the jail forget to draw his bolt on the wicket, or leave a chink of a window open, or the like, and we will be rid of the rover, and have the one best honest fellow in Orkney or Zetland on the lee-side of a bowl of punch with us in five hours."

The provost replied in nearly the same terms as before, that he had the highest respect for Mr Magnus Troil of Burgh-Westra, but that he could not suffer his consideration for any individual, however respectable, to interfere with the discharge of his duty.

Minna then addressed her sister in a tone of calm and sarcastic displeasure.—"You forget," she said, "Brenda, that you are talking of the safety of a poor insignificant udaller of Zetland, to no less a person than the chief magistrate of the metropolis of Orkney—can you expect so great a person to condescend to such a trifling subject of consideration? It will be time enough for the provost to think of complying with the terms sent to him—for comply with them at length he both must and will—when the Church of Saint Magnus is beat down about his ears."

"You may be angry with me, my pretty young lady," said the good-humoured Provost 'Torfe," but I cannot be offended with you. The Church of Saint Magnus has stood many a day, and, I think, will outlive both you and me, much more yonder pack of unchanged dogs. And besides that your father is half an Orkneyman, and has both estate and friends among us, I would, I give you my word, do as much for a Zetlander in distress as I would for any one, excepting one of our own native Kirkwallers, who are doubtless to be preferred. And if you will take up your lodgings here with my wife and myself, we will endeavour to show you," continued he, "that you are as welcome in Kirkwall, as ever you could be in Lerwick or Scalloway."

Minna deigned no reply to this good-humoured invitation, but Brenda declined it in civil terms, pleading the necessity of taking up their abode with a wealthy widow of Kirkwall, a relation, who already expected them.

Halcro made another attempt to move the provost, but found him inexorable.—“The collector of the customs had already threatened,” he said, “to inform against him for entering into treaty, or, as he called it, packing and peeling with those strangers, even when it seemed the only means of preventing a bloody affray in the town; and, should he now forego the advantage afforded by the imprisonment of Cleveland and the escape of the factor, he might incur something worse than censure.” The burthen of the whole was, “that he was sorry for the udaller, he was sorry even for the lad Cleveland, who had some sparks of honour about him; but his duty was imperious, and must be obeyed.” The provost then precluded farther argument, by observing, that another affair from Zetland called for his immediate attention. A gentleman named Mertoun, residing at Jarlshof, had made complaint against Snailsfoot the jagger, for having assisted a domestic of his in embezzling some valuable articles which had been deposited in his custody, and he was about to take examinations on the subject, and cause them to be restored to Mr Mertoun, who was accountable for them to the right owner.

In all this information, there was nothing which seemed interesting to the sisters excepting the word Mertoun, which went like a dagger to the heart of Minna, when she recollected the circumstances under which Mordaunt Mertoun had disappeared, and which, with an emotion less painful, though still of a melancholy nature, called a faint blush into Brenda’s cheek, and a slight degree of moisture into her eye. But it was soon evident that the magistrate spoke not of Mordaunt, but of his father; and the daughters of Magnus, little interested in his detail, took leave of the provost to go to their own lodgings.

When they arrived at their relation’s, Minna made it her business to learn, by such inquiries as she could make without exciting suspicion, what was the situation of the unfortunate Cleveland, which she soon discovered to be exceedingly precarious. The provost had not, indeed, committed him to close custody, as Claud Halcro had anticipated, recollecting, perhaps, the favourable circumstances under which he had surrendered himself, and loth, till the moment of the last necessity, altogether to break faith with him. But although left apparently at large, he was strictly watched by persons well armed and appointed for the purpose, who had directions to detain him by force, if he attempted to pass certain narrow precincts which were allotted to him. He was quartered in a strong room within what is called the King’s Castle, and at night his chamber door was locked on the outside, and a sufficient guard mounted to prevent his escape. He therefore enjoyed only the degree of liberty which the cat, in her cruel sport, is sometimes pleased to permit to the mouse which she has clutched; and yet such was the terror of the resources, the courage, and ferocity of the pirate captain, that the provost

was blamed by the collector, and many other sage citizens of Kirkwall, for permitting him to be at large upon any conditions.

It may be well believed, that, under such circumstances, Cleveland had no desire to seek any place of public resort, conscious that he was the object of a mixed feeling of curiosity and terror. His favourite place of exercise, therefore, was the external aisles of the Cathedral of Saint Magnus, of which the eastern end alone is fitted up for public worship. This solemn old edifice, having escaped the ravage which attended the first convulsions of the Reformation, still retains some appearance of episcopal dignity. This place of worship is separated by a screen from the nave and western limb of the cross, and the whole is preserved in a state of cleanliness and decency, which might be well proposed as an example to the proud piles of Westminster and St Paul’s.

It was in this exterior part of the cathedral that Cleveland was permitted to walk, the rather that his guards, by watching the single open entrance, had the means, with very little inconvenience to themselves, of preventing any possible attempt at escape. The place itself was well suited to his melancholy circumstances. The lofty and vaulted roof rises upon ranges of Saxon pillars, of massive size, four of which, still larger than the rest, once supported the lofty spire, which, long since destroyed by accident, has been rebuilt upon a disproportioned and truncated plan. The light is admitted at the eastern end through a lofty, well-proportioned, and richly-ornamented Gothic window, and the pavement is covered with inscriptions, in different languages, distinguishing the graves of noble Orcadians, who have at different times been deposited within the sacred precincts.

Here walked Cleveland, musing over the events of a mis-spent life, which, it seemed probable, might be brought to a violent and shameful close, while he was yet in the prime of youth.—“With these dead,” he said, looking on the pavement, “will I soon be numbered—but no holy man will speak a blessing; no friendly hand register an inscription; no proud descendant sculpture armorial bearings over the grave of the pirate Cleveland. My whitening bones will swing in the gibbet-irons, on some wild beach or lonely cape, that will be esteemed fatal and accursed for my sake. The old mariner, as he passes the sound, will shake his head, and tell of my name and actions, as a warning to his younger comrades.—But, Minna! Minna!—what will be thy thoughts when the news reaches thee?—Would to God the tidings were drowned in the deepest whirlpool betwixt Kirkwall and Burgh-Westra, ere they came to her ear!—and O! would to Heaven that we had never met, since we never can meet again!”

He lifted up his eyes as he spoke, and Minna Troil stood before him. Her face was pale, and her hair disheveled; but her look was composed and firm, with its usual expression of high-minded melancholy. She was still shrouded in the large mantle which she had assumed on leaving the vessel. Cleveland’s first emotion was astonishment; his next was joy, not unmixed with awe. He would have exclaimed—he would have thrown himself at

her feet—But she imposed at once silence and composure on him, by raising her finger, and saying, in a low but commanding accent,—“Be cautious—we are observed—there are men without—they let me enter with difficulty. I dare not remain long—they would think—they might believe—O Cleveland! I have hazarded everything to save you!”

“To save me?—Alas! poor Minna!” answered Cleveland, “to save me is impossible.—Enough that I have seen you once more, were it but to say, for ever farewell!”

“We must, indeed, say farewell,” said Minna; “for fate, and your guilt, have divided us for ever.—Cleveland, I have seen your associates—need I tell you more—need I say, that I know now what a pirate is?”

“You have been in the ruffians’ power!” said Cleveland, with a start of agony—“Did they presume?”—

“Cleveland,” replied Minna, “they presumed nothing—your name was a spell over them. By the power of that spell over these ferocious banditti, and by that alone, I was reminded of the qualities I once thought my Cleveland’s!”

“Yes,” said Cleveland, proudly, “my name has and shall have power over them, when they are at the wildest; and, had they harmed you by one rude word, they should have found—Yet what do I rave about—I am a prisoner!”

“You shall be so no longer,” said Minna—“Your safety—the safety of my dear father—all demand your instant freedom. I have formed a scheme for your liberty, which, boldly executed, cannot fail. The light is failing without—muffle yourself in my cloak, and you will easily pass the guards—I have given them the means of carousing, and they are deeply engaged. Haste to the Loch of Stennis, and hide yourself till day dawns; then make a smoke on the point, where the land, stretching into the lake on each side, divides it nearly in two at the Bridge of Broisgar. Your vessel, which lies not far distant, will send a boat ashore.—Do not hesitate an instant.”

“But you, Minna!—Should this wild scheme succeed,” said Cleveland, “what is to become of you?”

“For my share in your escape,” answered the maiden, “the honesty of my own intention—the honesty of my intention will vindicate me in the sight of Heaven; and the safety of my father, whose fate depends on yours, will be my excuse to man.”

In a few words, she gave him the history of their capture, and its consequences. Cleveland cast up his eyes and raised his hands to Heaven, in thankfulness for the escape of the sisters from his evil companions, and then hastily added,—“But you are right, Minna; I must fly at all rates—for your father’s sake I must fly.—Here, then we part—yet not, I trust, for ever.”

“For ever!” answered a voice, that sounded as from a sepulchral vault.

They started, looked around them, and then gazed on each other. It seemed as if the echoes of the building had returned Cleveland’s last words, but the pronunciation was too emphatically accented.

“Yes, for ever!” said Norna of the Fitful-head, stepping forward from behind one of the massive

Saxon pillars which support the roof of the cathedral. “Here meet the crimson foot and the crimson hand. Well for both that the wound is healed whence that crimson was derived—well for both, but best for him who shed it.—Here, then, you meet—and meet for the last time!”

“Not so,” said Cleveland, as if about to take Minna’s hand; “to separate me from Minna, while I have life, must be the work of herself alone.”

“Away!” said Norna, stepping betwixt them, “away with such vain folly!—Nourish no vain dreams of future meetings—you part here, and you part for ever. The hawk pairs not with the dove; guilt matches not with innocence.—Minna Troil, you look for the last time on this bold and criminal man—Cleveland, you behold Minna for the last time!”

“And dream you,” said Cleveland, indignantly, “that your mummery imposes on me, and that I am among the fools who see more than trick in your pretended art?”

“Forbear, Cleveland, forbear!” said Minna, her hereditary awe of Norna augmented by the circumstance of her sudden appearance. “O forbear!—she is powerful—she is but too powerful.—And do you, O Norna, remember my father’s safety is linked with Cleveland’s.”

“And it is well for Cleveland that I do remember it,” replied the Pythoness—“and that, for the sake of one, I am here to aid both. You, with your childish purpose, of passing one of his bulk and stature under the disguise of a few paltry folds of wadmaal—what would your device have procured him but instant restraint with bolt and shackle?—I will save him—I will place him in security on board his bark. But let him renounce these shores for ever, and carry elsewhere the terrors of his sable flag, and his yet blacker name; for if the sun rises twice, and finds him still at anchor, his blood be on his own head.—Ay, look to each other—look the last look that I permit to frail affection,—and say, if ye can say it, Farewell for ever.”

“Obey her,” stammered Minna; “remonstrate not, but obey her.”

Cleveland, grasping her hand, and kissing it ardently, said, but so low that she only could hear it, “Farewell, Minna, but *not* for ever.”

“And now, maiden, begone,” said Norna, “and leave the rest to the Reim-kennar.”

“One word more,” said Minna, “and I obey you. Tell me but if I have caught aright your meaning—Is Mordaunt Mertoun safe and recovered?”

“Recovered, and safe,” said Norna; “else woe to the hand that shed his blood!”

Minna slowly sought the door of the cathedral, and turned back from time to time to look at the shadowy form of Norna, and the stately and military figure of Cleveland, as they stood together in the deepening gloom of the ancient cathedral. When she looked back a second time, they were in motion, and Cleveland followed the matron, as, with a slow and solemn step, she glided towards one of the side aisles. When Minna looked back a third time, their figures were no longer visible. She collected herself, and walked on to the eastern door by which she had entered, and listened for an instant to the guard, who talked together on the outside.

"The Zetland girl stays a long time with this pirate fellow," said one. "I wish they have not more to speak about than the ransom of her father."

"Ay, truly," answered another, "the wenches will have more sympathy with a handsome young pirate, than an old bed-ridden burgher."

Their discourse was here interrupted by her of whom they were speaking; and, as if taken in the manner, they pulled off their hats, made their awkward obeisances, and looked a little confused.

Minna returned to the house where she lodged, much affected, yet, on the whole, pleased with the result of her expedition, which seemed to put her father out of danger, and assured her at once of the escape of Cleveland, and of the safety of young Mordaunt. She hastened to communicate both pieces of intelligence to Brenda, who joined her in thankfulness to Heaven, and was herself well nigh persuaded to believe in Norna's supernatural pretensions, so much was she pleased with the manner in which they had been employed. Some time was spent in exchanging their mutual congratulations, and mingling tears of hope, mixed with apprehension; when, at a late hour in the evening, they were interrupted by Claud Halcro, who, full of a fidgeting sort of importance, not unmingled with fear, came to acquaint them, that the prisoner, Cleveland, had disappeared from the cathedral, in which he had been permitted to walk, and that the provost, having been informed that Minna was accessory to his flight, was coming, in a mighty quandary, to make inquiry into the circumstances.

When the worthy magistrate arrived, Minna did not conceal from him her own wish that Cleveland should make his escape, as the only means which she saw of redeeming her father from imminent danger. But that she had any actual accession to his flight, she positively denied; and stated, "that she had parted from Cleveland in the cathedral, more than two hours since, and then left him in company with a third person whose name she did not conceive herself obliged to communicate."

"It is not needful, Miss Minna Troil," answered Provost Torfe; "for although no person but this Captain Cleveland and yourself was seen to enter the Kirk of Saint Magnus this day, we know well enough that your cousin, old Ulla Troil, whom you Zetlanders call Norna of Fitful-head, has been cruising up and down, upon sea and land, and air, for what I know, in boats and on ponies, and it may be on broomsticks; and here has been her dumb drow, too, coming and going, and playing the spy on every one—and a good spy he is, for he can hear everything, and tells nothing again, unless to his mistress. And we know, besides, that she can enter the kirk when all the doors are fast, and has been seen there more than once, God save us from the Evil One!—and so, without farther questions asked, I conclude it was old Norna whom you left in the kirk with this slashing blade—and, if so, they may catch them again that can.—I cannot but say, however, pretty Mistress Minna, that you Zetland folks seem to forget both law and gospel, when you use the help of witchcraft to fetch delinquents out of a legal prison; and the least that you, or your cousin, or your father, can do, is to use influence with this

wild fellow to go away as soon as possible, without hurting the town or trade, and then there will be little harm in what has chanced; for, Heaven knows, I did not seek the poor lad's life, so I could get my hand free of him without blame; and far less did I wish that, through his imprisonment, any harm should come to worthy Magnus Troil of Burgh-Westra."

"I see where the shoe pinches you, Mr Provost," said Claud Halcro, "and I am sure I can answer for my friend Mr Troil, as well as for myself, that we will say and do all in our power with this man Cleveland to make him leave the coast directly."

"And I," said Minna, "am so convinced that what you recommend is best for all parties, that my sister and I will set off early to-morrow morning to the House of Stennis, if Mr Halcro will give us his escort, to receive my father when he comes ashore, that we may acquaint him with your wish, and to use every influence to induce this unhappy man to leave the country."

Provost Torfe looked upon her with some surprise. "It is not every young woman," he said, "would wish to move eight miles nearer to a band of pirates."

"We run no risk," said Claud Halcro, interfering. "The House of Stennis is strong; and my cousin, whom it belongs to, has men and arms within it. The young ladies are as safe there as in Kirk-wall; and much good may arise from an early communication betwixt Magnus Troil and his daughters. And happy am I to see, in your case, my good old friend,—as glorious John says,—

——— after much debate,
The man prevail above the magistrate."

The provost smiled, nodded his head, and indicated, as far as he thought he could do so with decency, how happy he should be if the Fortune's Favourite, and her disorderly crew, would leave Orkney without farther interference, or violence on either side. He could not authorize their being supplied from the shore, he said; but either for fear or favour, they were certain to get provisions at Stromness. This pacific magistrate then took leave of Halcro and the two ladies, who proposed, the next morning, to transfer their residence to the House of Stennis, situated upon the banks of the salt-water lake of the same name, and about four miles by water from the Road of Stromness, where the rovers' vessel was lying.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Fly, Fleance, fly!—Thou mayest escape.

Macbeth.

IT was one branch of the various arts by which Norna endeavoured to maintain her pretensions to supernatural powers, that she made herself familiarly and practically acquainted with all the secret passes and recesses, whether natural or artificial, which she could hear of, whether by tradition or otherwise, and was, by such knowledge, often enabled to perform feats which were otherwise unaccountable. Thus, when she escaped from the ta-

bernacle at Burgh-Westra, it was by a sliding board which covered a secret passage in the wall, known to none but herself and Magnus, who, she was well assured, would not betray her. The profusion also, with which she lavished a considerable income, otherwise of no use to her, enabled her to procure the earliest intelligence respecting whatever she desired to know, and, at the same time, to secure all other assistance necessary to carry her plans into effect. Cleveland, upon the present occasion, had room to admire both her sagacity and her resources.

Upon her applying some means of forcible pressure, a door which was concealed under some rich wooden sculpture in the screen which divides the eastern aisle from the rest of the cathedral, opened, and disclosed a dark narrow winding passage, into which she entered, telling Cleveland, in a whisper, to follow, and be sure he shut the door behind him. He obeyed, and followed her in darkness and silence, sometimes descending steps, of the number of which she always apprised him, sometimes ascending, and often turning at short angles. The air was more free than he could have expected, the passage being ventilated at different parts by unseen and ingeniously contrived spiracles, which communicated with the open air. At length their long course ended, by Norna drawing aside a sliding panel, which, opening behind a wooden, or box-bed, as it is called in Scotland, admitted them into an ancient, but very mean apartment, having a latticed window, and a groined roof. The furniture was much dilapidated; and its only ornaments were, on the one side of the wall, a garland of faded ribbons, such as are used to decorate whale-vessels; and on the other, an escutcheon, bearing an earl's arms and coronet, surrounded with the usual emblems of mortality. The mattock and spade, which lay in one corner, together with the appearance of an old man, who, in a rusty black coat, and slouched hat, sat reading by a table, announced that they were in the habitation of the church-beadle, or sexton, and in the presence of that respectable functionary.

When his attention was attracted by the noise of the sliding panel, he arose, and testifying much respect, but no surprise, took his shadowy hat from his thin grey locks, and stood uncovered in the presence of Norna, with an air of profound humility.

"Be faithful," said Norna to the old man, "and beware you show not any living mortal the secret path to the sanctuary."

The old man bowed, in token of obedience and of thanks, for she put money in his hand as she spoke. With a faltering voice, he expressed his hope that she would remember his son, who was on the Greenland voyage, that he might return fortunate and safe, as he had done last year, when he brought back the garland, pointing to that upon the wall.

"My cauldron shall boil, and my rhyme shall be said in his behalf," answered Norna. "Waits Pacolet without with the horses?"

The old sexton assented, and the Pythoness, commanding Cleveland to follow her, went through a back door of the apartment into a small garden, corresponding, in its desolate appearance, to the habitation they had just quitted. The low and broken wall easily permitted them to pass into another and larger

garden, though not much better kept, and a gate, which was upon the latch, let them into a long and winding lane, through which, Norna having whispered to her companion that it was the only dangerous place on their road, they walked with a hasty pace. It was now nearly dark, and the inhabitants of the poor dwellings, on either hand, had betaken themselves to their houses. They saw only one woman, who was looking from her door, but blessed herself and retired into her house with precipitation, when she saw the tall figure of Norna stalk past her with long strides. The lane conducted them into the country, where the dumb dwarf waited with three horses, ensconced behind the wall of a deserted shed. On one of these Norna instantly seated herself, Cleveland mounted another, and, followed by Pacolet on the third, they moved sharply on through the darkness; the active and spirited animals on which they rode being of a breed rather taller than those reared in Zetland.

After more than an hour's smart riding, in which Norna acted as guide, they stopped before a hovel, so utterly desolate in appearance, that it resembled rather a cattle-shed than a cottage.

"Here you must remain till dawn, when your signal can be seen from your vessel," said Norna, consigning the horses to the care of Pacolet, and leading the way into the wretched hovel, which she presently illuminated by lighting the small iron lamp which she usually carried along with her. "It is a poor," she said, "but a safe place of refuge; for were we pursued hither, the earth would yawn and admit us into its recesses ere you were taken. For know, that this ground is sacred to the gods of old Valhalla.—And now say, man of mischief and of blood, are you friend or foe to Norna, the sole priestess of these disowned deities?"

"How is it possible for me to be your enemy?" said Cleveland.—"Common gratitude"—

"Common gratitude," said Norna, interrupting him, "is a common word—and words are the common pay which fools accept at the hands of knaves; but Norna must be requited by actions—by sacrifices."

"Well, mother, name your request."

"That you never seek to see Minna Troil again, and that you leave this coast in twenty-four hours," answered Norna.

"It is impossible," said the captain; "I cannot be soon enough found in the sea-stores which the sloop must have."

"You can. I will take care you are fully supplied; and Caithness and the Hebrides are not far distant—you can depart if you will."

"And why should I," said Cleveland, "if I will not?"

"Because your stay endangers others," said Norna, "and will prove your own destruction. Hear me with attention. From the first moment I saw you lying senseless on the sand beneath the cliffs of Sumburgh, I read that in your countenance which linked you with me, and those who were dear to me; but whether for good or evil, was hidden from mine eyes. I aided in saving your life—in preserving your property. I aided in doing so the very youth whom you have crossed in his dearest

affections—crossed by tale-bearing and slander.”

“I slander Mertoun!” exclaimed the captain. “By Heaven, I scarce mentioned his name at Burgh-Westra, if it is that which you mean. The peddling fellow Bryce, meaning, I believe, to be my friend, because he found something could be made by me, did, I have since heard, carry tattle, or truth, I know not which, to the old man, which was confirmed by the report of the whole island. But, for me, I scarce thought of him as a rival; else, I had taken a more honourable way to rid myself of him.”

“Was the point of your double-edged knife, directed to the bosom of an unarmed man, intended to carve out that more honourable way?” said Norna, sternly.

Cleveland was conscience-struck, and remained silent for an instant, ere he replied, “There, indeed, I was wrong; but he is, I thank Heaven, recovered, and welcome to an honourable satisfaction.”

“Cleveland,” said the Pythoness, “No! The fiend who employs you as his implement is powerful; but with me he shall not strive. You are of that temperament which the dark influences desire as the tools of their agency; bold, haughty, and undaunted, unrestrained by principle, and having only in its room a wild sense of indomitable pride, which such men call honour. Such you are, and as such your course through life has been—onward and unrestrained, bloody and tempestuous. By me, however, it shall be controled,” she concluded, stretching out her staff, as if in the attitude of determined authority—“ay, even although the demon who presides over it should now arise in his terrors.”

Cleveland laughed scornfully. “Good mother,” he said, “reserve such language for the rude sailor that implores you to bestow him fair wind, or the poor fisherman that asks success to his nets and lines. I have been long inaccessible both to fear and to superstition. Call forth your demon, if you command one, and place him before me. The man that has spent years in company with incarnate devils, can scarce dread the presence of a disembodied fiend.”

This was said with a careless and desperate bitterness of spirit, which proved too powerfully energetic even for the delusions of Norna’s insanity; and it was with a hollow and tremulous voice that she asked Cleveland—“For what, then, do you hold me, if you deny the power I have bought so dearly?”

“You have wisdom, mother,” said Cleveland; “at least you have art, and art is power. I hold you for one who knows how to steer upon the current of events, but I deny your power to change its course. Do not, therefore, waste words in quoting terrors for which I have no feeling, but tell me at once, wherefore you would have me depart?”

“Because I will have you see Minna no more,” answered Norna—“Because Minna is the destined bride of him whom men call Mordaunt Mertoun—Because if you depart not within twenty-four hours, utter destruction awaits you. In these plain words there is no metaphysical delusion—Answer me as plainly.”

“In as plain words, then,” answered Cleveland, “I will not leave these islands—not, at least,

till I have seen Minna Troil; and never shall your Mordaunt possess her while I live.”

“Hear him!” said Norna—“hear a mortal man spurn at the means of prolonging his life!—hear a sinful—a most sinful being, refuse the time which fate yet affords for repentance, and for the salvation of an immortal soul!—Behold him how he stands erect, bold and confident in his youthful strength and courage! My eyes, unused to tears—even my eyes, which have so little cause to weep for him, are blinded with sorrow, to think what so fair a form will be ere the second sun set!”

“Mother,” said Cleveland, firmly, yet with some touch of sorrow in his voice, “I in part understand your threats. You know more than we do of the course of the Halcyon—perhaps have the means (for I acknowledge you have shown wonderful skill of combination in such affairs) of directing her cruise our way. Be it so,—I will not depart from my purpose for that risk. If the frigate comes hither, we have still our shoal water to trust to; and I think they will scarce cut us out with boats, as if we were a Spanish xebec. I am therefore resolved I will hoist once more the flag under which I have cruized, avail ourselves of the thousand chances which have helped us in greater odds, and, at the worst, fight the vessel to the very last; and, when mortal man can do no more, it is but snapping a pistol in the powder-room, and as we have lived, so will we die.”

There was a dead pause as Cleveland ended; and it was broken by his resuming, in a softer tone.—“You have heard my answer, mother; let us debate it no farther, but part in peace. I would willingly leave you a remembrance, that you may not forget a poor fellow to whom your services have been useful, and who parts with you in no unkindness, however unfriendly you are to his dearest interests.—Nay, do not shun to accept such a trifle,” he said, forcing upon Norna the little silver enchased box, which had been once the subject of strife betwixt Mertoun and him; “it is not for the sake of the metal, which I know you value not, but simply as a memorial that you have met him of whom many a strange tale will hereafter be told in the seas which he has traversed.”

“I accept your gift,” said Norna, “in token that, if I have in aught been accessory to your fate, it was as the involuntary and grieving agent of other powers. Well did you say we direct not the current of the events, which hurry us forward, and render our utmost efforts unavailing; even as the wells of Tuftiloe* can wheel the stoutest vessel round and round, in despite of either sail or steerage.—Pacolet!” she exclaimed in a louder voice, “what, ho! Pacolet!”

A large stone, which lay at the side of the wall of the hovel, fell as she spoke, and to Cleveland’s surprise, if not somewhat to his fear, the mis-shapen form of the dwarf was seen, like some overgrown reptile, extricating himself out of a subterranean passage, the entrance to which the stone had covered.

* A *well*, in the language of those seas, denotes one of those whirlpools, or circular eddies, which wheel and boil with astonishing strength, and are very dangerous. Hence the distinction, in old English, betwixt *wells* and *waves*, the latter signifying the direct onward course of the tide, and the former the smooth, glassy, oily-looking whirlpools, whose strength seems to the eye almost irresistible.

Norna, as if impressed by what Cleveland had said on the subject of her supernatural pretensions, was so far from endeavouring to avail herself of this opportunity to enforce them, that she hastened to explain the phenomenon he had witnessed.

"Such passages," she said, "to which the entrances are carefully concealed, are frequently found in these islands—the places of retreat of the ancient inhabitants, where they sought refuge from the rage of the Normans, the pirates of that day. It was that you might avail yourself of this, in case of need, that I brought you hither. Should you observe signs of pursuit, you may either lurk in the bowels of the earth until it has passed by, or escape, if you will, through the farther entrance near the lake, by which Pacolet entered but now.—And now farewell! Think on what I have said; for as sure as you now move and breathe a living man, so surely is your doom fixed and sealed, unless, within four-and-twenty hours, you have doubled the Burgh-head."

"Farewell, mother!" said Cleveland, as she departed, bending a look upon him, in which, as he could perceive by the lamp, sorrow was mingled with displeasure.

The interview, which thus concluded, left a strong effect even upon the mind of Cleveland, accustomed as he was to imminent dangers and to hair-breadth escapes. He in vain attempted to shake off the impression left by the words of Norna, which he felt the more powerful, because they were in a great measure divested of her wonted mystical tone, which he contemned. A thousand times he regretted that he had from time to time delayed the resolution which he had long adopted, to quit his dreadful and dangerous trade; and as often he firmly determined, that, could he but see Minna Troil once more, were it but for a last farewell, he would leave the sloop, so soon as his comrades were extricated from their perilous situation, endeavour to obtain the benefit of the king's pardon, and distinguish himself, if possible, in some more honourable course of warfare.

This resolution, to which he again and again pledged himself, had at length a sedative effect upon his mental perturbation, and, wrapt in his cloak, he enjoyed, for a time, that imperfect repose which exhausted nature demands as her tribute, even from those who are situated on the verge of the most imminent danger. But how far soever the guilty may satisfy his own mind, and stupify the feelings of remorse, by such a conditional repentance, we may well question whether it is not, in the sight of Heaven, rather a presumptuous aggravation, than an expiation of his sins.

When Cleveland awoke, the grey dawn was already mingling with the twilight of an Orcadian night. He found himself on the verge of a beautiful sheet of water, which, close by the place where he had rested, was nearly divided by two tongues of land that approach each other from the opposing sides of the lake, and are in some degree united by the Bridge of Broisgar, a long causeway, containing openings to permit the flow and reflux of the tide. Behind him, and fronting to the bridge, stood that remarkable semicircle of huge upright stones, which

has no rival in Britain, excepting the inimitable monument at Stonehenge. These immense blocks of stone, all of them above twelve feet, and several being even fourteen or fifteen feet in height, stood around the pirate in the grey light of the dawning, like the phantom forms of antediluvian giants, who, shrouded in the habiliments of the dead, came to revisit, by this pale light, the earth which they had plagued by their oppression and polluted by their sins, till they brought down upon it the vengeance of long-suffering Heaven.

Cleveland was less interested by this singular monument of antiquity than by the distant view of Stromness, which he could as yet scarce discover. He lost no time in striking a light, by the assistance of one of his pistols, and some wet fern supplied him with fuel sufficient to make the appointed signal. It had been earnestly watched for on board the sloop; for Goffe's incapacity became daily more apparent; and even his most steady adherents agreed it would be best to submit to Cleveland's command till they got back to the West Indies.

Bunce, who came with the boat to bring off his favourite commander, danced, cursed, shouted and spouted for joy, when he saw him once more at freedom. "They had already," he said, "made some progress in victualing the sloop, and they might have made more, but for that drunken old swab Goffe, who minded nothing but splicing the main-brace."

The boat's crew were inspired with the same enthusiasm, and rowed so hard, that, although the tide was against them, and the air of wind failed, they soon placed Cleveland once more on the quarter-deck of the vessel which it was his misfortune to command.

The first exercise of the captain's power was to make known to Magnus Troil that he was at full freedom to depart—that he was willing to make him any compensation in his power, for the interruption of his voyage to Kirkwall; and that Captain Cleveland was desirous, if agreeable to Mr Troil, to pay his respects to him on board his brig—thank him for former favours, and apologize for the circumstances attending his detention.

To Bunce, who, as the most civilized of the crew, Cleveland had intrusted this message, the old plain-dealing udaller made the following answer: "Tell your captain that I should be glad to think he had never stopped any one upon the high sea, save such as have suffered as little as I have. Say, too, that if we are to continue friends, we will be most so at a distance; for I like the sound of his cannon balls as little by sea, as he would like the whistle of a bullet by land from my rifle-gun. Say, in a word, that I am sorry I was mistaken in him, and that he would have done better to have reserved for the Spaniard the usage he is bestowing on his countrymen."

"And so that is your message, old Snapcholerick?" said Bunce—"Now, stap my vitals if I have not a mind to do your errand for you over the left shoulder, and teach you more respect for gentlemen of fortune. But I won't, and chiefly for the sake of your two pretty wenches, not to mention my old friend Claud Halcro, the very visage of whom brought back all the old days of scene-shifting and candle-snuffing."

So good morrow to you, Gaffer Seal's-cap, and all is said that need pass between us."

No sooner did the boat put off with the pirates, who left the brig, and now returned to their own vessel, than Magnus, in order to avoid reposing unnecessary confidence in the honour of these gentlemen of fortune, as they called themselves, got his brig under way; and, the wind coming favourably round, and increasing as the sun rose, he crowded all sail for Scalpa-flow, intending there to disembark and go by land to Kirkwall, where he expected to meet his daughters and his friend Claud Halcro.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Now, Emma, now the last reflection make,
What thou wouldst follow, what thou must forsake:
By our ill-omen'd stars and adverse Heaven,
No middle object to thy choice is given.

PRIOR'S *Henry and Emma.*

THE sun was high in heaven; the boats were busily fetching off from the shore the promised supply of provisions and water, which, as many fishing skiffs were employed in the service, were got on board with unexpected speed, and stowed away by the crew of the sloop with equal dispatch. All worked with good will; for all, save Cleveland himself, were weary of a coast, where every moment increased their danger, and where, which they esteemed a worse misfortune, there was no booty to be won. Bunce and Derrick took the immediate direction of this duty, while Cleveland, walking the deck alone, and in silence, only interfered from time to time, to give some order which circumstances required, and then relapsed into his own sad reflections.

There are two sorts of men whom situations of guilt, terror, and commotion, bring forward as prominent agents. The first are spirits so naturally moulded and fitted for deeds of horror, that they stalk forth from their lurking-places like actual demons, to work in their native element, as the hideous apparition of the bearded man came forth at Versailles, on the memorable 5th October, 1789, the delighted executioner of the victims delivered up to him by a blood-thirsty rabble. But Cleveland belonged to the second class of these unfortunate beings, who are involved in evil rather by the concurrence of external circumstances than by natural inclination, being, indeed, one in whom his first engaging in this lawless mode of life, as the follower of his father, nay, perhaps, even his pursuing it as his father's avenger, carried with it something of mitigation and apology;—one also who often considered his guilty situation with horror, and had made repeated, though ineffectual efforts, to escape from it.

Such thoughts of remorse were now rolling in his mind, and he may be forgiven, if recollections of Minna mingled with and aided them. He looked around, too, on his mates, and, profligate and hardened as he knew them to be, he could not think of their paying the penalty of his obstinacy. "We shall be ready to sail with the ebb tide," he said to himself—"why should I endanger these men, by detaining them till the hour of danger, predicted by

that singular woman, shall arrive? Her intelligence, howsoever acquired, has been always strangely accurate; and her warning was as solemn as if a mother were to apprise an erring son of his crimes, and of his approaching punishment. Besides, what chance is there that I can again see Minna? She is at Kirkwall, doubtless, and to hold my course thither would be to steer upon the rocks. No, I will not endanger these poor fellows—I will sail with the ebb tide. On the desolate Hebrides, or on the north-west coast of Ireland, I will leave the vessel, and return hither in some disguise—yet, why should I return, since it will perhaps be only to see Minna the bride of Mordaunt? No—let the vessel sail with this ebb tide without me. I will abide and take my fate."

His meditations were here interrupted by Jack Bunce, who, hailing him noble captain, said they were ready to sail when he pleased.

"When *you* please, Bunce; for I shall leave the command with you, and go ashore at Stromness," said Cleveland.

"You shall do no such matter, by Heaven!" answered Bunce. "The command with me truly! and how the devil am I to get the crew to obey me? Why, even Dick Fletcher rides rusty on me now and then. You know well enough that, without you, we shall be all at each other's throats in half an hour; and, if you desert us, what a rope's end does it signify whether we are destroyed by the king's cruizers, or by each other? Come, come, noble captain, there are black-eyed girls enough in the world, but where will you find so tight a sea-boat as the little Favourite here, manned as she is with a set of tearing lads,

Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
And rule it when 't is wildest!"

"You are a precious fool, Jack Bunce," said Cleveland, half angry, and, in despite of himself, half diverted by the false tones and exaggerated gesture of the stage-struck pirate.

"It may be so, noble captain," answered Bunce, "and it may be that I have my comrades in my folly. Here are you, now, going to play *All for Love* and the *World well Lost*, and yet you cannot bear a harmless bounce in blank verse—Well, I can talk prose for the matter, for I have news enough to tell—and strange news too—ay, and stirring news to boot."

"Well, pr'ythee deliver them (to speak thy own cant) like a man of this world."

"The Stromness fishers will accept nothing for their provisions and trouble," said Bunce—"there is a wonder for you!"

"And for what reason, I pray?" said Cleveland; "it is the first time I have ever heard of cash being refused at a sea-port."

"True—they commonly lay the charges on as thick as if they were caulking. But here is the matter. The owner of the brig yonder, the father of your fair Imoinda, stands paymaster, by way of thanks for the civility with which we treated his daughters, and that we may not meet our due, as he calls it, on these shores."

"It is like the frank-hearted old udaller!" said

Cleveland; "but is he then at Stromness? I thought he was to have crossed the island for Kirkwall."

"He did so purpose," said Bunce; "but more folks than King Duncan change the course of their voyage. He was no sooner ashore than he was met with by a meddling old witch of these parts, who has her finger in every man's pie, and by her counsel he changed his purpose of going to Kirkwall, and lies at anchor for the present in yonder white house, that you may see with your glass up the lake yonder. I am told the old woman clubbed also to pay for the sloop's stores. Why she should shell out the boards I cannot conceive an idea, except that she is said to be a witch, and may befriend us as so many devils."

"But who told you all this?" said Cleveland, without using his spy-glass, or seeming so much interested in the news as his comrade had expected.

"Why," replied Bunce, "I made a trip ashore this morning to the village, and had a can with an old acquaintance, who had been sent by Master Troil to look after matters, and I fished it all out of him, and more too than I am desirous of telling you, noble captain."

"And who is your intelligencer?" said Cleveland; "has he got no name?"

"Why, he is an old, fiddling, foppish acquaintance of mine, called Halcro, if you must know," said Bunce.

"Halcro!" echoed Cleveland, his eyes sparkling with surprise—"Claud Halcro?—why, he went ashore at Inganess with Minna and her sister—Where are they?"

"Why, that is just what I did not want to tell you," replied the confidant—"yet hang me if I can help it, for I cannot baulk a fine situation—That start had a fine effect—O ay, and the spy-glass is turned on the House of Stennis now!—Well, yonder they are, it must be confessed—indifferently well guarded too. Some of the old witch's people are come over from that mountain of an island—Hoy, as they call it; and the old gentleman has got some fellows under arms himself. But what of all that, noble captain!—give you but the word, and we snap up the wenches to-night—clap them under hatches—man the capstern by day-break—up top-sails—and sail with the morning tide."

"You sicken me with your villany," said Cleveland, turning away from him.

"Umph!—villany, and sicken you!" said Bunce—"Now, pray, what have I said but what has been done a thousand times by gentlemen of fortune like ourselves?"

"Mention it not again," said Cleveland; then took a turn along the deck, in deep meditation, and, coming back to Bunce, took him by the hand, and said, "Jack, I will see her once more."

"With all my heart," said Bunce, sullenly.

"Once more will I see her, and it may be to abjure at her feet this cursed trade, and expiate my offences"—

"At the gallows!" said Bunce, completing the sentence—"With all my heart!—confess and be hanged is a most reverend proverb."

"Nay—but, dear Jack!" said Cleveland.

"Dear Jack!" answered Bunce, in the same sullen tone—"a dear sight you have been to dear Jack.

But hold your own course—I have done with caring for you for ever—I should but sicken you with my villanous counsels."

"Now must I soothe this silly fellow as if he were a spoiled child," said Cleveland, speaking at Bunce, but not to him; "and yet he has sense enough, and bravery enough too; and one would think, kindness enough to know that men don't pick their words during a gale of wind."

"Why, that's true, Clement," said Bunce, "and there is my hand upon it—And, now I think upon't, you shall have your last interview, for it's out of my line to prevent a parting scene; and what signifies a tide—we can sail by to-morrow's ebb as well as by this."

Cleveland sighed, for Norna's prediction rushed on his mind; but the opportunity of a last meeting with Minna was too tempting to be resigned either for presentiment or prediction.

"I will go presently ashore to the place where they all are," said Bunce; "and the payment of these stores shall serve me for a pretext; and I will carry any letters or message from you to Minna with the dexterity of a valet de chambre."

"But they have armed men—you may be in danger," said Cleveland.

"Not a whit—not a whit," replied Bunce. "I protected the wenches when they were in my power; I warrant their father will neither wrong me, nor see me wronged."

"You say true," said Cleveland, "it is not in his nature. I will instantly write a note to Minna." And he ran down to the cabin for that purpose, where he wasted much paper, ere, with a trembling hand, and throbbing heart, he achieved such a letter as he hoped might prevail on Minna to permit him a farewell meeting on the succeeding morning.

His adherent, Bunce, in the meanwhile, sought out Fletcher, of whose support to second any motion whatsoever, he accounted himself perfectly sure; and, followed by this trusty satellite, he intruded himself on the awful presence of Hawkins the boatswain, and Derrick the quarter-master, who were regaling themselves with a can of rumbo, after the fatiguing duty of the day.

"Here comes he can tell us," said Derrick—"So, Master Lieutenant, for so we must call you now, I think, let us have a peep into your counsels—When will the anchor be a-trip?"

"When it pleases Heaven, Master Quarter-master," answered Bunce, "for I know no more than the stern-post."

"Why, d—n my buttons," said Derrick, "do we not weigh this tide?"

"Or to-morrow's tide, at farthest?" said the boatswain—"Why, what have we been slaving the whole company for, to get all these stores aboard?"

"Gentlemen," said Bunce, "you are to know that Cupid has laid our captain on board, carried the vessel, and nailed down his wits under hatches."

"What sort of play-stuff is all this?" said the boatswain, gruffly. "If you have anything to tell us, say it in a word, like a man."

"Howsomdever," said Fletcher, "I always think Jack Bunce speaks like a man, and acts like a man too—and so, d'ye see"—

"Hold your peace, dear Dick, best of bully-backs, be silent," said Bunce—"Gentlemen, in one word, the captain is in love."

"Why, now, only think of that!" said the boatswain; "not but I have been in love as often as any man, when the ship was laid up."

"Well, but," continued Bunce, "Captain Cleveland is in love—Yes—Prince Volscius is in love; and, though that's the cue for laughing on the stage, it is no laughing matter here. He expects to meet the girl to-morrow, for the last time; and that, we all know, leads to another meeting, and another, and so on till the Halcyon is down on us, and then we may look for more kicks than halfpence."

"By —," said the boatswain, with a sounding oath, "we'll have a mutiny, and not allow him to go ashore, —eh, Derrick?"

"And the best way too," said Derrick.

"What d'ye think of it, Jack Bunce?" said Fletcher, in whose ears this counsel sounded very sagely, but who still bent a wistful look upon his companion.

"Why, look ye, gentlemen," said Bunce, "I will mutiny none, and stap my vitals if any of you shall."

"Why then I won't, for one," said Fletcher; "but what are we to do, since, howsomdever"——

"Stopper your jaw, Dick, will you?" said Bunce. "Now, boatswain, I am partly of your mind, that the captain must be brought to reason by a little wholesome force. But you all know he has the spirit of a lion, and will do nothing unless he is allowed to hold on his own course. Well, I'll go ashore and make this appointment. The girl comes to the rendezvous in the morning, and the captain goes ashore—we take a good boat's crew with us, to row against tide and current, and we will be ready at the signal, to jump ashore and bring off the captain and the girl, whether they will or no. The pet-child will not quarrel with us, since we bring off his whirligig alongst with him; and if he is still fractious, why, we will weigh anchor without his orders, and let him come to his senses at leisure, and know his friends another time."

"Why this has a face with it, Master Derrick," said Hawkins.

"Jack Bunce is always right," said Fletcher; "howsomdever, the captain will shoot some of us, that is certain."

"Hold your jaw, Dick," said Bunce; "pray who the devil cares, do you think, whether you are shot or hanged?"

"Why, it don't much argufy for the matter of that," replied Dick; "howsomdever"——

"Be quiet, I tell you," said his inexorable patron, "and hear me out.—We will take him at unawares, so that he shall neither have time to use cutlass nor pops; and I myself, for the dear love I bear him, will be the first to lay him on his back. There is a nice tight-going bit of a pinnace, that is a consort of this chase of the captain's,—if I have an opportunity, I'll snap her up on my own account."

"Yes, yes," said Derrick, "let you alone for keeping on the look-out for your own comforts."

"Faith, nay," said Bunce, "I only snatch at them when they come fairly in my way, or are pur-

chased by dint of my own wit; and none of you could have fallen on such a plan as this. We shall have the captain with us, head, hand, and heart and all, besides making a scene fit to finish a comedy. So I will go ashore to make the appointment, and do you possess some of the gentlemen who are still sober, and fit to be trusted, with the knowledge of our intentions."

Bunce, with his friend Fletcher, departed accordingly, and the two veteran pirates remained looking at each other in silence, until the boatswain spoke at last. "B— me, Derrick, if I like these two daffadandilly young fellows; they are not the true breed. Why, they are no more like the rovers I have known, than this sloop is to a first-rate. Why, there was old Sharpe, that read prayers to his ship's company every Sunday, what would he have said to have heard it proposed to bring two wenches on board?"

"And what would tough old Black Beard have said," answered his companion, "if they had expected to keep them to themselves? They deserve to be made to walk the plank for their impudence; or to be tied back to back and set a-diving, and I care not how soon."

"Ay, but who is to command the ship then?" said Hawkins.

"Why, what ails you at old Goffe?" answered Derrick.

"Why, he has sucked the monkey so long and so often," said the boatswain, "that the best of him is buffed. He is little better than an old woman when he is sober, and he is roaring mad when he is drunk—we have had enough of Goffe."

"Why, then, what d'ye say to yourself or to me, boatswain?" demanded the quarter-master. "I am content to toss up for it."

"Rot it, no," answered the boatswain, after a moment's consideration; "if we were within reach of the trade-winds, we might either of us make a shift; but it will take all Cleveland's navigation to get us there; and so, I think, there is nothing like Bunce's project for the present. Hark, he calls for the boat—I must go on deck and have her lowered for his honour, d—n his eyes!"

The boat was lowered accordingly, made its voyage up the lake with safety, and landed Bunce within a few hundred yards of the old mansion-house of Stennis. Upon arriving in front of the house, he found that hasty measures had been taken to put it in a state of defence, the lower windows being barricaded, with places left for use of musketry, and a ship-gun being placed so as to command the entrance, which was besides guarded by two sentinels. Bunce demanded admission, at the gate, which was briefly and unceremoniously refused to him, with an exhortation to him, at the same time, to be gone about his business before worse came of it. As he continued, however, importunately to insist on seeing some one of the family, and stated his business to be of the most urgent nature, Claud Halcro at length appeared, and with more peevishness than belonged to his usual manner, that admirer of glorious John expostulated with his old acquaintance upon his pertinacious folly.

"You are," he said, "like foolish moths flutter-

ing about a candle, which is sure at last to consume you."

"And you," said Bunce, "are a set of stingless drones, whom we can smoke out of your defences at our pleasure, with half-a-dozen of hand-grenades."

"Smoke a fool's head!" said Halcro; "take my advice, and mind your own matters, or there will be those upon you will smoke you to purpose. Either begone, or tell me in two words what you want; for you are like to receive no welcome here, save from a blunderbuss. We are men enough of ourselves; and here is young Mordaunt Mertoun come from Hoy, whom your captain so nearly murdered."

"Tush, man," said Bunce, "he did but let out a little malapert blood."

"We want no such phlebotomy here," said Claud Halcro; "and, besides, your patient turns out to be nearer allied to us than either you or we thought of; so you may think how little welcome the captain or any of his crew are like to be here."

"Well; but what if I bring money for the stores sent on board?"

"Keep it till it is asked of you," said Halcro. "There are two bad paymasters—he that pays too soon, and he that does not pay at all."

"Well, then, let me at least give our thanks to the donor," said Bunce.

"Keep them too, till they are asked for," answered the poet.

"So this is all the welcome I have of you for old acquaintance' sake?" said Bunce.

"Why, what can I do for you, Master Altamont?" said Halcro, somewhat moved.—"If young Mordaunt had had his own will, he would have welcomed you with 'the red Burgundy, number a thousand.' For God's sake begone, else the stage direction will be, enter guard, and seize Altamont."

"I will not give you the trouble," said Bunce, "but will make my exit instantly.—Stay a moment—I had almost forgot that I have a slip of paper for the tallest of your girls there—Minna, ay, Minna is her name. It is a farewell from Captain Cleveland—you cannot refuse to give it her."

"Ah, poor fellow!" said Halcro—"I comprehend—I comprehend—Farewell, fair Armida—"

'Mid pikes and 'mid bullets, 'mid tempests and fire,
The danger is less than in hopeless desire.

Tell me but this—is there poetry in it?"

"Choke full to the seal, with song, sonnet, and elegy," answered Bunce; "but let her have it cautiously and secretly."

"Tush, man!—teach me to deliver a billet-doux!—me, who have been in the Wits' Coffee-house, and have seen all the toasts of the Kit-Cat Club!—Minna shall have it then, for old acquaintance' sake, Mr Altamont, and for your captain's sake too, who has less of the core of the devil about him than his trade requires. There can be no harm in a farewell letter."

"Farewell then, old boy, for ever and a day!" said Bunce; and seizing the poet's hand, gave it so hearty a gripe, that he left him roaring, and shaking his fist, like a dog when a hot cinder has fallen on his foot.

Leaving the rover to return on board the vessel,

we remain with the family of Magnus Troil, assembled at their kinsman's mansion of Stennis, where they maintained a constant and careful watch against surprise.

Mordaunt Mertoun had been received with much kindness by Magnus Troil, when he came to his assistance, with a small party of Norna's dependents, placed by her under his command. The udaller was easily satisfied that the reports instilled into his ears by the jagger, in zealous desire to augment his favour towards his more profitable customer, Cleveland, by diminishing that of Mertoun, were without foundation. They had, indeed, been confirmed by the good Lady Glowrowrum, and by common fame, both of whom were pleased to represent Mordaunt Mertoun as an arrogant pretender to the favour of the sisters of Burgh-Westra, who only hesitated, sultan-like, on whom he should bestow the handkerchief. But common fame, Magnus considered, was a common liar, and he was sometimes disposed (where scandal was concerned) to regard the good Lady Glowrowrum as rather an uncommon specimen of the same genus. He therefore received Mordaunt once more into full favour, listened with much surprise to the claim which Norna laid to the young man's duty, and with no less interest to her intention of surrendering to him the considerable property which she had inherited from her father. Nay, it is even probable that, though he gave no immediate answer to her hints concerning a union betwixt his eldest daughter and her heir, he might think such an alliance recommended, as well by the young man's personal merits, as by the chance it gave of retaining the very large estate which had been divided betwixt his own father and that of Norna. At all events, the udaller received his young friend with much kindness, and he and the proprietor of the mansion joined in intrusting to him, as the youngest and most active of the party, the charge of commanding the night-watch, and relieving the sentinels around the House of Stennis.

CHAPTER XL.

For an outlaws, this is the lawe—
That men him take and bind,
Without pitie hanged to be,
And waver with the wind.

PRIOR'S *Nut-Brown Matd.*

MORDAUNT had caused the sentinels who had been on duty since midnight to be relieved ere the peep of day, and having given directions that the guard should be again changed at sunrise, he had retired to a small parlour, and, placing his arms beside him, was slumbering in an easy-chair, when he felt himself pulled by the watch-cloak in which he was enveloped.

"Is it sunrise," said he, "already?" as, starting up, he discovered the first beams lying level upon the horizon.

"Mordaunt!" said a voice, every note of which thrilled to his heart.

He turned his eyes on the speaker, and Brenda Troil, to his joyful astonishment, stood before him. As he was about to address her eagerly, he was

checked by observing the signs of sorrow and discomposure in her pale cheeks, trembling lips, and brimful eyes.

"Mordaunt," she said, "you must do Minna and me a favour—you must allow us to leave the house quietly, and without alarming any one, in order to go as far as the Standing Stones of Stennis."

"What freak can this be, dearest Brenda?" said Mordaunt, much amazed at the request—"some Orcadian observances of superstition, perhaps; but the time is too dangerous, and my charge from your father too strict, that I should permit you to pass without his consent. Consider, dearest Brenda, I am a soldier on duty, and must obey orders."

"Mordaunt," said Brenda, "this is no jesting matter—Minna's reason, nay, Minna's life, depends on your giving us this permission."

"And for what purpose?" said Mordaunt; "let me at least know that."

"For a wild and a desperate purpose," replied Brenda—"It is that she may meet Cleveland."

"Cleveland!" said Mordaunt—"Should the villain come ashore, he shall be welcomed with a shower of rifle-balls. Let me within a hundred yards of him," he added, grasping his piece, "and all the mischief he has done me shall be balanced with an ounce bullet!"

"His death will drive Minna frantic," said Brenda; "and he who injures Minna, Brenda will never again look upon."

"This is madness—raving madness!" said Mordaunt—"Consider your honour—consider your duty."

"I can consider nothing but Minna's danger," said Brenda, breaking into a flood of tears; "her former illness was nothing to the state she has been in all night. She holds in her hand his letter, written in characters of fire, rather than of ink, imploring her to see him, for a last farewell, as she would save a mortal body, and an immortal soul; pledging himself for her safety; and declaring no power shall force him from the coast till he has seen her.—You must let us pass."

"It is impossible!" replied Mordaunt, in great perplexity—"This ruffian has imprecations enough, doubtless, at his fingers' ends—but what better pledge has he to offer?—I cannot permit Minna to go."

"I suppose," said Brenda, somewhat reproachfully, while she dried her tears, yet still continued sobbing, "that there is something in what Norna spoke of betwixt Minna and you; and that you are too jealous of this poor wretch, to allow him even to speak with her an instant before his departure."

"You are unjust," said Mordaunt, hurt, and yet somewhat flattered by her suspicions,—"you are as unjust as you are imprudent. You know—you cannot but know—that Minna is chiefly dear to me as your sister. Tell me, Brenda—and tell me truly—if I aid you in this folly, have you no suspicion of the pirate's faith?"

"No, none," said Brenda; "if I had any, do you think I would urge you thus? He is wild and unhappy, but I think we may in this trust him."

"Is the appointed place the Standing Stones, and the time day-break?" again demanded Mordaunt.

"It is, and the time is come," said Brenda,—"for Heaven's sake let us depart!"

"I will myself," said Mordaunt, "relieve the sentinel at the front door for a few minutes, and suffer you to pass.—You will not protract this interview, so full of danger?"

"We will not," said Brenda, "and you, on your part, will not avail yourself of this unhappy man's venturing hither, to harm or to seize him?"

"Rely on my honour," said Mordaunt—"He shall have no harm, unless he offers any."

"Then I go to call my sister," said Brenda, and tripped out of the apartment.

Mordaunt considered the matter for an instant, and then going to the sentinel at the front door, he told him to run instantly to the main-guard, and order the whole to turn out with their arms—to see the order obeyed, and to return when they were in readiness. Meantime, he himself, he said, would remain upon the post.

During the interval of the sentinel's absence, the front door was slowly opened, and Minna and Brenda appeared, muffled in their mantles. The former leaned on her sister, and kept her face bent on the ground as one who felt ashamed of the step she was about to take. Brenda also passed her lover in silence, but threw back upon him a look of gratitude and affection, which doubled, if possible, his anxiety for their safety.

The sisters, in the meanwhile, passed out of sight of the house; when Minna, whose step, till that time, had been faint and feeble, began to erect her person, and to walk with a pace so firm and so swift, that Brenda, who had some difficulty to keep up with her, could not forbear remonstrating on the imprudence of hurrying her spirits, and exhausting her force, by such unnecessary haste.

"Fear not, my dearest sister," said Minna; "the spirit which I now feel will, and must, sustain me through the dreadful interview. I could not but move with a drooping head, and dejected pace, while I was in view of one who must necessarily deem me deserving of his pity or his scorn. But you know, my dearest Brenda, and Mordaunt shall also know, that the love I bore to that unhappy man, was as pure as the rays of that sun, that is now reflected on the waves. And I dare attest that glorious sun, and yonder blue heaven, to bear me witness, that but to urge him to change his unhappy course of life, I had not, for all the temptations this round world holds, ever consented to see him more."

As she spoke thus, in a tone which afforded much confidence to Brenda, the sisters attained the summit of a rising ground, whence they commanded a full view of the Orcadian Stonehenge, consisting of a huge circle and semicircle of the Standing Stones, as they are called, which already glimmered a greyish white in the rising sun, and projected far to the westward their long gigantic shadows. At another time, the scene would have operated powerfully on the imaginative mind of Minna, and interested the curiosity at least of her less sensitive sister. But, at this moment, neither was at leisure to receive the impressions which this stupendous monument of antiquity is so well calculated to impress on the feelings of those who behold it; for they saw, in the

lower lake, beneath what is termed the Bridge of Broisgar, a boat well manned and armed, which had disembarked one of its crew, who advanced alone, and wrapped in a naval cloak, towards that monumental circle which they themselves were about to reach from another quarter.

"They are many, and they are armed," said the startled Brenda, in a whisper to her sister.

"It is for precaution's sake," answered Minna, "which, alas! their condition renders but too necessary. Fear no treachery from him—that, at least, is not his vice."

As she spoke, or shortly afterwards, she attained the centre of the circle, on which, in the midst of the tall erect pillars of rude stone that are raised around, lies one flat and prostrate, supported by short stone-pillars, of which some relics are still visible, that had once served, perhaps, the purpose of an altar.

"Here," she said, "in heathen times (if we may believe legends, which have cost me but too dear), our ancestors offered sacrifices to heathen deities—and here will I, from my soul, renounce, abjure, and offer up to a better and a more merciful God than was known to them, the vain ideas with which my youthful imagination has been seduced."

She stood by the prostrate table of stone, and saw Cleveland advance towards her, with a timid pace, and a downcast look, as different from his usual character and bearing, as Minna's high air and lofty demeanour, and calm contemplative posture, were distant from those of the love-lorn and broken-hearted maiden, whose weight had almost borne down the support of her sister as she left the House of Stennis. If the belief of those is true, who assign these singular monuments exclusively to the druids, Minna might have seemed the haxa, or high priestess of the order, from whom some champion of the tribe expected inauguration. Or, if we hold the circles of Gothic and Scandinavian origin, she might have seemed a descended vision of Freya, the spouse of the Thundering Deity, before whom some bold seaking or champion bent with an awe, which no mere mortal terror could have inflicted upon him. Brenda, overwhelmed with inexpressible fear and doubt, remained a pace or two behind, anxiously observing the motions of Cleveland, and attending to nothing around, save to him and to her sister.

Cleveland approached within two yards of Minna, and bent his head to the ground. There was a dead pause, until Minna said, in a firm but melancholy tone, "Unhappy man, why didst thou seek this aggravation of our woe? Depart in peace, and may Heaven direct thee to a better course than that which thy life has yet held."

"Heaven will not aid me," said Cleveland, "excepting by your voice. I came hither rude and wild, scarce knowing that my trade, my desperate trade, was more criminal in the sight of man or of Heaven, than that of those privateers whom your law acknowledges. I was bred in it, and, but for the wishes you have encouraged me to form, I should have perhaps died in it, desperate and impenitent. O, do not throw me from you! let me do something to redeem what I have done amiss, and do not leave your own work half finished!"

VOL. III.

"Cleveland," said Minna, "I will not reproach you with abusing my inexperience, or with availing yourself of those delusions which the credulity of early youth had flung around me, and which led me to confound your fatal course of life with the deeds of our ancient heroes. Alas, when I saw your followers, that illusion was no more!—but I do not upbraid you with its having existed. Go, Cleveland; detach yourself from those miserable wretches with whom you are associated, and believe me, that if Heaven yet grants you the means of distinguishing your name by one good or glorious action, there are eyes left in these lonely islands, that will weep as much for joy as—as—they must now do for sorrow."

"And is this all?" said Cleveland; "and may I not hope, that if I extricate myself from my present associates—if I can gain my pardon by being as bold in the right, as I have been too often in the wrong cause—if after a term, I care not how long—but still a term which may have an end, I can boast of having redeemed my fame—may I not—may I not hope that Minna may forgive what my God and my country shall have pardoned?"

"Never, Cleveland, never!" said Minna, with the utmost firmness; "on this spot we part, and part for ever, and part without longer indulgence. Think of me as of one dead, if you continue as you now are; but if, which may Heaven grant, you change your fatal course, think of me then as one, whose morning and evening prayers will be for your happiness, though she has lost her own.—Farewell, Cleveland!"

He kneeled, overpowered by his own bitter feelings, to take the hand which she held out to him, and in that instant, his confidant Bunce, starting from behind one of the large upright pillars, his eyes wet with tears, exclaimed—

"Never saw such a parting scene on any stage! But I'll be d—d if you make your exit as you expect."

And so saying, ere Cleveland could employ either remonstrance or resistance, and indeed before he could get upon his feet, he easily secured him by pulling him down on his back, so that two or three of the boat's crew seized him by the arms and legs, and began to hurry him towards the lake. Minna and Brenda shrieked, and attempted to fly; but Derrick snatched up the former with as much ease as a falcon pounces on a pigeon, while Bunce, with an oath or two which were intended to be of a consolatory nature, seized on Brenda; and the whole party, with two or three of the other pirates, who, stealing from the water-side, had accompanied them on the ambuscade, began hastily to run towards the boat, which was left in charge of two of their number. Their course, however, was unexpectedly, and, for their criminal purpose, fatally interrupted.

When Mordaunt Mertoun had turned out his guard in arms, it was with the natural purpose of watching over the safety of the two sisters. They had accordingly closely observed the motions of the pirates, and when they saw so many of them leave the boat and steal towards the place of rendezvous assigned to Cleveland, they naturally suspected treachery, and by cover of an old hollow way or trench, which perhaps had anciently been connected

with the monumental circle, they had thrown themselves unperceived between the pirates and their boat. At the cries of the sisters, they started up and placed themselves in the way of the ruffians, presenting their pieces, which, notwithstanding, they dared not fire, for fear of hurting the young ladies, secured as they were in the rude grasp of the marauders. Mordaunt, however, advanced with the speed of a wild-deer on Bunce, who, loath to quit his prey, yet unable to defend himself otherwise, turned to this side and that alternately, exposing Brenda to the blows which Mordaunt offered at him. This defence, however, proved in vain against a youth, possessed of the lightest foot and most active hand ever known in Zetland, and after a feint or two, Mordaunt brought the pirate to the ground with a stroke from the butt of the carbine, which he dared not use otherwise. At the same time fire-arms were discharged on either side by those who were liable to no such cause of forbearance, and the pirates who had hold of Cleveland, dropped him, naturally enough, to provide for their own defence or retreat. But they only added to the numbers of their enemies; for Cleveland, perceiving Minna in the arms of Derrick, snatched her from the ruffian with one hand, and with the other shot him dead on the spot. Two or three more of the pirates fell or were taken, the rest fled to their boat, pushed off, and fired repeatedly on the Orcadian party, which they returned, with little injury on either side. Meanwhile, Mordaunt, having first seen that the sisters were at liberty, and in full flight towards the house, advanced on Cleveland with his cutlass drawn. The pirate presented a pistol, and calling out at the same time,—“Mordaunt, I never missed my aim,” he fired it into the air, and threw it into the lake; then drew his cutlass, brandished it round his head, and flung that also as far as his arm could send it, in the same direction. Yet such was the universal belief of his personal strength and resources, that Mordaunt still used precaution, as, advancing on Cleveland, he asked if he surrendered.

“I surrender to no man,” said the pirate-captain; “but you may see I have thrown away my weapons.”

He was immediately seized by some of the Orcadians without his offering any resistance; but the instant interference of Mordaunt prevented his being roughly treated or bound. The victors conducted him to a well-secured upper apartment in the House of Stennis, and placed a sentinel at the door. Bunce and Fletcher, both of whom had been stretched on the field during the skirmish, were lodged in the same chamber; and two prisoners, who appeared of lower rank, were confined in a vault belonging to the mansion.

Without pretending to describe the joy of Magnus Troil, who, when awakened by the noise and firing, found his daughters safe, and his enemy a prisoner, we shall only say, it was so great that he forgot, for the time, at least, to inquire what circumstances were those which had placed them in danger; and that he hugged Mordaunt to his breast a thousand times as their preserver; and swore as often by the bones of his sainted namesake, that if he had a

thousand daughters, so tight a lad and so true a friend should have the choice of them, let Lady Glowrowrum say what she would.

A very different scene was passing in the prison-chamber of the unfortunate Cleveland and his associates. The captain sat by the window, his eyes bent on the prospect of the sea which it presented, and was seemingly so intent on it as to be insensible of the presence of the others. Jack Bunce stood meditating some ends of verse, in order to make his advances towards a reconciliation with Cleveland; for he began to be sensible, from the consequences, that the part he had played towards his captain, however well intended, was neither lucky in its issue nor likely to be well taken. His admirer and adherent, Fletcher, lay half-asleep, as it seemed, on a truckle-bed in the room, without the least attempt to interfere in the conversation which ensued.

“Nay, but speak to me, Clement,” said the penitent lieutenant, “if it be but to swear at me for my stupidity.

What! not an oath?—Nay, then the world goes hard,
If Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.”

“I pr’ythee peace, and begone!” said Cleveland; “I have one bosom friend left yet, and you will make me bestow its contents on you or on myself.”

“I have it!” said Bunce, “I have it!” and on he went in the vein of Jaffier—

“Then, by the hell I merit, I’ll not leave thee,
Till to thyself at least thou’rt reconciled,
However thy resentment deal with me!”

“I pray you once more to be silent,” said Cleveland—“Is it not enough that you have undone me with your treachery, but you must stun me with your silly buffoonery?—I would not have believed *you* would have lifted a finger against me, Jack, of any man or devil in yonder unhappy ship.”

“Who, I?” exclaimed Bunce, “I lift a finger against you!—And if I did, it was in pure love, and to make you the happiest fellow that ever trod a deck, with your mistress beside you, and fifty fine fellows at your command. Here is Dick Fletcher can bear witness I did all for the best, if he would but speak, instead of lolloping there like a Dutch dogger laid up to be careened.—Get up, Dick, and speak for me, won’t you?”

“Why, yes, Jack Bunce,” answered Fletcher, raising himself with difficulty, and speaking feebly, “I will if I can—and I always knew you spoke and did for the best—but howsomdever, d’ye see, it has turned out for the worst for me this time, for I am bleeding to death, I think.”

“You cannot be such an ass!” said Jack Bunce, springing to his assistance, as did Cleveland. But human aid came too late—he sunk back on the bed, and, turning on his face, expired without a groan.

“I always thought him a d—d fool,” said Bunce, as he wiped a tear from his eye, “but never such a consummate idiot as to hop the perch so sillily. I have lost the best follower”—and he again wiped his eye.

Cleveland looked on the dead body, the rugged

features of which had remained unaltered by the death-pang—"A bull-dog," he said, "of the true British breed, and, with a better counsellor, would have been a better man."

"You may say that of some other folks too, captain, if you are minded to do them justice," said Bunce.

"I may indeed, and especially of yourself," said Cleveland, in reply.

"Why then, say, *Jack, I forgive you*," said Bunce; "it's but a short word, and soon spoken."

"I forgive you from all my soul, Jack," said Cleveland, who had resumed his situation at the window; "and the rather that your folly is of little consequence—the morning is come that must bring ruin on us all."

"What! you are thinking of the old woman's prophecy you spoke of?" said Bunce.

"It will soon be accomplished," answered Cleveland. "Come hither; what do you take yon large square-rigged vessel for, that you see doubling the head-land on the east, and opening the Bay of Stromness?"

"Why, I can't make her well out," said Bunce, "but yonder is old Goffe takes her for a West Indian loaded with rum and sugar, I suppose, for d—n me if he does not slip cable, and stand out to her!"

"Instead of running into the shoal water, which was his only safety," said Cleveland—"The fool! the dotard! the driveling, drunken idiot!—he will get his liquor hot enough; for yon is the *Halcyon*—See, she hoists her colours and fires a broadside! and there will soon be an end of the *Fortune's Favourite*! I only hope they will fight her to the last plank. The boatswain used to be staunch enough, and so is Goffe, though an incarnate demon.—Now she shoots away, with all the sail she can spread, and that shows some sense."

"Up goes the Jolly Hodge, the old black flag with the death's head and hour-glass, and that shows some spunk."

"The hour-glass is turned for us, Jack, for this bout—our sand is running fast.—Fire away yet, my roving lads! The deep sea or the blue sky, rather than a rope and a yard-arm."

There was a moment of anxious and dead silence; the sloop, though hard pressed, maintained still a running fight, and the frigate continuing in full chase, but scarce returning a shot. At length the vessels neared each other, so as to show that the man-of-war intended to board the sloop, instead of sinking her, probably to secure the plunder which might be in the pirate vessel.

"Now, Goffe—now, boatswain!" exclaimed Cleveland, in an ecstasy of impatience, and as if they could have heard his commands, "stand by sheets and tacks—rake her with a broadside, when you are under her bows, then about ship, and go off on the other tack like a wild-goose. The sails shiver—the helm's a-lee—Ah!—deep-sea sink the lubbers!—they miss stays, and the frigate runs them a-board!"

Accordingly the various manœuvres of the chase had brought them so near, that Cleveland, with his spy-glass, could see the man-of-war's men boarding

by the yards and bowsprit, in irresistible numbers, their naked cutlasses flashing in the sun, when, at that critical moment, both ships were enveloped in a cloud of thick black smoke, which suddenly arose on board the captured pirate.

"*Exeunt omnes!*" said Bunce, with clasped hands.

"There went the *Fortune's Favourite*, ship and crew," said Cleveland, at the same instant.

But the smoke immediately clearing away, showed that the damage had only been partial, and that, from want of a sufficient quantity of powder, the pirates had failed in their desperate attempt to blow up their vessel with the *Halcyon*.

Shortly after the action was over, Captain Weatherport of the *Halcyon* sent an officer and a party of marines to the House of Stennis, to demand of them the pirate seamen who were their prisoners, and, in particular, Cleveland and Bunce, who acted as captain and lieutenant of the gang.

This was a demand which was not to be resisted, though Magnus Troil could have wished sincerely that the roof under which he lived had been allowed as an asylum at least to Cleveland. But the officer's orders were peremptory; and he added, it was Captain Weatherport's intention to land the other prisoners, and send the whole, with a sufficient escort, across the island to Kirkwall, in order to undergo an examination there before the civil authorities, previous to their being sent off to London for trial at the High Court of Admiralty. Magnus could therefore only intercede for good usage to Cleveland, and that he might not be stripped or plundered, which the officer, struck by his good mien, and compassionating his situation, readily promised. The honest udaller would have said something in the way of comfort to Cleveland himself, but he could not find words to express it, and only shook his head.

"Old friend," said Cleveland, "you may have much to complain of—yet you pity instead of exulting over me—for the sake of you and yours, I will never harm human being more. Take this from me—my last hope, but my last temptation also"—he drew from his bosom a pocket-pistol, and gave it to Magnus Troil. "Remember me to—But no—let every one forget me.—I am your prisoner, sir," said he to the officer.

"And I also," said poor Bunce; and, putting on a theatrical countenance, he ranted, with no very perceptible faltering in his tone, the words of Pierre:—

"Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour;
Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my fate, and die with decency."

CHAPTER XLI.

Joy, joy, in London now!

SOUTHEY.

THE news of the capture of the rover soon reached to Kirkwall, about an hour before noon, and filled all men with wonder and with joy. Little business was that day done at the fair, whilst people of all ages and occupations streamed from the place to see the prisoners as they were marched

towards Kirkwall, and to triumph in the different appearance which they now bore, from that which they had exhibited when ranting, swaggering, and bullying in the streets of that town. The bayonets of the marines were soon seen to glisten in the sun, and then came on the melancholy troop of captives, hand-cuffed two and two together. Their finery had been partly torn from them by their captors, partly hung in rags about them; many were wounded and covered with blood, many blackened and scorched with the explosion, by which a few of the most desperate had in vain striven to blow up the vessel. Most of them seemed sullen and impenitent, some were more becomingly affected with their condition, and a few braved it out, and sung the same ribald songs to which they had made the streets of Kirkwall ring when they were in their frolics.

The boatswain and Goffe, coupled together, exhausted themselves in threats and imprecations against each other; the former charging Goffe with want of seamanship, and the latter alleging that the boatswain had prevented him from firing the powder that was stowed forward, and so sending them all to the other world together. Last came Cleveland and Bunce, who were permitted to walk unshackled; the decent melancholy, yet resolved manner of the former, contrasting strongly with the stage strut and swagger which poor Jack thought it fitting to assume, in order to conceal some less dignified emotions. The former was looked upon with compassion, the latter with a mixture of scorn and pity; while most of the others inspired horror, and even fear, by their looks and their language.

There was one individual in Kirkwall, who was so far from hastening to see the sight which attracted all eyes, that he was not even aware of the event which agitated the town. This was the elder Mertoun, whose residence Kirkwall had been for two or three days, part of which had been spent in attending to some judicial proceedings, undertaken at the instance of the procurator fiscal, against that grave professor, Bryce Snailsfoot. In consequence of an inquisition into the proceedings of this worthy trader, Cleveland's chest, with his papers and other matters therein contained, had been restored to Mertoun, as the lawful custodier thereof, until the right owner should be in a situation to establish his right to them. Mertoun was at first desirous to throw back upon Justice the charge which she was disposed to intrust him with; but, on perusing one or two of the papers, he hastily changed his mind—in broken words, requested the magistrate to let the chest be sent to his lodgings, and, hastening homeward, bolted himself into the room, to consider and digest the singular information which chance had thus conveyed to him, and which increased, in a tenfold degree, his impatience for an interview with the mysterious Norna of the Fitful-head.

It may be remembered that she had required of him, when they met in the church-yard of Saint Ninian, to attend in the outer aisle of the Cathedral of Saint Magnus, at the hour of noon, on the fifth day of the Fair of Saint Olla, there to meet a person by whom the fate of Mordaunt would be explained to him.—“It must be herself,” he said; “and that I should see her at this moment is indispensable.

How to find her sooner, I know not; and better lose a few hours even in this exigence, than offend her by a premature attempt to force myself on her presence.”

Long, therefore, before noon—long before the town of Kirkwall was agitated by the news of the events on the other side of the island, the elder Mertoun was pacing the deserted aisle of the cathedral, awaiting, with agonizing eagerness, the expected communication from Norna. The bell tolled twelve—no door opened—no one was seen to enter the cathedral; but the last sounds had not ceased to reverberate through the vaulted roof, when, gliding from one of the interior side-aisles, Norna stood before him. Mertoun, indifferent to the apparent mystery of her sudden approach (with the secret of which the reader is acquainted), went up to her at once, with the earnest ejaculation—“Ulla—Ulla Troil—aid me to save our unhappy boy!”

“To Ulla Troil,” said Norna, “I answer not—I gave that name to the winds, on the night that cost me a father!”

“Speak not of that night of horror,” said Mertoun; “we have need of our reason—let us not think on recollections which may destroy it; but aid me, if thou canst, to save our unfortunate child!”

“Vaughan,” answered Norna, “he is already saved—long since saved; think you a mother's hand—and that of such a mother as I am—would await your crawling, tardy, ineffectual assistance? No, Vaughan—I make myself known to you, but to show my triumph over you—it is the only revenge which the powerful Norna permits herself to take for the wrongs of Ulla Troil.”

“Have you indeed saved him—saved him from the murderous crew?—speak!—and speak truth!—I will believe everything—all you would require me to assent to!—prove to me only he is escaped and safe!”

“Escaped and safe, by my means,” said Norna—“safe, and in assurance of an honoured and happy alliance. Yes, great unbeliever!—yes, wise and self-opinioned infidel!—these were the works of Norna! I knew you many a year since; but never had I made myself known to you, save with the triumphant consciousness of having controled the destiny that threatened my son. All combined against him—planets which threatened drowning—combinations which menaced blood—but my skill was superior to all.—I arranged—I combined—I found means—I made them—each disaster has been averted;—and what infidel on earth, or stubborn demon beyond the bounds of earth, shall hereafter deny my power?”

The wild ecstasy with which she spoke, so much resembled triumphant insanity, that Mertoun answered—“Were your pretensions less lofty, and your speech more plain, I should be better assured of my son's safety.”

“Doubt on, vain sceptic!” said Norna—“And yet know, that not only is our son safe, but vengeance is mine, though I sought it not—vengeance on the powerful implement of the darker influences, by whom my schemes were so often thwarted, and even the life of my son endangered.—Yes, take it as a guarantee of the truth of my speech, that Cleveland

—the pirate Cleveland—even now enters Kirkwall as a prisoner, and will soon expiate with his life the having shed blood which is of kin to Norna's."

"Who didst thou say was prisoner?" exclaimed Mertoun, with a voice of thunder—"Who, woman, didst thou say should expiate his crimes with his life?"

"Cleveland—the pirate Cleveland!" answered Norna; "and by me, whose counsel he scorned, he has been permitted to meet his fate."

"Thou most wretched of women!" said Mertoun, speaking from between his clenched teeth,—“thou hast slain thy son, as well as thy father!"

"My son!—what son?—what mean you?—Mordaunt is your son—your only son!" exclaimed Norna—"is he not?—tell me quickly—is he not?"

"Mordaunt is indeed *my* son," said Mertoun—"the laws, at least, give him to me as such—But, O unhappy Ulla! Cleveland is your son as well as mine—blood of our blood, bone of our bone; and if you have given him to death, I will end my wretched life along with him!"

"Stay—hold—stop, Vaughan!" said Norna; "I am not yet overcome—prove but to me the truth of what you say, I would find help, if I should evoke hell!—But prove your words, else believe them I cannot."

"*Thou* help! wretched, over-weening woman—in what have thy combinations and thy stratagems—the legerdmain of lunacy—the mere quackery of insanity—in what have these involved thee?—and yet I will speak to thee as reasonable—nay, I will admit thee as powerful—Hear then, Ulla, the proofs which you demand, and find a remedy, if thou canst:—

"When I fled from Orkney," he continued, after a pause—"it is now five-and-twenty years since—I bore with me the unhappy offspring to which you had given light. It was sent to me by one of your kinswomen, with an account of your illness, which was soon followed by a generally received belief of your death. It avails not to tell in what misery I left Europe. I found refuge in Hispaniola, wherein a fair young Spaniard undertook the task of comforter. I married her—she became mother of the youth called Mordaunt Mertoun."

"You married her!" said Norna, in a tone of deep reproach.

"I did, Ulla," answered Mertoun; "but you were avenged. She proved faithless, and her infidelity left me in doubts whether the child she bore had a right to call me father—But I also was avenged."

"You murdered her!" said Norna, with a dreadful shriek.

"I did that," said Mertoun, without a more direct reply, "which made an instant flight from Hispaniola necessary. Your son I carried with me to Tortuga, where we had a small settlement. Mordaunt Vaughan, my son by marriage, about three or four years younger, was residing in Port-Royal, for the advantages of an English education. I resolved never to see him again, but I continued to support him. Our settlement was plundered by the Spaniards, when Clement was but fifteen—Want came to aid despair and a troubled conscience. I became a corsair, and involved Clement in the same desperate trade. His skill and bravery, though then a mere

boy, gained him a separate command; and after a lapse of two or three years, while we were on different cruizes, my crew rose on me, and left me for dead on the beach of one of the Bermudas. I recovered, however, and my first inquiries, after a tedious illness, were after Clement. He, I heard, had been also marooned by a rebellious crew, and put ashore on a desert islet, to perish with want—I believed he had so perished."

"And what assures you that he did not?" said Ulla; "or how comes this Cleveland to be identified with Vaughan?"

"To change a name is common with such adventurers," answered Mertoun, "and Clement had apparently found that of Vaughan had become too notorious—and this change, in his case, prevented me from hearing any tidings of him. It was then that remorse seized me, and that, detesting all nature, but especially the sex to which Louisa belonged, I resolved to do penance in the wild islands of Zetland for the rest of my life. To subject myself to fasts and to the scourge, was the advice of the holy catholic priests, whom I consulted. But I devised a nobler penance—I determined to bring with me the unhappy boy Mordaunt, and to keep always before me the living memorial of my misery and my guilt. I have done so, and I have thought over both, till reason has often trembled on her throne. And now, to drive me to utter madness, my Clement—my own, my undoubted son—revives from the dead to be consigned to an infamous death, by the machinations of his own mother!"

"Away, away!" said Norna, with a laugh, when she had heard the story to an end, "this is a legend framed by the old corsair, to interest my aid in favour of a guilty comrade. How could I mistake Mordaunt for my son, their ages being so different?"

"The dark complexion and manly stature may have done much," said Basil Mertoun; "strong imagination must have done the rest."

"But, give me proofs—give me proofs that this Cleveland is my son, and believe me, this sun shall sooner sink in the east, than they shall have power to harm a hair of his head."

"These papers, these journals," said Mertoun, offering the pocket-book.

"I cannot read them," she said, after an effort, "my brain is dizzy."

"Clement had also tokens which you may remember, but they must have become the booty of his captors. He had a silver box with a Runic inscription, with which in far other days you presented me—a golden chaplet."

"A box!" said Norna, hastily; "Cleveland gave me one but a day since—I have never looked at it till now."

Eagerly she pulled it out—eagerly examined the legend around the lid, and as eagerly exclaimed—"They may now indeed call me Reim-kennar, for by this rhyme I know myself murderess of my son, as well as of my father!"

The conviction of the strong delusion under which she had laboured, was so overwhelming, that she sunk down at the foot of one of the pillars—Mertoun shouted for help, though in despair of receiving any; the sexton, however, entered, and, hopeless of all

assistance from Norna, the distracted father rushed out, to learn, if possible, the fate of his son.

CHAPTER XLII.

Go, some of you, cry a reprieve!

Beggar's Opera.

CAPTAIN WEATHERPORT had, before this time, reached Kirkwall in person, and was received with great joy and thankfulness by the magistrates, who had assembled in council for the purpose. The provost, in particular, expressed himself delighted with the providential arrival of the Halcyon, at the very conjuncture when the pirate could not escape her. The captain looked a little surprised, and said—"For that, sir, you may thank the information you yourself supplied."

"That I supplied?" said the provost, somewhat astonished.

"Yes, sir," answered Captain Weatherport, "I understand you to be George Torfe, chief magistrate of Kirkwall, who subscribes this letter."

The astonished provost took the letter addressed to Captain Weatherport of the Halcyon, stating the arrival, force, &c., of the pirates' vessel; but adding, that they had heard of the Halcyon being on the coast, and that they were on their guard and ready to baffle her, by going among the shoals, and through the islands, and holms, where the frigate could not easily follow; and at the worst, they were desperate enough to propose running the sloop ashore and blowing her up, by which much booty and treasure would be lost to the captors. The letter, therefore, suggested, that the Halcyon should cruize betwixt Duncans-bay head and Cape Wrath, for two or three days, to relieve the pirates of the alarm her neighbourhood occasioned, and lull them into security, the more especially as the letter-writer knew it to be their intention, if the frigate left the coast, to go into Stromness Bay, and there put their guns ashore for some necessary repairs, or even for careening, if they could find means. The letter concluded by assuring Captain Weatherport, that, if he could bring his frigate into Stromness Bay on the morning of the 24th of August, he would have a good bargain of the pirates—if sooner, he was not unlikely to miss them.

"This letter is not of my writing or subscribing, Captain Weatherport," said the provost; "nor would I have ventured to advise any delay in your coming hither."

The captain was surprised in his turn. "All I know is, that it reached me when I was in the bay of Thurso, and that I gave the boat's crew that brought it five dollars for crossing the Pentland Frith in very rough weather. They had a dumb dwarf as cockswain, the ugliest urchin my eyes ever opened upon. I give you much credit for the accuracy of your intelligence, Mr Provost."

"It is lucky as it is," said the provost; "yet I question whether the writer of this letter would not rather that you had found the nest cold and the bird flown."

So saying, he handed the letter to Magnus Troil,

who returned it with a smile, but without any observation, aware, doubtless, with the sagacious reader, that Norna had her own reasons for calculating with accuracy on the date of the Halcyon's arrival.

Without puzzling himself farther concerning a circumstance which seemed inexplicable, the captain requested that the examinations might proceed; and Cleveland and Altamont, as he chose to be called, were brought up the first of the pirate crew, on the charge of having acted as captain and lieutenant. They had just commenced the examination, when, after some expostulation with the officers who kept the door, Basil Mertoun burst into the apartment and exclaimed, "Take the old victim for the young one!—I am Basil Vaughan, too well known on the windward station—take my life, and spare my son's!"

All were astonished, and none more than Magnus Troil, who hastily explained to the magistrates and Captain Weatherport, that this gentleman had been living peaceably and honestly on the Main-land of Zetland for many years.

"In that case," said the captain, "I wash my hands of the poor man, for he is safe, under two proclamations of mercy; and, by my soul, when I see them hanging on each other's neck, I wish I could say as much for the son."

"But how is it—how can it be?" said the provost; "we always called the old man Mertoun, and the young, Cleveland, and now it seems they are both named Vaughan."

"Vaughan," answered Magnus, "is a name which I have some reason to remember; and, from what I have lately heard from my cousin Norna, that old man has a right to bear it."

"And, I trust, the young man also," said the captain, who had been looking over a memorandum. "Listen to me a moment," added he, addressing the younger Vaughan, whom we have hitherto called Cleveland. "Hark you, sir, your name is said to be Clement Vaughan—are you the same, who, then a mere boy, commanded a party of rovers, who, about eight or nine years ago, pillaged a Spanish village called Quempoa, on the Spanish main, with the purpose of seizing some treasure?"

"It will avail me nothing to deny it," answered the prisoner.

"No," said Captain Weatherport, "but it may do you service to admit it.—Well, the muleteers escaped with the treasure, while you were engaged in protecting, at the hazard of your own life, the honour of two Spanish ladies against the brutality of your followers. Do you remember anything of this?"

"I am sure I do," said Jack Bunce; "for our captain here was marooned for his gallantry, and I narrowly escaped flogging and pickling for having taken his part."

"When these points are established," said Captain Weatherport, "Vaughan's life is safe—the women he saved were persons of quality, daughters to the governor of the province, and application was long since made, by the grateful Spaniard, to our government, for favour to be shown to their preserver. I had special orders about Clement Vaughan, when I had a commission for cruizing upon

the pirates, in the West Indies, six or seven years since. But Vaughan was gone then as a name amongst them; and I heard enough of Cleveland in his room. However, captain, be you Cleveland or Vaughan, I think I can assure you a free pardon when you arrive in London."

Cleveland bowed, and the blood mounted to his face. Mertoun fell on his knees, and exhausted himself in thanksgiving to Heaven. They were removed, amidst the sympathizing sobs of the spectators.

"And now, good Master Lieutenant, what have you got to say for yourself?" said Captain Weatherport to the *ci-devant* Roscius.

"Why, little or nothing, please your honour; only that I wish your honour could find my name in that book of mercy you have in your hand; for I stood by Captain Clement Vaughan in that Quempoa business."

"You call yourself Frederick Altamont?" said Captain Weatherport. "I can see no such name here; one John Bonne, or Bunce, the lady put on her tablets."

"Why, that is me—that is I myself, captain—I can prove it; and I am determined, though the sound be something plebeian, rather to live Jack Bunce, than to hang as Frederick Altamont."

"In that case," said the captain, "I can give you some hopes as John Bunce."

"Thank your noble worship," shouted Bunce; then changing his tone, he said, "Ah, since an alias has such virtue, poor Dick Fletcher might have come off as Timothy Tugmutton; but, howsomdever, d'ye see, to use his own phrase"—

"Away with the lieutenant," said the captain, "and bring forward Goffe and the other fellows; there will be ropes reeved for some of them, I think." And this prediction promised to be amply fulfilled, so strong was the proof which was brought against them.

The *Halcyon* was accordingly ordered round to carry the whole prisoners to London, for which she set sail in the course of two days.

During the time that the unfortunate Cleveland remained at Kirkwall, he was treated with civility by the captain of the *Halcyon*; and the kindness of his old acquaintance, Magnus Troil, who knew in secret how closely he was allied to his blood, pressed on him accommodations of every kind, more than he could be prevailed on to accept.

Norna, whose interest in the unhappy prisoner was still more deep, was at this time unable to express it. The sexton had found her lying on the pavement in a swoon, and when she recovered, her mind for the time had totally lost its equipoise, and it became necessary to place her under the restraint of watchful attendants.

Of the sisters of Burgh-Westra, Cleveland only heard that they remained ill, in consequence of the fright to which they had been subjected, until the evening before the *Halcyon* sailed, when he received, by a private conveyance, the following billet:—"Farewell, Cleveland—we part for ever, and it is right that we should—Be virtuous and be happy. The delusions which a solitary education and limited acquaintance with the modern world had spread

around me, are gone and dissipated for ever. But in you, I am sure, I have been thus far free from error—that you are one to whom good is naturally more attractive than evil, and whom only necessity, example, and habit, have forced into your late course of life. Think of me as one who no longer exists, unless you should become as much the object of general praise, as now of general reproach; and then think of me as one who will rejoice in your reviving fame, though she must never see you more!" The note was signed M. T.; and Cleveland, with a deep emotion, which he testified even by tears, read it an hundred times over, and then clasped it to his bosom.

Mordaunt Mertoun heard by letter from his father, but in a very different style. Basil bade him farewell for ever, and acquitted him henceforward of the duties of a son, as one on whom he, notwithstanding the exertions of many years, had found himself unable to bestow the affections of a parent. The letter informed him of a recess in the old house of Jarlshof, in which the writer had deposited a considerable quantity of specie and of treasure, which he desired Mordaunt to use as his own. "You need not fear," the letter bore, "either that you lay yourself under obligation to me, or that you are sharing the spoils of piracy. What is now given over to you, is almost entirely the property of your deceased mother, Louisa Gonzago, and is yours by every right. Let us forgive each other," was the conclusion, "as they who must meet no more."—And they never met more; for the elder Mertoun, against whom no charge was ever preferred, disappeared after the fate of Cleveland was determined, and was generally believed to have retired into a foreign convent.

The fate of Cleveland will be most briefly expressed in a letter which Minna received within two months after the *Halcyon* left Kirkwall. The family were then assembled at Burgh-Westra, and Mordaunt was a member of it for the time, the good udaller thinking he could never sufficiently repay the activity which he had shown in the defence of his daughters. Norna, then beginning to recover from her temporary alienation of mind, was a guest in the family, and Minna, who was sedulous in her attention upon this unfortunate victim of mental delusion, was seated with her, watching each symptom of returning reason, when the letter we allude to was placed in her hands.

"Minna," it said—"dearest Minna!—farewell, and for ever. Believe me, I never meant you wrong—never. From the moment I came to know you, I resolved to detach myself from my hateful comrades, and had framed a thousand schemes, which have proved as vain as they deserved to be—for why, or how, should the fate of one so lovely, pure, and innocent, be involved with that of one so guilty?—Of these dreams I will speak no more. The stern reality of my situation is much milder than I either expected or deserved; and the little good I did has outweighed, in the minds of honourable and merciful judges, much that was evil and criminal. I have not only been exempted from the ignominious death to which several of my compeers are sentenced, but Captain Weatherport, about once more to sail for

the Spanish main, under the apprehension of an immediate war with that country, has generously solicited and obtained permission to employ me, and two or three more of my less guilty associates, in the same service—a measure recommended to himself by his own generous compassion, and to others by our knowledge of the coast, and of local circumstances, which, by whatsoever means acquired, we now hope to use for the service of our country. Minna, you will hear my name pronounced with honour, or you will never hear it again. If virtue can give happiness, I need not wish it to you, for it is yours already.—Farewell, Minna.”

Minna wept so bitterly over this letter, that it attracted the attention of the convalescent Norna. She snatched it from the hand of her kinswoman, and read it over at first with the confused air of one to whom it conveyed no intelligence—then with a dawn of recollection—then with a burst of mingled joy and grief, in which she dropped it from her hand. Minna snatched it up, and retired with her treasure to her own apartment.

From that time Norna appeared to assume a different character. Her dress was changed to one of a more simple and less imposing character. Her dwarf was dismissed, with ample provision for his future comfort. She showed no desire of resuming her erratic life; and directed her observatory, as it might be called, on Fitful-head, to be dismantled. She refused the name of Norna, and would only be addressed by her real appellation of Ulla Troil. But the most important change remained behind. Formerly, from the dreadful dictates of spiritual despair, arising out of the circumstances of her father's death, she seemed to have considered herself as an outcast from divine grace; besides, that, enveloped in the vain occult sciences which she pretended to practise, her study, like that of Chaucer's physician, had been “but little in the bible.” Now, the sacred volume was seldom laid aside; and, to the poor ignorant people who came as formerly to invoke her power over the elements, she only replied—“The winds are in the hollow of His hand.”—Her conversation was not, perhaps, altogether rational; for this, the state of a mind disordered by such a complication of horrid incidents, probably prevented. But it seemed to be sincere, and was certainly useful. She appeared deeply to repent of her former presumptuous attempts to interfere with the course of human events, superintended as they are by far higher powers, and expressed bitter compunction when such her former pretensions were in any manner recalled to her memory. She still showed a partiality to Mordaunt, though, perhaps, arising chiefly from habit; nor was it easy to know how much or how little she remembered of the complicated events in which she had been connected. When she died, which was about four years after the events we have commemorated, it was found that, at the special and earnest request of Minna Troil, she had conveyed her very considerable property to Brenda. A clause in her will specially directed, that all the books, implements of her laboratory, and other things connected with her former studies, should be committed to the flames.

About two years before Norna's death, Brenda

was wedded to Mordaunt Mertoun. It was some time before old Magnus Troil, with all his affection for his daughter, and all his partiality for Mordaunt, was able frankly to reconcile himself to this match. But Mordaunt's accomplishments were peculiarly to the udaller's taste, and the old man felt the impossibility of supplying his place in his family so absolutely, that at length his Norse blood gave way to the natural feeling of the heart, and he comforted his pride, while he looked around him and saw what he considered as the encroachments of the Scottish gentry upon THE COUNTRY (so Zetland is fondly termed by its inhabitants), that as well “his daughter married the son of an English pirate as of a Scottish thief”—in scornful allusion to the Highland and Border families, to whom Zetland owes many respectable landholders, but whose ancestors were generally esteemed more renowned for ancient family and high courage than for accurately regarding the trifling distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*. The jovial old man lived to the extremity of human life, with the happy prospect of a numerous succession in the family of his younger daughter; and having his board cheered alternately by the minstrelsy of Claud Halcro, and enlightened by the lucubrations of Mr Triptolemus Yellowley, who, laying aside his high pretensions, was, when he became better acquainted with the manners of the islanders, and remembered the various misadventures which had attended his premature attempts at reformation, an honest and useful representative of his principal, and never so happy as when he could escape from the spare commons of his sister Barbara to the genial table of the udaller. Barbara's temper was also much softened by the unexpected restoration of the horn of silver coins (the property of Norna) which she had concealed in the mansion of old Stourburgh, for achieving some of her mysterious plans, but which she now restored to those by whom it had been accidentally discovered, with an intimation, however, that it would again disappear unless a reasonable portion was expended on the sustenance of the family—a precaution to which Tronda Dronsdaughter (probably an agent of Norna's) owed her escape from a slow and wasting death by inanition.

Mordaunt and Brenda were as happy as our mortal condition permits us to be. They admired and loved each other—enjoyed easy circumstances—had duties to discharge which they did not neglect; and, clear in conscience as light of heart, laughed, sung, danced, daffed the world aside, and bid it pass.

But Minna—the high and imaginative Minna—she, gifted with such depth of feeling and enthusiasm, yet doomed to see both blighted in early youth, because, with the inexperience of a disposition equally romantic and ignorant, she had built the fabric of her happiness on a quicksand instead of a rock,—was she, could she be, happy? Reader, she *was* happy; for, whatever may be alleged to the contrary by the sceptic and the scorner, to each duty performed there is assigned a degree of mental peace and high consciousness of honourable exertion, corresponding to the difficulty of the task accomplished. That rest of the body which succeeds to hard and industrious toil, is not to be compared to the repose which the spirit enjoys under similar cir-

cumstances. Her resignation, however, and the constant attention which she paid to her father, her sister, the afflicted Norna, and to all who had claims on her, were neither Minna's sole nor her most precious source of comfort. Like Norna, but under a more regulated judgment, she learned to exchange the visions of wild enthusiasm, which had exerted and misled her imagination, for a truer and purer connexion with the world beyond us, than could be learned from the sagas of heathen bards, or the visions of later rhymers. To this she owed the support by which she was enabled, after various accounts of the honourable and gallant conduct of Cleveland, to read with resignation, and even with a sense of comfort, mingled with sorrow, that he had at length fallen, leading the way in a gallant and honourable enterprise, which was successfully accomplished by those companions to whom his determined bravery had opened the road. Bunce, his fantastic follower in good, as formerly in evil, transmitted an account to Minna of this melancholy event, in terms which showed, that, though his head was weak, his heart had not been utterly corrupted by the lawless life which he for some time led, or at least that it had been amended by the change; and that he himself had gained credit and promotion in the same action, seemed to be of little consequence to him, compared with the loss of his old captain and comrade.* Minna read the intelligence, and

* We have been able to learn nothing with certainty of

thanked Heaven, even while the eyes which she lifted up were streaming with tears, that the death of Cleveland had been in the bed of honour; nay, she even had the courage to add her gratitude, that he had been snatched from a situation of temptation ere circumstances had overcome his new-born virtue; and so strongly did this reflection operate, that her life, after the immediate pain of this event had passed away, seemed not only as resigned, but even more cheerful than before. Her thoughts, however, were detached from the world, and only visited it with an interest like that which guardian spirits take for their charge, in behalf of those friends with whom she lived in love, or the poor whom she could serve and comfort. Thus passed her life, enjoying, from all who approached her, an affection enhanced by reverence; insomuch, that when her friends sorrowed for her death, which arrived at a late period of her existence, they were comforted by the fond reflection, that the humanity which she then laid down, was the only circumstance which had placed her, in the words of Scripture, "a little lower than the angels!"

Bunce's fate; but our friend, Dr Dryasdust, believes he may be identified with an old gentleman, who, in the beginning of the reign of George I., attended the Rose Coffee-house regularly, went to the theatre every night, told mercilessly long stories about the Spanish main, controled reckonings, and bullied waiters, and was generally known by the name of Captain Bounce.

The Fortunes of Nigel.

Knifegrinder. Story? Lord bless you! I have none to tell, sir.

Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE.

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK, TO THE REVEREND
DR DRYASDUST.

DEAR SIR,

I readily accept of, and reply to, the civilities with which you have been pleased to honour me in your obliging letter, and entirely agree with your quotation of "*Quam bonum, et quam jucundum!*" We may indeed esteem ourselves as come of the same family, or, according to our country proverb, as being all one man's bairns; and there needed no apology on your part, reverend and dear sir, for demanding of me any information which I may be able to supply respecting the subject of your curiosity. The interview which you allude to took place in the course of last winter, and is so deeply imprinted on my recollection, that it requires no effort to collect all its most minute details.

You are aware that the share which I had in introducing the Romance called *THE MONASTERY*, to public notice, has given me a sort of character in the literature of our Scottish metropolis. I no longer stand in the outer shop of our biblioplists, bargaining for the objects of my curiosity with an unrespective shop-lad, hustled among boys who come to buy Corderies and copy-books, and servant-girls cheapening a pennyworth of paper, but am cordially welcomed by the biblioplist himself, with, "Pray, walk into the back-shop, captain. Boy, get a chair for Captain Clutterbuck. There is the newspaper, captain—to-day's paper;" or, "Here is the last new work—there is a folder, make free with the leaves;" or, "Put it in your pocket and carry it home;" or, "We will make a bookseller of you, sir, you shall have it at trade price." Or, perhaps, if it is the worthy trader's own publication, his liberality may even extend itself to—"Never mind booking such a trifle to you, sir—it is an over copy. Pray, mention the work to your literary friends." I say nothing of the snug well-selected literary party arranged around a turbot, leg of five-year-old mutton, or some such gear, or of the circulation of a quiet bottle of Robert Cockburn's choicest black—or perhaps of his best blue, to quicken our talk about old books, or our plans for new ones. All these are comforts reserved to such as are freemen of the corporation of letters, and I have the advantage of enjoying them in perfection.

But all things change under the sun; and it is with no ordinary feelings of regret, that, in my annual visits to the metropolis, I now miss the social and warm-hearted welcome of the quick-witted and kindly friend who first introduced me to the public; who had more original wit than would have set up a dozen of professed sayers of good things, and more racy humour than would have made the fortune of as many more. To this great deprivation has been

added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend, whose vigorous intellect, and liberal ideas, have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect, even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes, operated in a great measure by the strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhopèd-for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present.

I entered the shop at the Cross, to inquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder. Availing myself then of the privileges to which I have alluded, I strolled onwards in that labyrinth of small dark rooms, or *crypts*, to speak our own antiquarian language, which form the extensive back-settlements of that celebrated publishing-house. Yet, as I proceeded from one obscure recess to another, filled, some of them with old volumes, some with such as, from the equality of their rank on the shelves, I suspected to be the less saleable modern books of the concern, I could not help feeling a holy horror creep upon me, when I thought of the risk of intruding on some ecstatic bard giving vent to his poetical fury; or, it might be, on the yet more formidable privacy of a band of critics, in the act of worrying the game which they had just run down. In such a supposed case, I felt by anticipation the horrors of the Highland seers, whom their gift of deuteroscopy compels to witness things unmeet for mortal eye; and who, to use the expression of Collins,

— heartless, oft, like moody madness, stare
To see the phantom train their secret work prepare.

Still, however, the irresistible impulse of an undefined curiosity drove me on through this succession of darksome chambers, till, like the jeweller of Delhi in the house of the magician Bennaskar, I at length reached a vaulted room dedicated to secrecy and silence, and beheld, seated by a lamp, and employed in reading a blotted *revise*, the person, or perhaps I should rather say the Eidolon, or Representative Vision, of the *AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY*! You will not be surprised at the filial instinct which enabled me at once to acknowledge the features borne by this venerable apparition, and that I at once bended the knee, with the classical salutation of, *Salve, magne parens!* The vision, however, cut me short, by pointing to a seat, and intimating that my presence was not unexpected, and that he had something to say to me.

I sat down with humble obedience, and endeavoured to note the features of him with whom I now

found myself so unexpectedly in society. But on this point I can give your reverence no satisfaction; for, besides the obscurity of the apartment, and the fluttered state of my own nerves, I seemed to myself overwhelmed by a sense of filial awe, which prevented my noting and recording what it is probable the personage before me might most desire to have concealed. Indeed, his figure was so closely veiled and wimpled, either with a mantle, morning-gown, or some such loose garb, that the verses of Spenser might well have been applied—

Yet certes, by her face and physnomy,
Whether she man or woman only were,
That could not any creature well descry.

I must, however, proceed as I have begun, to apply the masculine gender: for, notwithstanding very ingenious reasons, and indeed something like positive evidence, have been offered to prove the Author of *Waverley* to be two ladies of talent—I abide by the general opinion, that he is of the rougher sex. There are in his writings too many things

Quæ maribus solum tribuuntur,

to permit me to entertain any doubt on that subject. I will proceed, in the manner of dialogue, to repeat as nearly as I can what passed betwixt us, only observing, that in the course of the conversation, my timidity imperceptibly gave way under the familiarity of his address; and, latterly, I perhaps argued with fully as much confidence as was befitting.

Author of Waverley. I was willing to see you, Captain Clutterbuck, being the person of my family whom I have most regard for, since the death of Jedediah Cleishbotham; and I am afraid I may have done you some wrong, in assigning to you the Monastery as a portion of my effects. I have some thoughts of making it up to you, by naming you godfather to this yet unborn babe—he indicated the proof-sheet with his finger)—But first, touching the Monastery—How says the world?—you are abroad and can learn.

Captain Clutterbuck. Hem! hem!—The inquiry is delicate—I have not heard any complaints from the publishers.

Author. That is the principal matter; but yet an indifferent work is sometimes towed on by those which have left harbour before it, with the breeze in their poop.—What say the critics?

Captain. There is a general—feeling—that the White Lady is no favourite.

Author. I think she is a failure myself; but rather in execution than conception. Could I have evoked an *esprit follet*, at the same time fantastic and interesting, capricious and kind; a sort of wild-fire of the elements, bound by no fixed laws, or motives of action; faithful and fond, yet teasing and uncertain—

Captain. If you will pardon the interruption, sir, I think you are describing a pretty woman.

Author. On my word, I believe I am. I must invest my elementary spirits with a little human flesh and blood—they are too fine-drawn for the present taste of the public.

Captain. They object, too, that the object of your

nixie ought to have been more uniformly noble—Her ducking the priest was no naiad-like amusement.

Author. Ah! they ought to allow for the capricious of what is, after all, but a better sort of goblin. The bath into which Ariel, the most delicate creation of Shakspeare's imagination, seduces our jolly friend Trinculo, was not of amber or rose-water. But no one shall find me rowing against the stream. I care not who knows it—I write for the public amusement; and, though I never will aim at popularity by what I think unworthy means, I will not, on the other hand, be pertinacious in the defence of my own errors against the voice of the public.

Captain. You abandon, then, in the present work—(looking, in my turn, towards the proof-sheet)—the mystic, and the magical, and the whole system of signs, wonders, and omens? There are no dreams, or presages, or obscure allusions to future events?

Author. Not a Cock-lane scratch, my son—not one bounce on the drum of Tedworth—not so much as the poor tick of a solitary death-watch in the wainscot. All is clear and above-board—a Scotch metaphysician might believe every word of it.

Captain. And the story is, I hope, natural and probable; commencing strikingly, proceeding naturally, ending happily—like the course of a famed river, which gushes from the mouth of some obscure and romantic grotto—then gliding on, never pausing, never precipitating, visiting, as it were by natural instinct, whatever worthy subjects of interest are presented by the country through which it passes—widening and deepening in interest as it flows on; and at length arriving at the final catastrophe as at some mighty haven, where ships of all kinds strike sail and yard.

Author. Hey! hey! what the deuce is all this? Why, 'tis Ercles' vein, and it would require some one much more like Hercules than I, to produce a story which should gush and glide and never pause, and visit, and widen, and deepen, and all the rest on't. I should be chin-deep in the grave, man, before I was done with my task; and, in the meanwhile, all the quirks and quiddities which I might have devised for my reader's amusement, would lie rotting in my gizzard, like Sancho's suppressed witticisms, when he was under his master's displeasure.—There never was a novel written on this plan while the world stood.

Captain. Pardon me—Tom Jones.

Author. True, and perhaps Amelia also. Fielding had high notions of the dignity of an art which he may be considered as having founded. He challenges a comparison between the novel and the epic. Smollett, Le Sage, and others, emancipating themselves from the strictness of the rules he has laid down, have written rather a history of the miscellaneous adventures which befall an individual in the course of life, than the plot of a regular and connected epopeia, where every step brings us a point nearer to the final catastrophe. These great masters have been satisfied if they amused the reader upon the road; though the conclusion only arrived because the tale must have an end—just as the traveller alights at the inn, because it is evening.

Captain. A very commodious mode of travelling,

for the author at least. In short, sir, you are of opinion with Bayes—"What the devil does the plot signify, except to bring in fine things?"

Author. Grant that I were so, and that I should write with sense and spirit a few scenes, unlaboured and loosely put together, but which had sufficient interest in them to amuse in one corner the pain of body; in another, to relieve anxiety of mind; in a third place, to un wrinkle a brow bent with the furrows of daily toil; in another, to fill the place of bad thoughts, or to suggest better; in yet another, to induce an idler to study the history of his country; in all, save where the perusal interrupted the discharge of serious duties, to furnish harmless amusement,—might not the author of such a work, however inartificially executed, plead for his errors and negligences the excuse of the slave, who was about to be punished for having spread the false report of a victory,—“Am I to blame, O Athenians, who have given you one happy day?”

Captain. Will your goodness permit me to mention an anecdote of my excellent grandmother?

Author. I see little she can have to do with the subject, Captain Clutterbuck.

Captain. It may come into our dialogue on Bayes's plan.—The sagacious old lady, rest her soul! was a good friend to the church, and could never hear a minister maligned by evil tongues, without taking his part warmly. There was one fixed point, however, at which she always abandoned the cause of her reverend protégé—it was so soon as she learned he had preached a regular sermon against slanderers and backbiters.

Author. And what is that to the purpose?

Captain. Only that I have heard engineers say, that one may betray the weak point to the enemy, by too much ostentation of fortifying it.

Author. And, once more I pray, what is that to the purpose?

Captain. Nay, then, without farther metaphor, I am afraid this new production, in which your generosity seems willing to give me some concern, will stand much in need of apology, since you think proper to begin your defence before the case is on trial.—The story is hastily huddled up, I will venture a pint of claret.

Author. A pint of port, I suppose you mean?

Captain. I say of claret—good claret of the monastery. Ah, sir, would you but take the advice of your friends, and try to deserve at least one-half of the public favour you have met with, we might all drink Tokay!

Author. I care not what I drink, so the liquor be wholesome.

Captain. Care for your reputation, then, for your fame.

Author. My fame?—I will answer you as a very ingenious, able, and experienced friend, when counsel for the notorious Jem Mac-Coul, replied to the opposite side of the bar, when they laid weight on his client's refusing to answer certain queries, which they said any man who had regard for his reputation would not hesitate to reply to. “My client” said he—by the way, Jem was standing behind him at the time, and a rich scene it was—“is so unfortunate as to have no regard for his

reputation; and I should deal very uncandidly with the court, should I say he had any that was worth his attention.”—I am, though from very different reasons, in Jem's happy state of indifference. Let fame follow those who have a substantial shape. A shadow—and an impersonal author is nothing better—can cast no shade.

Captain. You are not now, perhaps so impersonal as heretofore. These Letters to the Member for the University of Oxford—

Author. Show the wit, genius, and delicacy of the author, which I heartily wish to see engaged on a subject of more importance; and show besides, that the preservation of my character of *incognito* has engaged early talent in the discussion of a curious question of evidence. But a cause, however ingeniously pleaded, is not therefore gained. You may remember, the neatly-wrought chain of circumstantial evidence, so artificially brought forward to prove Sir Philip Francis's title to the Letters of Junius, seemed at first irrefragable; yet the influence of the reasoning has passed away, and Junius, in the general opinion, is as much unknown as ever. But on this subject I will not be soothed or provoked into saying one word more. To say who I am not, would be one step towards saying who I am; and as I desire not, any more than a certain justice of peace mentioned by Shenstone, the noise or report such things make in the world, I shall continue to be silent on a subject, which, in my opinion, is very undeserving the rout that has been made about it, and still more unworthy of the serious employment of such ingenuity as has been displayed by the young letter-writer.

Captain. But allowing, my dear sir, that you care not for your personal reputation, or for that of any literary person upon whose shoulders your faults may be visited, allow me to say, that common gratitude to the public, who have received you so kindly, and to the critics, who have treated you so leniently, ought to induce you to bestow more pains on your story.

Author. I do entreat you, my son, as Dr Johnson would have said, “free your mind from cant.” For the critics, they have their business, and I mine; as the nursery proverb goes—

The children of Holland take pleasure in making

What the children in England take pleasure in breaking.

I am their humble jackall, too busy in providing food for them, to have time for considering whether they swallow or reject it.—To the public, I stand pretty nearly in the relation of the postman who leaves a packet at the door of an individual. If it contains pleasing intelligence, a billet from a mistress, a letter from an absent son, a remittance from a correspondent supposed to be bankrupt,—the letter is acceptably welcome, and read and re-read, folded up, filed, and safely deposited in the bureau. If the contents are disagreeable, if it comes from a dun or from a bore, the correspondent is cursed, the letter is thrown into the fire, and the expense of postage is heartily regretted; while all the while the bearer of the dispatches is, in either case, as little thought on as the snow of last Christmas. The utmost extent of kindness between the author and the public

which can really exist, is that the world are disposed to be somewhat indulgent to the succeeding works of an original favourite, were it but on account of the habit which the public mind has acquired; while the author very naturally thinks well of *their* taste, who have so liberally applauded *his* productions. But I deny there is any call for gratitude, properly so called, either on one side or the other.

Captain. Respect to yourself, then, ought to teach caution.

Author. Ay, if caution could augment the chance of my success. But, to confess to you the truth, the works and the passages in which I have succeeded, have uniformly been written with the greatest rapidity; and when I have seen some of these placed in opposition with others, and commended as more highly finished, I could appeal to pen and standish, that the parts in which I have come feebly off, were by much the more laboured. Besides, I doubt the beneficial effect of too much delay, both on account of the author and the public. A man should strike while the iron is hot, and hoist sail while the wind is fair. If a successful author keeps not the stage, another instantly takes his ground. If a writer lies by for ten years ere he produces a second work, he is superseded by others; or, if the age is so poor of genius that this does not happen, his own reputation becomes his greatest obstacle. The public will expect the new work to be ten times better than its predecessor; the author will expect it should be ten times more popular, and 'tis a hundred to ten that both are disappointed.

Captain. This may justify a certain degree of rapidity in publication, but not that which is proverbially said to be no speed. You should take time at least to arrange your story.

Author. That is a sore point with me, my son. Believe me, I have not been fool enough to neglect ordinary precautions. I have repeatedly laid down my future work to scale, divided it into volumes and chapters, and endeavoured to construct a story which I meant should evolve itself gradually and strikingly, maintain suspense, and stimulate curiosity; and which, finally, should terminate in a striking catastrophe. But I think there is a demon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose. Characters expand under my hand; incidents are multiplied; the story lingers, while the materials increase; my regular mansion turns out a Gothic anomaly, and the work is complete long before I have attained the point I proposed.

Captain. Resolution and determined forbearance might remedy that evil.

Author. Alas! my dear sir, you do not know the force of paternal affection. When I light on such a character as Baillie Jarvie, or Dalgetty, my imagination brightens, and my conception becomes clearer at every step which I make in his company, although it leads me many a weary mile away from the regular road, and forces me to leap hedge and ditch to get back into the route again. If I resist the temptation, as you advise me, my thoughts become prosy, flat, and dull; I write painfully to myself, and under a consciousness of flagging, which makes me flag still more; the sunshine with which

fancy had invested the incidents, departs from them, and leaves everything dull and gloomy. I am no more the same author, than the dog in a wheel, condemned to go round and round for hours, is like the same dog merrily chasing his own tail, and gamboling in all the frolic of unrestrained freedom. In short, sir, on such occasions, I think I am bewitched.

Captain. Nay, sir, if you plead sorcery, there is no more to be said—he must needs go whom the devil drives. And this, I suppose, sir, is the reason why you do not make the theatrical attempt to which you have been so often urged?

Author. It may pass for one good reason for not writing a play, that I cannot form a plot. But the truth is, that the idea adopted by too favourable judges, of my having some aptitude for that department of poetry, has been much founded on those scraps of old plays, which, being taken from a source inaccessible to collectors, they have hastily considered the offspring of my mother-wit. Now, the manner in which I became possessed of these fragments is so extraordinary, that I cannot help telling it to you.

You must know, that, some twenty years since, I went down to visit an old friend in Worcestershire, who had served with me in the—dragoons.

Captain. Then you *have* served, sir?

Author. I have—or I have not, which signifies the same thing—Captain is a good travelling name.—I found my friend's house unexpectedly crowded with guests, and, as usual, was condemned—the mansion being an old one—to the *haunted apartment*. I have, as a great modern said, seen too many ghosts to believe in them, so betook myself seriously to my repose, lulled by the wind rustling among the lime-trees, the branches of which chequered the moon-light which fell on the floor through the diamonded casement, when, behold, a darker shadow interposed itself, and I beheld visibly on the floor of the apartment—

Captain. The White Lady of Avenel, I suppose?—You have told the very story before.

Author. No—I beheld a female form, with round mob-cap, bib, and apron, sleeves tucked up to the elbow, a dredging-box in the one hand, and in the other a sauce-ladle. I concluded, of course, that it was my friend's cook-maid walking in her sleep; and as I knew he had a value for Sally, who could toss a pancake with any girl in the county, I got up to conduct her safely to the door. But as I approached her, she said,—“Hold, sir! I am not what you take me for;”—words which seemed so apposite to the circumstances, that I should not have much minded them, had it not been for the peculiarly hollow sound in which they were uttered.—“Know then,” she said, in the same unearthly accents, “that I am the spirit of Betty Barnes.”—“Who hanged herself for love of the stage-coachman,” thought I; “this is a proper spot of work.”—“Of that unhappy Elizabeth or Betty Barnes, long cook-maid to Mr Warburton, the painful collector, but, ah! the too careless custodian, of the largest collection of ancient plays ever known—of most of which the titles only are left to gladden the

Prolegomena of the Variorum Shakspeare. Yes, stranger, it was these ill-fated hands that consigned to grease and conflagration the scores of small quartos, which, did they now exist, would drive the whole Roxburghe Club out of their senses—it was these unhappy pickers and stealers that singed fat fowls and wiped dirty trenchers with the lost works of Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Jonson, Webster—what shall I say?—even of Shakspeare himself.”

Like every dramatic antiquary, my ardent curiosity, after some play named in the Book of the Master of Revels, had often been checked by finding the object of my research numbered amongst the holocaust of victims, which this unhappy woman had sacrificed to the god of good cheer. It is no wonder then, that, like the Hermit of Parnell,—

I broke the bands of fear, and madly cried,
“You careless jade!” But scarce the words began,
When Betty brandish’d high her saucing-pan.

“Beware,” she said, “you do not, by your ill-timed anger, cut off the opportunity I yet have to indemnify the world for the errors of my ignorance. In yonder coal-hole, not used for many a year, repose the few greasy and blackened fragments of the elder drama, which were not totally destroyed. Do thou, then”—Why, what do you stare at, captain? By my soul, it is true; as my friend Major Longbow says, “What should I tell you a lie for?”

Captain. Lie, sir! Nay, Heaven forbid I should apply the word to a person so veracious. You are only inclined to chase your tail a little this morning, that’s all. Had you not better reserve this legend to form an introduction to “Three recovered Dramas,” or so?

Author. You are quite right—habit’s a strange thing, my son. I had forgot whom I was speaking to. Yes, plays for the closet, not for the stage—

Captain. Right, and so you are sure to be acted; for the managers, while thousands of volunteers are desirous of serving them, are wonderfully partial to pressed men.

Author. I am a living witness, having been, like a second Laberius, made a dramatist whether I would or not. I believe my muse would be *Terryfied* into treading the stage, even if I should write a sermon.

Captain. Truly, if you did, I am afraid folks might make a farce of it; and therefore, should you change your style, I still advise a volume of dramas, like Lord Byron’s.

Author. No, his lordship is a cut above me—I won’t run my horse against his, if I can help myself. But there is my friend Allan has written just such a play as I might write myself in a very sunny day, and with one of Bramah’s extra patent pens. I cannot make neat work without such appurtenances.

Captain. Do you mean Allan Ramsay?

Author. No, nor Barbara Allan either. I mean Allan Cunningham, who has just published his tragedy of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell, full of merry-making and murdering, kissing and cutting of throats, and passages which lead to nothing, and which are very pretty passages for all that. Not a glimpse of probability is there about the plot, but so much ani-

mation in particular passages, and such a vein of poetry through the whole, as I dearly wish I could infuse into my Culinary Remains, should I ever be tempted to publish them. With a popular impress, people would read and admire the beauties of Allan—as it is, they may perhaps only note his defects—or, what is worse, not note him at all. But never mind them, honest Allan, you are a credit to Caledonia for all that. There are some lyrical effusions of his too, which you would do well to read, captain. “It’s hame, and it’s hame,” is equal to Burns.

Captain. I will take the hint. The club at Ken-naquhair are turned fastidious since Catalani visited the abbey. My “Poortith Cauld” has been received both poorly and coldly, and “the Banks of Bonnie Doon” have been positively coughed down—*Tempora mutantur.*

Author. They cannot stand still, they will change with all of us. What then?—

A man’s a man for a’ that.

But the hour of parting approaches.

Captain. You are determined to proceed, then, in your own system. Are you aware that an unworthy motive may be assigned for this rapid succession of publication? You will be supposed to work merely for the lucre of gain.

Author. Supposing that I did permit the great advantages which must be derived from success in literature to join with other motives in inducing me to come more frequently before the public, that emolument is the voluntary tax which the public pays for a certain species of literary amusement—it is extorted from no one, and paid, I presume, by those only who can afford it, and who receive gratification in proportion to the expense. If the capital sum which these volumes have put into circulation be a very large one, has it contributed to my indulgences only? or can I not say to hundreds—from honest Duncan, the paper-manufacturer, to the most snivelling of the printer’s devils—“Didst thou not share?—hadst thou not fifteen pence?” I profess I think our modern Athens much obliged to me for having established such an extensive manufacture; and when universal suffrage comes in fashion, I intend to stand for a seat in the House, on the interest of all the unwashed artificers connected with literature.

Captain. This would be called the language of a calico-manufacturer.

Author. Cant again, my dear son—there is lime in this sack too—nothing but sophistication in this world! I do say it, in spite of Adam Smith and his followers, that a successful author is a productive labourer, and that his works constitute as effectual a part of the public wealth as that which is created by any other manufacture. If a new commodity, having an actually intrinsic and commercial value, be the result of the operation, why are the author’s bales of books to be esteemed a less profitable part of the public stock than the goods of any other manufacturer? I speak with reference to the diffusion of the wealth arising to the public, and the degree of industry which even such a trifling work as the present must stimulate and reward, before the volumes leave the publisher’s shop. Without me it could not exist, and to this extent I am the benefac-

tor to the country. As for my own emolument, it is won by my toil, and I account myself answerable to Heaven only for the mode in which I expend it.—The candid may hope it is not all dedicated to selfish purposes; and, without much pretensions to merit in him who expends it, a part may “wander, Heaven-directed, to the poor.”

Captain. Yet it is generally held base to write from the mere motive of gain.

Author. It would be base to do so exclusively, or even to make it a principal motive of literary exertion. Nay, I will venture to say, that no work of imagination, proceeding from the mere consideration of a certain sum of copy-money, ever did, or ever will, succeed. So the lawyer who pleads, the soldier who fights, the physician who prescribes, the clergyman—if such there be—who preaches, without any zeal for their profession, or without any sense of its dignity, and merely on account of their fee, pay, or stipend, degrade themselves to the rank of sordid mechanics. Accordingly, in the case of two of the learned faculties, at least, their services are considered as unappreciable, and are acknowledged, not by any exact estimate of the services rendered, but by a honorarium, or voluntary acknowledgment. But let a client or patient make the experiment of omitting this little ceremony of the honorarium, which is *censé* to be a thing entirely out of consideration between them, and mark how the learned gentleman will look upon his case. Cant set apart, it is the same thing with literary emolument. No man of sense, in any rank of life, is, or ought to be, above accepting a just recompense for his time, and a reasonable share of the capital which owes its very existence to his exertions. When Czar Peter wrought in the trenches, he took the pay of a common soldier; and nobles, statesmen, and divines, the most distinguished of their time, have not scorned to square accounts with their bookseller.

Captain (sings).

O if it were a mean thing,
The gentles would not use it;
And if it were ungodly,
The clergy would refuse it.

Author. You say well. But no man of honour, genius, or spirit, would make the mere love of gain the chief, far less the only, purpose of his labours. For myself, I am not displeased to find the game a winning one; yet while I pleased the public, I should probably continue it merely for the pleasure of playing; for I have felt as strongly as most folks that love of composition, which is perhaps the strongest of all instincts, driving the author to the pen, the painter to the pallet, often without either the chance of fame or the prospect of reward. Perhaps I have said too much of this. I might, perhaps with as much truth as most people, exculpate myself from the charge of being either of a greedy or mercenary disposition; but I am not, therefore, hypocrite enough to disclaim the ordinary motives, on account of which the whole world around me is toiling unremittingly, to the sacrifice of ease, comfort, health, and life. I do not affect the disinterestedness of that ingenious association of gentlemen mentioned by Goldsmith, who sold their magazine

for six-pence a piece, merely for their own amusement.

Captain. I have but one thing more to hint.—The world say you will run yourself out.

Author. The world say true; and what then? When they dance no longer, I will no longer pipe; and I shall not want flappers enough to remind me of the apoplexy.

Captain. And what will become of us then, your poor family? We shall fall into contempt and oblivion.

Author. Like many a poor fellow, already overwhelmed with the number of his family, I cannot help going on to increase it—“’Tis my vocation, Hal.”—Such of you as deserve oblivion—perhaps the whole of you—may be consigned to it. At any rate, you have been read in your day, which is more than can be said of some of your contemporaries, of less fortune and more merit. They cannot say but what you *had* the crown. As for myself, I shall always deserve, at least, the unwilling tribute which Johnson paid to Churchill, when he said, though the fellow’s genius was a tree which bore only crabs, yet it was prolific, and had plenty of fruit, such as it was. It is always something to have engaged the public attention for seven years. Had I only written *Waverley*, I should have long since been, according to the established phrase, “the ingenious author of a novel much admired at the time.” I believe, on my soul, that the reputation of *Waverley* is sustained very much by the praises of those who may be inclined to prefer that tale to its successors.

Captain. You are willing, then, to barter future reputation for present popularity?

Author. *Meliora spero.* Horace himself expected not to survive in all his works—I may hope to live in some of mine;—*non omnis moriar.* It is some consolation to reflect, that the best authors in all countries have been the most voluminous; and it has often happened that those who have been best received in their own time, have also continued to be acceptable to posterity. I do not think so ill of the present generation, as to suppose that its present favour necessarily infers future condemnation.

Captain. Were all to act on such principles, the public would be inundated.

Author. Once more, my dear son, beware of cant. You speak as if the public were obliged to read books merely because they are printed—your friends the booksellers would thank you to make the proposition good. The most serious grievance attending such inundations as you talk of, is, that they make rags dear. The multiplicity of publications does the present age no harm, and may greatly advantage that which is to succeed us.

Captain. I do not see how that is to happen.

Author. The complaints in the time of Elizabeth and James, of the alarming fertility of the press, were as loud as they are at present—yet look at the shore over which the inundation of that age flowed, and it resembles now the rich strand of the Faery Queen—

— bestrew’d all with rich array,
Of pearl and precious stones of great assay;
And all the gravel mix’d with golden ore.

Believe me, that even in the most neglected works of the present age, the next may discover treasures.

Captain. Some books will defy all alchymy.

Author. They will be but few in number; since, as for writers who are possessed of no merit at all, unless, indeed, they publish their works at their own expense, like Sir Richard Blackmore, their power of annoying the public will be soon limited by the difficulty of finding undertaking booksellers.

Captain. You are incorrigible. Are there no bounds to your audacity?

Author. There are the sacred and eternal boundaries of honour and virtue. My course is like the enchanted chamber of Britomart—

Where, as she look'd about, she did behold
How over that same door was likewise writ,
Be bold—Be Bold, and everywhere *Be Bold*.
Whereat she mused, and could not construe it;
At last she spied at that room's upper end
Another iron door, on which was writ—
BE NOT TOO BOLD.

Captain. Well, you must take the risk of proceeding on your own principles.

Author. Do you act on yours, and take care you do not stay idling here till the dinner hour is over,—I will add this work to your patrimony, *valeat quantum*.

Here our dialogue terminated; for a little sooty-faced Apollyon from the Canongate came to demand the proof-sheet on the part of Mr M'Corkindale; and I heard Mr C. rebuking Mr F. in another compartment of the same labyrinth I have described, for suffering any one to penetrate so far into the *penetralia* of their temple.

I leave it to you to form your own opinion concerning the import of this dialogue, and I cannot but believe I shall meet the wishes of our common parent in prefixing this letter to the work which it concerns.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Very sincerely and affectionately

Yours, &c., &c.,

CUTHBERT CLUTTERBUCK.

Kennaquhair, 1st April, 1822.

CHAPTER I.

Now Scot and English are agreed,
And Saunders hastes to cross the Tweed,
Where, such the splendours that attend him,
His very mother scarce had kenn'd him.
His metamorphosis behold,
From Glasgow frieze to cloth of gold;
His back-sword, with the iron hilt,
To rapier, fairly hatch'd and gilt;
Was ever seen a gallant braver!
His very bonnet's grown a beaver.

The Reformation.

THE long-continued hostilities which had for centuries divided the south and the north divisions of the Island of Britain, had been happily terminated by the succession of the pacific James I. to the Eng-

lish crown. But although the united crown of England and Scotland was worn by the same individual, it required a long lapse of time, and the succession of more than one generation, ere the inveterate national prejudices which had so long existed betwixt the sister kingdoms were removed, and the subjects of either side of the Tweed brought to regard those upon the other bank as friends and as brethren.

These prejudices were, of course, most inveterate during the reign of King James. The English subjects accused him of partiality to those of his ancient kingdom; while the Scots, with equal injustice, charged him with having forgotten the land of his nativity, and with neglecting those early friends to whose allegiance he had been so much indebted.

The temper of the king, peaceable even to timidity, inclined him perpetually to interfere as mediator amongst the contending factions, whose brawls disturbed the court. But, notwithstanding all his precautions, historians have recorded many instances, where the mutual hatred of two nations, who, after being enemies for a thousand years, had been so very recently united, broke forth with a fury which menaced a general convulsion; and, spreading from the highest to the lowest classes, as it occasioned debates in council and parliament, factions in the court, and duels among the gentry, was no less productive of riots and brawls amongst those of the lower orders.

While these heart-burnings were at the highest, there flourished in the city of London an ingenious, but whimsical and self-opinioned mechanic, much devoted to abstract studies, David Ramsay by name, who, whether recommended by his great skill in his profession, as the courtiers alleged, or, as was murmured among his neighbours, by his birth-place, in the good town of Dalkeith, near Edinburgh, held in James's household the post of maker of watches and horologes to his majesty. He scorned not, however, to keep open shop within Temple-bar, a few yards to the eastward of Saint Dunstan's Church.

The shop of a London tradesman at that time, as it may be supposed, was something very different from those we now see in the same locality. The goods were exposed to sale in cases, only defended from the weather by a covering of canvas, and the whole resembled the stalls and booths now erected for the temporary accommodation of dealers at a country fair, rather than the established emporium of a respectable citizen. But most of the shopkeepers of note, and David Ramsay amongst others, had their booth connected with a small apartment which opened backward from it, and bore the same resemblance to the front shop that Robinson Crusoe's cavern did to the tent which he erected before it. To this Master Ramsay was often accustomed to retreat to the labour of his abstruse calculations; for he aimed at improvement and discoveries in his own art, and sometimes pushed his researches, like Napier, and other mathematicians of the period, into abstract science. When thus engaged, he left the outer posts of his commercial establishment to be maintained by two stout-bodied and strong-voiced apprentices, who kept up the cry of, "What d'ye lack? what d'ye lack?" accompanied with the appropriate recommendations of the articles in which

they dealt. This direct and personal application for custom to those who chanced to pass by, is now, we believe, limited to Monmouth-street (if it still exists even in that repository of ancient garments), under the guardianship of the scattered remnant of Israel. But at the time we are speaking of, it was practised alike by Jew and Gentile, and served, instead of all our present newspaper puffs and advertisements, to solicit the attention of the public in general, and of friends in particular, to the unrivaled excellence of the goods, which they offered to sale upon such easy terms, that it might fairly appear that the venders had rather a view to the general service of the public, than to their own particular advantage.

The verbal proclaimers of the excellence of their commodities, had this advantage over those who, in the present day, use the public papers for the same purpose, that they could in many cases adapt their address to the peculiar appearance and apparent taste of the passengers. [This, as we have said, was also the case in Monmouth-street in our remembrance. We have ourselves been reminded of the deficiencies of our femoral habiliments, and exhorted upon that score to fit ourselves more becomingly; but this is a digression.] This direct and personal mode of invitation to customers, became, however, a dangerous temptation to the young wags who were employed in the task of solicitation during the absence of the principal person interested in the traffic; and, confiding in their numbers and civic union, the 'prentices of London were often seduced into taking liberties with the passengers, and exercising their wit at the expense of those whom they had no hopes of converting into customers by their eloquence. If this was resented by any act of violence, the inmates of each shop were ready to pour forth in succour; and, in the words of an old song which Dr Johnson was used to hum,—

Up then rose the 'prentices all,
Living in London, both proper and tall.

Desperate riots often arose on such occasions, especially when the Templars, or other youths connected with the aristocracy, were insulted, or conceived themselves to be so. Upon such occasions, bare steel was frequently opposed to the clubs of the citizens, and death frequently ensued on both sides. The tardy and inefficient police of the time had no other resource than by the alderman of the ward calling out the householders, and putting a stop to the strife by overpowering numbers, as the Capulets and Montagues are separated upon the stage.

At the period when such was the universal custom of the most respectable, as well as the most inconsiderable shopkeepers in London, David Ramsay, upon the evening to which we solicit the attention of the reader, retiring to more abstruse and private labours, left the administration of his outer shop, or booth, to the aforesaid sharp, active, able-bodied, and well-voiced apprentices, namely, Jenkin Vincent and Frank Tunstall.

Vincent had been educated at the excellent foundation of Christ's-Church Hospital; and was bred, therefore, as well as born, a Londoner, with all the peculiar acuteness, and address, and audacity, which belong peculiarly to the youth of a metropolis. He

VOL. III.

was now about twenty years old, short in stature, but remarkably strong-made, eminent for his feats upon holidays at the foot-ball, and other gymnastic exercises; scarce rivaled in the broad-sword play, though hitherto only exercised in the form of single-stick. He knew every lane, blind alley, and sequestered court of the ward, better than his catechism; was alike active in his master's affairs, and in his own adventures of fun and mischief; and so managed matters, that the credit he acquired by the former bore him out, or at least served for his apology, when the latter propensity led him into scrapes, of which, however, it is but fair to state, that they had hitherto inferred nothing mean or discreditable. Some aberrations there were, which David Ramsay, his master, endeavoured to reduce to regular order when he discovered them, and others which he winked at—supposing them to answer the purpose of the escapement of a watch, which disposes of a certain quantity of the extra power of that mechanical impulse which puts the whole in motion.

The physiognomy of Jin Vin—by which abbreviation he was familiarly known through the ward—corresponded with the sketch we have given of his character. His head, upon which his 'prentice's flat cap was generally flung in a careless and oblique fashion, was closely covered with thick hair of raven black, which curled naturally and closely, and would have grown to great length, but for the modest custom enjoined by his state of life, and strictly enforced by his master, which compelled him to keep it short-cropped,—not unreluctantly, as he looked with envy on the flowing ringlets, in which the courtiers, and aristocratical students of the neighbouring Temple, began to indulge themselves, as marks of superiority and of gentility. Vincent's eyes were deep set in his head, of a strong vivid black, full of fire, roguery, and intelligence, and conveying a humorous expression, even while he was uttering the usual small-talk of his trade, as if he ridiculed those who were disposed to give any weight to his common-places. He had address enough, however, to add little touches of his own, which gave a turn of drollery even to this ordinary routine of the booth; and the alacrity of his manner—his ready and obvious wish to oblige—his intelligence and civility, when he thought civility necessary, made him a universal favourite with his master's customers. His features were far from regular, for his nose was flattish, his mouth tending to the larger size, and his complexion inclining to be more dark than was then thought consistent with masculine beauty. But then, in despite of his having always breathed the air of a crowded city, his complexion had the ruddy and manly expression of redundant health; his turned-up nose gave an air of spirit and raillery to what he said, and seconded the laugh of his eyes; and his wide mouth was garnished with a pair of well formed and well coloured lips, which, when he laughed, disclosed a range of teeth strong and well set, and as white as the very pearl. Such was the elder apprentice of David Ramsay, watch-maker, and constructor of horologes, to his Most Sacred Majesty, James I.

Jenkin's companion was the younger apprentice, though, perhaps, he might be the elder of the two in

years. At any rate, he was of a much more staid and composed temper. Francis Tunstall was of that ancient and proud descent who claimed the style of the "unstained;" because, amid the various chances of the long and bloody wars of the Roses, they had, with undeviating faith, followed the House of Lancaster, to which they had originally attached themselves. The meanest sprig of such a tree attached importance to the root from which he derived himself; and Tunstall was supposed to nourish in secret a proportion of that family pride, which had extorted tears from his widowed and almost indigent mother, when she saw herself obliged to consign him to a line of life inferior, as her prejudices suggested, to the course held by his progenitors. Yet, with all this aristocratic prejudice, his master found the well-born youth more docile, regular, and strictly attentive to his duty, than his far more active and alert comrade. Tunstall also gratified his master by the particular attention which he seemed disposed to bestow on the abstract principles of science connected with the trade which he was bound to study, the limits of which were daily enlarged with the increase of mathematical science.

Vincent beat his companion beyond the distance-post, in everything like the practical adaptation of thorough practice, in the dexterity of hand necessary to execute the mechanical branches of the art, and double-distanced him in all respecting the commercial affairs of the shop. Still David Ramsay was wont to say, that if Vincent knew how to do a thing the better of the two, Tunstall was much better acquainted with the principles on which it ought to be done; and he sometimes objected to the latter, that he knew critical excellence too well ever to be satisfied with practical mediocrity.

The disposition of Tunstall was shy, as well as studious; and, though perfectly civil and obliging, he never seemed to feel himself in his place while he went through the duties of the shop. He was tall and handsome, with fair hair, and well formed limbs, good features, light-blue eyes, well opened, a straight Grecian nose, and a countenance which expressed both good humour and intelligence, but qualified by a gravity unsuitable to his years, and which almost amounted to dejection. He lived on the best terms with his companion, and readily stood by him whenever he was engaged in any of the frequent skirmishes, which, as we have already observed, often disturbed the city of London about this period. But though Tunstall was allowed to understand quarter-staff (the weapon of the north country) in a superior degree, and though he was naturally both strong and active, his interference in such affrays seemed always matter of necessity; and, as he never voluntarily joined either their brawls or their sports, he held a far lower place in the opinion of the youth of the ward, than his hearty and active friend Jin Vin. Nay, had it not been for the interest made for his comrade, by the intercession of Vincent, Tunstall would have stood some chance of being altogether excluded from the society of his contemporaries of the same condition, who called him, in scorn, the Cavaliero Cuddy, and the Gentle Tunstall. On the other hand, the lad himself, deprived of the fresh air in which he had been

brought up, and foregoing the exercise to which he had been formerly accustomed, while the inhabitant of his native mansion, lost gradually the freshness of his complexion, and, without exhibiting any formal symptoms of disease, grew more thin and pale as he grew older, and at length exhibited the appearance of indifferent health, without anything of the habits and complaints of an invalid, excepting a disposition to avoid society, and to spend his leisure time in private study, rather than mingle in the sports of his companions, or even resort to the theatres, then the general rendezvous of his class; where, according to high authority, they fought for half-bitten apples, cracked nuts, and filled the upper gallery with their clamours.

Such were the two youths who called David Ramsay master; and with both of whom he used to fret from morning till night, as their peculiarities interfered with his own, or with the quiet and beneficial course of his traffic.

Upon the whole, however, the youths were attached to their master, and he, a good-natured, though an absent and whimsical man, was scarce less so to them; and, when a little warmed with wine at an occasional junketing, he used to boast, in his northern dialect, of his "twa bonnie lads, and the looks that the court ladies threw at them, when visiting his shop in their caroches, when on a frolic into the city." But David Ramsay never failed, at the same time, to draw up his own tall, thin, lathy skeleton, extend his lean jaws into an alarming grin, and indicate, by a nod of his yard-long visage, and a twinkle of his little grey eye, that there might be more faces in Fleet-street worth looking at than those of Frank and Jenkin. His old neighbour, Widow Simmons, the sempstress, who had served, in her day, the very tip-top revelers of the Temple, with ruffs, cuffs, and bands, distinguished more deeply the sort of attention paid by the females of quality, who so regularly visited David Ramsay's shop, to its inmates. "The boy Frank," she admitted, "used to attract the attention of the young ladies, as having something gentle and downcast in his looks; but then he could not better himself, for the poor youth had not a word to throw at a dog. Now Jin Vin was so full of his gibes and his jeers, and so willing, and so ready, and so serviceable, and so mannerly all the while, with his step that sprung like a buck's in Epping Forest, and his eye that twinkled as black as a gipsy's, that no woman who knew the world would make a comparison betwixt the lads. As for poor neighbour Ramsay himself, the man," she said, "was a civil neighbour, and a learned man, doubtless, and might be a rich man, if he had common sense to back his learning; and doubtless, for a Scot, neighbour Ramsay was nothing of a bad man; but he was so constantly grimed with smoke, gilded with brass filings, and smeared with lamp-black and oil, that Dame Simmons judged it would require his whole shopful of watches to induce any feasible woman to touch the said neighbour Ramsay with anything save a pair of tongs."

A still higher authority, Dame Ursula, wife to Benjamin Suddlechops, the barber, was of exactly the same opinion.

Such were, in natural qualities and public estimation, the two youths, who, in a fine April day,

having first rendered their dutiful service and attendance on the table of their master and his daughter, at their dinner at one o'clock,—Such, O ye lads of London, was the severe discipline undergone by your predecessors!—and having regaled themselves upon the fragments, in company with two female domestics, one a cook, and maid of all work, the other called Mistress Margaret's maid, now relieved their master in the duty of the outward shop; and, agreeably to the established custom, were soliciting, by their entreaties and recommendations of their master's manufacture, the attention and encouragement of the passengers.

In this species of service it may be easily supposed that Jenkin Vincent left his more reserved and bashful comrade far in the back-ground. The latter could only articulate with difficulty, and as an act of duty which he was rather ashamed of discharging, the established words of form—"What d'ye lack?—What d'ye lack?—Clocks—watches—barnacles?—What d'ye lack?—Watches—clocks—barnacles?—What d'ye lack, sir?—What d'ye lack, madam?—Barnacles—watches—clocks?"

But this dull and dry iteration, however varied by diversity of verbal arrangement, sounded flat when mingled with the rich and commendatory oratory of the bold-faced, deep-mouthed, and ready-witted Jenkin Vincent.—"What d'ye lack, noble sir?—What d'ye lack, beauteous madam?" he said, in a tone at once bold and soothing, which often was so applied as both to gratify the persons addressed, and to excite a smile from other hearers.—"God bless your reverence," to a beneficed clergyman; "the Greek and Hebrew have blinded your reverence's eyes—Buy a pair of David Ramsay's barnacles! The king—God bless his sacred majesty!—never reads Hebrew or Greek without them."

"Are you well avised of that?" said a fat parson from the Vale of Evesham. "Nay, if the head of the church wears them,—God bless his sacred majesty!—I will try what they can do for me; for I have not been able to distinguish one Hebrew letter from another, since—I cannot remember the time—when I had a bad fever. Chuse me a pair of his most sacred majesty's own wearing, my good youth."

"This is a pair, and please your reverence," said Jenkin, producing a pair of spectacles which he touched with an air of great deference and respect, "which his most blessed majesty placed this day three weeks on his own blessed nose; and would have kept them for his own sacred use, but that the setting being, as your reverence sees, of the purest jet, was, as his sacred majesty was pleased to say, fitter for a bishop, than for a secular prince."

"His sacred majesty the king," said the worthy divine, "was ever a very Daniel in his judgment. Give me the barnacles, my good youth, and who can say what nose they may bestride in two years hence—our reverend brother of Gloucester waxes in years." He then pulled out his purse, paid for the spectacles, and left the shop with even a more important step than that which had paused to enter it.

"For shame," said Tunstall to his companion;

"these glasses will never suit one of his years."

"You are a fool, Frank," said Vincent in reply; "had the good doctor wished glasses to read with, he would have tried them before buying. He does not want to look through them himself, and these will serve the purpose of being looked at by other folks, as well as the best magnifiers in the shop.—What d'ye lack?" he cried, resuming his solicitations. "Mirrors for your toilette, my pretty madam; your head-gear is something awry—pity, since it is so well fancied." The woman stopped and bought a mirror.—"What d'ye lack?—a watch, Master Serjeant—a watch that will go as steady and true as your own eloquence?"

"Hold your peace, sir," answered the knight of the coif, who was disturbed by Vin's address whilst in deep consultation with an eminent attorney; "hold your peace! You are the loudest-tongued varlet betwixt the Devil's Tavern and Guild-hall."

"A watch," reiterated the undaunted Jenkin, "that shall not lose thirteen minutes in a thirteen years' law-suit.—He's out of hearing—A watch with four wheels and a bar-movement—a watch that shall tell you, Master Poet, how long the patience of the audience will endure your next piece at the Black Bull." The bard laughed, and fumbled in the pocket of his slops till he chased into a corner, and fairly caught, a small piece of coin.

"Here is a tester to cherish thy wit, good boy," he said.

"Gramercy," said Vin; "at the next play of yours I will bring down a set of roaring boys that shall make all the critics in the pit, and the gallants on the stage, civil, or else the curtain shall smoke for it."

"Now, that I call mean," said Tunstall, "to take the poor rhymers' money, who has so little left behind."

"You are an owl, once again," said Vincent, "if he has nothing left to buy cheese and radishes, he will only dine a day the sooner with some patron or some player, for that is his fate five days out of the seven. It is unnatural that a poet should pay for his own pot of beer; I will drink his tester for him, to save him from such shame; and when his third night comes round, he shall have pennyworths for his coin, I promise you.—But here comes another-guess customer. Look at that strange fellow—see how he gapes at every shop, as if he would swallow the wares.—O! Saint Dunstan has caught his eye; pray God he swallow not the images. See how he stands astonished, as old Adam and Eve ply their ding-dong! Come, Frank, thou art a scholar; construe me that same fellow, with his blue cap with a cock's feather in it, to show he's of gentle blood, God wot—his grey eyes, his yellow hair, his sword with a ton of iron in the handle—his grey thread-bare cloak—his step like a Frenchman—his look like a Spaniard—a book at his girdle, and a broad dudgeon-dagger on the other side, to show him half-pedant, half-bully. How call you that pageant, Frank?"

"A raw Scotchman," said Tunstall; "just come up, I suppose, to help the rest of his countrymen to gnaw old England's bones; a palmer-worm, I reckon, to devour what the locust has spared."

"Even so, Frank," answered Vincent; "just as the poet sings sweetly,—

In Scotland he was born and bred,
And, though a beggar, must be fed."

"Hush!" said Tunstall, "remember our master."

"Pshaw!" answered his mercurial companion; "he knows on which side his bread is buttered, and, I warrant you, has not lived so long among Englishmen, and by Englishmen, to quarrel with us for bearing an English mind. But see, our Scot has done gazing at Saint Dunstan's, and comes our way. By this light, a proper lad and a sturdy, in spite of freckles and sun-burning.—He comes nearer still; I will have at him."

"And if you do," said his comrade, "you may get a broken head—he looks not as if he would carry coals."

"A fig for your threat," said Vincent, and instantly addressed the stranger. "Buy a watch, most noble northern thane—buy a watch, to count the hours of plenty since the blessed moment you left Berwick behind you.—Buy barnacles, to see the English gold lies ready for your gripe.—Buy what you will, you shall have credit for three days; for, were your pockets as bare as Father Fergus's, you are a Scot in London, and you will be stocked in that time." The stranger looked sternly at the waggish apprentice, and seemed to grasp his cudgel in rather a menacing fashion. "Buy physic," said the undaunted Vincent, "if you will buy neither time nor light—physic for a proud stomach, sir; there is a 'pothecary's shop on the other side of the way."

Here the probationary disciple of Galen, who stood at his master's door in his flat cap and canvas sleeves, with a large wooden pestle in his hand, took up the ball which was flung to him by Jenkin, with, "What d'ye lack, sir?—Buy a choice Caledonian salve, *Flos sulphur. cum butyro quant. suff.*"

"To be taken after a gentle rubbing-down with an English oaken towel," said Vincent.

The bonny Scot had given full scope to the play of this small artillery of city wit, by halting his stately pace, and viewing grimly, first the one assailant and then the other, as if menacing either repartee or more violent revenge. But phlegm or prudence got the better of his indignation, and, tossing his head as one who valued not the raillery to which he had been exposed, he walked down Fleet-street, pursued by the horse-laugh of his tormentors.

"The Scot will not fight till he see his own blood," said Tunstall, whom his north of England extraction had made familiar with all manner of proverbs against those who lay yet farther north than himself.

"Faith, I know not," said Jenkin; "he looks dangerous, that fellow—he will hit some one over the noddle before he goes far. Hark!—hark!—they are rising."

Accordingly, the well-known cry of, "'Prentices—'prentices—Clubs—clubs!" now rang along Fleet-street; and Jenkin, snatching up his weapon, which lay beneath the counter ready at the slightest notice, and calling to Tunstall to take his bat and

follow, leaped over the hatch-door which protected the outer shop, and ran as fast as he could towards the affray, echoing the cry as he ran, and elbowing, or shoving aside, whosoever stood in his way. His comrade, first calling to his master to give an eye to the shop, followed Jenkin's example, and ran after him as fast as he could, but with more attention to the safety and convenience of others; while old David Ramsay, with hands and eyes uplifted, a green apron before him, and a glass which he had been polishing thrust into his bosom, came forth to look after the safety of his goods and chattels, knowing, by old experience, that, when the cry of "Clubs" once arose, he would have little aid on the part of his apprentices.

CHAPTER II.

This, sir, is one among the seignory,
Has wealth at will, and will to use his wealth,
And wit to increase it. Marry, his worst folly
Lies in a thriftless sort of charity,
That goes a-gadding sometimes after objects
Which wise men will not see when thrust upon them.

The Old Couple.

THE ancient gentleman bustled about his shop, in pettish displeasure at being summoned hither so hastily, to the interruption of his more abstract studies; and, unwilling to renounce the train of calculation which he had put in progress, he mingled whimsically with the fragments of the arithmetical operation, his oratory to the passengers, and angry reflections on his idle apprentices. "What d'ye lack, sir? Madam, what d'ye lack—clocks for hall or table—night-watches—day-watches?—*Locking wheel being 48—the power of retort, 8—the striking pins are 48*—What d'ye lack, honoured sir?—*The quotient—the multiplicand*—That the knaves should have gone out at this blessed minute!—*the acceleration being at the rate of 5 minutes, 55 seconds, 53 thirds, 59 fourths*—I will switch them both when they come back—I will, by the bones of the immortal Napier!"

Here the vexed philosopher was interrupted by the entrance of a grave citizen of a most respectable appearance, who, saluting him familiarly by the name of "Davie, my old acquaintance," demanded what had put him so much out of sorts, and gave him at the same time a cordial grasp of his hand.

The stranger's dress was, though grave, rather richer than usual. His paned hose were of black velvet, lined with purple silk, which garniture appeared at the slashes. His doublet was of purple cloth, and his short cloak of black velvet to correspond with his hose; and both were adorned with a great number of small silver buttons richly wrought in filagree. A triple chain of gold hung round his neck; and, in place of a sword or dagger, he wore at his belt an ordinary knife for the purpose of the table, with a small silver case, which appeared to contain writing materials. He might have seemed some secretary or clerk engaged in the service of the public, only that his low, flat, and unadorned cap, and his well-blackened shining shoes, indicated

that he belonged to the city. He was a well-made man, about the middle size, and seemed firm in health, though advanced in years. His looks expressed sagacity and good humour; and the air of respectability which his dress announced, was well supported by his clear eye, ruddy cheek, and grey hair. He used the Scottish idiom in his first address, but in such a manner that it could hardly be distinguished whether he was passing upon his friend a sort of jocose mockery, or whether it was his own native dialect, for his ordinary discourse had little provincialism.

In answer to the queries of his respectable friend, Ramsay groaned heavily, answering by echoing back the question, "What ails me, Master George? Why, everything ails me! I profess to you that a man may as well live in fairy-land as in the Ward of Farringdon-Without. My apprentices are turned into mere goblins—they appear and disappear like spunkies, and have no more regularity in them than a watch without a scapement. If there is a ball to be tossed up, or a bullock to be driven mad, or a quean to be ducked for scolding, or a head to be broken, Jenkin is sure to be at the one end or the other of it, and then away skips Francis Tunstall for company. I think the prize-fighters, bear-leaders, and mountebanks, are in a league against me, my dear friend, and that they pass my house ten times for any other in the city. Here's an Italian fellow comes over too, that they call Punchinello; and altogether"—

"Well," interrupted Master George, "but what is all this to the present case?"

"Why," replied Ramsay, "here has been a cry of thieves or murder (I hope that will prove the least of it amongst these English pock-pudding swine!), and I have been interrupted in the deepest calculation ever mortal man plunged into, Master George."

"What, man!" replied Master George, "you must take patience—You are a man that deals in time, and can make it go fast and slow at pleasure; you, of all the world, have least reason to complain, if a little of it be lost now and then. But here come your boys, and bringing in a slain man betwixt them, I think—here has been serious mischief, I am afraid."

"The more mischief the better sport," said the crabbed old watch-maker. "I am blithe, though, that it's neither of the twa loons themselves.—What are ye bringing a corpse here for, ye fause villains?" he added, addressing the two apprentices, who, at the head of a considerable mob of their own class, some of whom bore evident marks of a recent fray, were carrying the body betwixt them.

"He is not dead yet, sir," answered Tunstall.

"Carry him into the apothecary's then," replied his master. "D'ye think I can set a man's life in motion again, as if he were a clock or a time-piece?"

"For God's sake, old friend," said his acquaintance, "let us have him here at the nearest—he seems only in a swoon."

"A swoon!" said Ramsay, "and what business had he to swoon in the streets? Only, if it will oblige my friend Master George, I would take in all the dead men in St Dunstan's parish. Call Sam Porter to look after the shop."

So saying, the stunned man, being the identical Scotsman who had passed a short time before amidst the jeers of the apprentices, was carried into the back shop of the artist, and there placed in an armed chair till the apothecary from over the way came to his assistance. This gentleman, as sometimes happens to those of the learned professions, had rather more lore than knowledge, and began to talk of the sinciput and occiput, and cerebrum and cerebellum, until he exhausted David Ramsay's brief stock of patience.

"Bell-um! bell-ell-um!" he repeated, with great indignation; "What signify all the bells in London, if you do not put a plaister on the chield's crown?"

Master George, with better directed zeal, asked the apothecary whether bleeding might not be useful; when, after humming and hawing for a moment, and being unable, upon the spur of the occasion, to suggest anything else, the man of pharmacy observed, that it would, at all events, relieve the brain or cerebrum, in case there was a tendency to the deposition of any extravasated blood, to operate as a pressure upon that delicate organ. Fortunately he was adequate to performing this operation; and, being powerfully aided by Jenkin Vincent (who was learned in all cases of broken head), with plenty of cold water, and a little vinegar, applied according to the scientific method practised by the bottle-holders in a modern ring, the man began to raise himself on his chair, draw his cloak tightly around him, and look about like one who struggles to recover sense and recollection.

"He had better lie down on the bed in the little back closet," said Mr Ramsay's visitor, who seemed perfectly familiar with the accommodations which the house afforded.

"He is welcome to my share of the truckle," said Jenkin,—for in the said back closet were the two apprentices accommodated in one truckle-bed,—"I can sleep under the counter."

"So can I," said Tunstall, "and the poor fellow can have the bed all night."

"Sleep," said the apothecary, "is, in the opinion of Galen, a restorative and febrifuge, and is most naturally taken in a truckle-bed."

"Where a better cannot be come by,"—said Master George; "but these are two honest lads, to give up their beds so willingly. Come, off with his cloak, and let us bear him to his couch—I will send for Dr Irving the king's chirurgion—he does not live far off, and that shall be my share of the Samaritan's duty, neighbour Ramsay."

"Well, sir," said the apothecary, "it is at your pleasure to send for other advice, and I shall not object to consult with Dr Irving or any other medical person of skill, neither to continue to furnish such drugs as may be needful from my pharmacopœia. However, whatever Dr Irving, who, I think, hath had his degrees in Edinburgh, or Dr Any-one-beside, be he Scottish or English, may say to the contrary, sleep, taken timeously, is a febrifuge, or sedative, and also a restorative."

He muttered a few more learned words, and concluded by informing Ramsay's friend in English far more intelligible than his Latin, that he would look to him as his paymaster, for medicines, care, and

attendance, furnished, or to be furnished, to this party unknown.

Master George only replied by desiring him to send his bill for what he had already to charge, and to give himself no farther trouble unless he heard from him. The pharmacopolist, who, from discoveries made by the cloak falling a little aside, had no great opinion of the faculty of this chance patient to make reimbursement, had no sooner seen his case espoused by a substantial citizen, than he showed some reluctance to quit possession of it, and it required a short and stern hint from Master George, which, with all his good humour, he was capable of expressing when occasion served, to send to his own dwelling this Esculapius of Templebar.

When they were rid of Mr Raredrench, the charitable efforts of Jenkin and Francis, to divest the patient of his long grey cloak, were firmly resisted on his part.—“My life suner—my life suner,” he muttered in indistinct murmurs. In these efforts to retain his upper garment, which was too tender to resist much handling, it gave way at length with a loud rent, which almost threw the patient into a second syncope, and he sat before them in his under garments, the looped and repaired wretchedness of which moved at once pity and laughter, and had certainly been the cause of his unwillingness to resign the mantle, which, like the virtue of charity, served to cover so many imperfections.

The man himself cast his eyes on his poverty-struck garb, and seemed so much ashamed of the disclosure, that, muttering between his teeth, that he would be too late for an appointment, he made an effort to rise and leave the shop, which was easily prevented by Jenkin Vincent and his comrade, who, at the nod of Master George, laid hold of and detained him in his chair. The patient next looked round him for a moment, and then said faintly, in his broad northern language—“What sort of usage ca’ ye this, gentlemen, to a stranger and a sojourner in your town? Ye hae broken my head—ye hae riven my cloak, and now ye are for restraining my personal liberty! They were wiser than me,” he said, after a moment’s pause, “that counseled me to wear my warst claithing in the streets of London; and, if I could have got ony things worse than these mean garments”—(“Which would have been very difficult,” said Jin Vin, in a whisper, to his companion) “they would have been e’en ower gude for the grips o’ men sae little acquainted with the laws of honest civility.”

“To say the truth,” said Jenkin, unable to forbear any longer, although the discipline of the times prescribed to those in his situation a degree of respectful distance and humility in the presence of parents, masters, or seniors, of which the present age has no idea—“To say truth, the good gentleman’s clothes look as if they would not brook much handling.”

“Hold your peace, young man,” said Master George, with a tone of authority; “never mock the stranger or the poor—the black ox has not trod on your foot yet—you know not what lands you may travel in, or what clothes you may wear, before you die.”

Vincent held down his head and stood rebuked,

but the stranger did not accept the apology which was made for him.

“I am a stranger, sir,” said he, “that is certain; though methinks, that, being such, I have been somewhat familiarly treated in this town of yours;—but, as for my being poor, I think I need not be charged with poverty, till I seek siller of somebody.”

“The dear country all over,” said Master George, in a whisper, to David Ramsay, “pride and poverty.”

But David had taken out his tablets and silver pen, and, deeply immersed in calculations, in which he rambled over all the terms of arithmetic, from the simple unit to millions, billions, and trillions, neither heard nor answered the observation of his friend, who, seeing his abstraction, turned again to the Scot.

“I fancy now, Jockey, if a stranger were to offer you a noble, you would chuck it back at his head?”

“Not if I could do him honest service for it, sir,” said the Scot; “I am willing to do what I may to be useful, though I come of an honourable house, and may be said to be in a sort indifferently weel provided for.”

“Ay!” said the interrogator, “and what house may claim the honour of your descent?”

“An ancient coat belongs to it, as the play says,” whispered Vincent to his companion.

“Come, Jockey, out with it,” continued Master George, observing that the Scot, as usual with his countrymen, when asked a blunt, straight-forward question, took a little time before answering it.

“I am no more Jockey, sir, than you are John,” said the stranger, as if offended at being addressed by a name, which at that time was used, as Sawney now is, for a general appellative of the Scottish nation. “My name, if you must know it, is Richie Moniplies; and I come of the old and honourable house of Castle Collop, weel kenn’d at the West-port of Edinburgh.”

“What is that you call the West-port?” proceeded the interrogator.

“Why, an it like your honour,” said Richie, who now, having recovered his senses sufficiently to observe the respectable exterior of Master George, threw more civility into his manner than at first, the West-port is a gate of our city, as yonder brick arches at Whitehall form the entrance of the king’s palace here, only that the West-port is of stonern work, and mair decorated with architecture and the policy of bigging.”

“Nouns, man, the Whitehall gate-ways were planned by the great Holbein,” answered Master George; “I suspect your accident has jumbled your brains, my good friend. I suppose you will tell me next, you have at Edinburgh as fine a navigable river as the Thames, with all its shipping?”

“The Thames!” exclaimed Richie, in a tone of ineffable contempt—“God bless your honour’s judgment, we have at Edinburgh the Water of Leith and the Nor-loch!”

“And the Pow-burn, and the Quarry-holes, and the Gusedub, fause loon!” answered Master George, speaking Scotch with a strong and natural emphasis; “it is such land-loupers as you that, with your falset

and fair fashions, bring reproach on our whole country."

"God forgie me, sir," said Richie, much surprised at finding the supposed southron converted into a native Scot, "I took your honour for an Englisher! But I hope there was naething wrang in standing up for ane's ain country's credit in a strange land, where all men cry her down."

"Do you call it for your country's credit, to show that she has a lying, puffing rascal, for one of her children?" said Master George. "But come, man, never look grave on it,—as you have found a countryman, so you have found a friend, if you deserve one—and specially if you answer me truly."

"I see nae gude it wad do me to speak ought else but truth," said the worthy North Briton.

"Well then—to begin," said Master George, "I suspect you are a son of old Mungo Moniplies, the flesher, at the West-port."

"Your honour is a witch, I think," said Richie, grinning.

"And how dared you, sir, to uphold him for a noble?"

"I dinna ken, sir," said Richie, scratching his head; "I hear mickle of an Earl of Warwick in these southern parts,—Guy, I think his name was,—and he has great reputation here for slaying dun cows, and boars, and such like; and I am sure my father has killed more cows and boars, not to mention bulls, calves, sheep, ewes, lambs, and pigs, than the haill baronage of England."

"Go to! you are a shrewd knave," said Master George; "charm your tongue, and take care of saucy answers. Your father was an honest burgher, and the deacon of his craft: I am sorry to see his son in so poor a coat."

"Indifferent, sir," said Richie Moniplies, looking down on his garments—"very indifferent; but it is the wonted livery of poor burghers' sons in our country—one of Luckie Want's bestowing upon us—rest us patient. The king's leaving Scotland has taken all custom frae Edinburgh; and there is hay made at the Cross, and a dainty crop of fouats in the Grass-market. There is as much grass grows where my father's stall stood, as might have been a good bite for the beasts he was used to kill."

"It is even too true," said Master George; "and while we make fortunes here, our old neighbours and their families are starving at home. This should be thought upon oftener.—And how came you by that broken head, Richie?—tell me honestly."

"Troth, sir, I'se no lee about the matter," answered Moniplies. "I was coming along the street here, and ilk ane was at me with their jests and roguery. So I thought to mysell, ye are ower mony for me to mell with; but let me catch ye in Barford's Park, or at the fit of the Vennel, I could gar some of ye sing another sang. Sae ae auld hirpling deevil of a potter behoved just to step in my way and offer me a pig, as he said, just to put my Scotch ointment in, and I gave him a push, as but natural, and the tottering deevil couped ower among his ain pigs, and damaged a score of them. And then the reird raise, and hadna these twa gentlemen helped me out of it, murdered I suld hae been, without remeid. And as it was, just when they got haud of my arm to

have me out of the fray, I got the lick that donnerit me from a left-handed lighter-man."

Master George looked to the apprentices as if to demand the truth of this story.

"It is just as he says, sir," replied Jenkin; "only I heard nothing about pigs.—The people said he had broke some crockery, and that—I beg pardon, sir—nobody could thrive within the kenning of a Scot."

"Well, no matter what they said, you were an honest fellow to help the weaker side—And you, sirrah," continued Master George, addressing his countryman, "will call at my house to-morrow morning, agreeable to this direction."

"I will wait upon your honour," said the Scot, bowing very low; "that is, if my honourable master will permit me."

"Thy master?" said George,—"Hast thou any other master save Want, whose livery you say you wear?"

"Troth, in one sense, if it please your honour, I serve twa masters," said Richie; "for both my master and me are slaves to that same beldame, whom we thought to show our heels to by coming off from Scotland. So that you see, sir, I hold in a sort of black ward tenure, as we call it in our country, being the servant of a servant."

"And what is your master's name?" said George; and observing that Richie hesitated, he added, "Nay, do not tell me, if it is a secret."

"A secret that there is little use in keeping," said Richie; "only ye ken that our northern stomachs are ower proud to call in witnesses to our distress. No that my master is in mair than present pinch, sir," he added, looking towards the two English apprentices, "having a large sum in the royal treasury—that is," he continued, in a whisper to Master George,—"the king is owing him a lot of siller; but it's ill getting at it, it's like.—My master is the young Lord Glenvarloch."

Master George testified surprise at the name—"You one of the young Lord Glenvarloch's followers, and in such a condition!"

"Troth, and I am all the followers he has, for the present that is; and blithe wad I be if he were muckle better off than I am, though I were to bide as I am."

"I have seen his father with four gentlemen and ten lackeys at his heels," said Master George, "rustling in their laces and velvets. Well, this is a changeful world, but there is a better beyond it.—The good old house of Glenvarloch, that stood by king and country five hundred years!"

"Your honour may say a thousand," said the follower.

"I will say what I know to be true, friend," said the citizen, "and not a word more.—You seem well recovered now—can you walk?"

"Bravely, sir," said Richie; "it was but a bit dover. I was bred at the West-port, and my cantle will stand a clour wad bring a stot down."

"Where does your master lodge?"

"We pit up, an it like your honour," replied the Scot, "in a sma' house at the fit of ane of the wynds that gang down to the water-side, with a decent man, John Christie, a ship-chandler as they ca't.

His father came from Dundee. I wotna the name of the wynd, but it's right anent the mickle kirk yonder; and your honour will mind, that we pass only by our family name of simple Mr Nigel Oli-faunt, as keeping ourselves retired for the present, though in Scotland we be called the Lord Nigel."

"It is wisely done of your master," said the citizen. "I will find out your lodgings, though your direction be none of the clearest." So saying, and slipping a piece of money, at the same time, into Richie Moniplies's hand, he bade him hasten home, and get into no more affrays.

"I will take care of that now, sir," said Richie, with a look of importance, "having a charge about me. And so, wussing ye a' weel, with special thanks to these twa young gentlemen"—

"I am no gentleman," said Jenkin, flinging his cap on his head—"I am a tight London 'prentice, and hope to be a freeman one day. Frank may write himself gentleman if he will."

"I was a gentleman once," said Tunstall, "and I hope I have done nothing to lose the name of one."

"Weel, weel, as ye list," said Richie Moniplies; "but I am mickle beholden to ye baith—and I am not a hair the less like to bear it in mind that I say but little about it just now. Gude night to you, my kind countryman." So saying, he thrust out of the sleeve of his ragged doublet a long bony hand and arm, on which the muscles rose like whip-cord.—Master George shook it heartily, while Jenkin and Frank exchanged sly looks with each other.

Richie Moniplies would next have addressed his thanks to the master of the shop, but seeing him, as he afterwards said, "scribbling on his bit bookie, as if he were demented," he contented his politeness with "giving him a hat," and so left the shop.

"Now, there goes Scotch Jockey, with all his bad and good about him," said Master George to Master David, who suspended, though unwillingly, the calculations with which he was engaged; and, keeping his pen within an inch of the tablets, gazed on his friend with great lack-lustre eyes, which expressed anything rather than intelligence or interest in the discourse addressed to him. "That fellow," proceeded Master George, without heeding his friend's state of abstraction, "shows with great liveliness of colouring how our Scotch pride and poverty makes liars and braggarts of us; and yet the knave, whose every third word to an Englishman is a boastful lie, will, I warrant you, be a true and tender friend and follower to his master, and has, perhaps, parted with his mantle to him in the cold blast, although he walked himself *in cuerpo*, as the don says. Strange! that courage and fidelity—for I will warrant that the knave is stout—should have no better companion than this swaggering braggadocio humour. But you mark me not, friend Davie."

"I do—I do, most heedfully," said Davie. "For, as the sun goeth round the dial-plate in twenty-four hours, add, for the moon, fifty minutes and a half"—

"You are in the seventh heavens, man," said his companion.

"I crave your pardon," replied Davie.—"Let the wheel A go round in twenty-four hours—I have it—and the wheel B in twenty-four hours, fifty minutes and a half—fifty-seven being to fifty-four, as

fifty-nine to twenty-four hours, fifty minutes and a half, or very nearly.—I crave your forgiveness, Master George, and heartily wish you good even."

"Good even!" said Master George; "why, you have not wished me good day yet. Come, old friend, lay by these tablets, or you will crack the inner machinery of *your* skull, as our friend yonder has got the outer case of his damaged.—Good night, quotha! I mean not to part with you so easily. I came to get my four-hours' nunchion from you, man, besides a tune on the lute from my god-daughter, Mrs Marget."

"Good faith! I was abstracted, Master George—but you know me. Whenever I get amongst the wheels," said Mr Ramsay, "why, 'tis"—

"Lucky that you deal in small ones," said his friend; as, awakened from his reveries and calculations, Ramsay led the way up a little back-stair to the first story, occupied by his daughter, and his little household.

The apprentices resumed their places in the front shop, and relieved Sam Porter; when Jenkin said to Tunstall—"Didst see, Frank, how the old goldsmith cottoned in with his beggarly countryman? When would one of his having have shaken hands so courteously with a poor Englishman?—Well, I'll say that for the best of the Scots, that they will go over head and ears to serve a countryman, when they will not wet a nail of their finger to save a southron, as they call us, from drowning. And yet Master George is but half-bred Scot neither in that respect; for I have known him do many a kind thing to the English too."

"But hark ye, Jenkin," said Tunstall, "I think you are but half-bred English yourself. How came you to strike on the Scotsman's side after all?"

"Why, you did so too," answered Vincent.

"Ay, because I saw you begin; and, besides, it is no Cumberland fashion to fall fifty upon one," replied Tunstall.

"And no Christ-Church fashion neither," said Jenkin. "Fair play and old England for ever!—Besides, to tell you a secret, his voice had a twang in it—in the dialect I mean—reminded me of a little tongue, which I think sweeter—sweeter than the last toll of St Dunstan's will sound, on the day that I am shot of my indentures.—Ha!—you guess who I mean, Frank?"

"Not I, indeed," answered Tunstall.—"Scotch Janet, I suppose, the laundress."

"Off with Janet in her own bucking-basket!—no, no, no!—You blind buzzard,—do you not know I mean pretty Mrs Marget!"

"Umph!" answered Tunstall, drily.

A flash of anger, not unmingled with suspicion, shot from Jenkin's keen black eyes.

"Umph!—and what signifies umph? I am not the first 'prentice has married his master's daughter, I think?"

"They kept their own secret, I fancy," said Tunstall; "at least, till they were out of their time."

"I tell you what it is, Frank," answered Jenkin, sharply, "that may be the fashion of you gentle-folks, that are taught from your biggen to carry two faces under the same hood, but it shall never be mine."

"There are the stairs, then," said Tunstall, coolly; "go up and ask Mrs Marget of our master just now, and see what sort of a face he will wear under *his* hood."

"No, I wonnot," answered Jenkin; "I am not such a fool as that neither. But I will take my own time; and all the Counts in Cumberland shall not cut my comb, and this is that which you may depend upon."

Francis made no reply; and they resumed their usual attention to the business of the shop, and their usual solicitations to the passengers.

CHAPTER III.

Bobadil. I pray you, possess no gallant of your acquaintance with a knowledge of my lodging.

Master Matthew. Who, I, sir?—Lord, sir!

BEN JONSON.

THE next morning found Nigel Olifaunt, the young Lord of Glenvarloch, seated, sad and solitary, in his little apartment, in the mansion of John Christie the ship-chandler; which that honest tradesman, in gratitude perhaps to the profession from which he derived his chief support, seemed to have constructed as nearly as possible upon the plan of a ship's cabin.

It was situated near to Paul's Wharf, at the end of one of those intricate and narrow lanes, which, until that part of the city was swept away by the great fire in 1666, constituted an extraordinary labyrinth of small, ark, damp, and unwholesome streets and alleys, in one corner or other of which the plague was then as surely found lurking, as in the obscure corners of Constantinople in our own time. But John Christie's house looked out upon the river, and had the advantage, therefore, of free air; impregnated, however, with the odoriferous fumes of the articles in which the ship-chandler dealt, with the odour of pitch, and the natural scent of the ouze and sludge left by the reflux of the tide.

Upon the whole, except that his dwelling did not float with the flood-tide, and become stranded with the ebb, the young lord was nearly as comfortably accommodated as he was while on board the little trading brig from the long town of Kirkaldy, in Fife, by which he had come a passenger to London. He received, however, every attention which could be paid him by his honest landlord, John Christie; for Richie Moniplies had not thought it necessary to preserve his master's *incognito* so completely, but that the honest ship-chandler could form a guess that his guest's quality was superior to his appearance. As for Dame Nell, his wife, a round, buxom, laughter-loving dame, with black eyes, a tight well-laced bodice, a green apron, and a red petticoat edged with a slight silver lace, and judiciously shortened so as to show that a short heel, and a tight clean ankle, rested upon her well-burnished shoe,—she, of course, felt interest in a young man, who, besides being very handsome, good-humoured, and easily satisfied with the accommodations her house afforded, was evidently of a rank, as well as manners, highly superior to the skippers (or cap-

VOL. III.

tains, as they call themselves) of merchant vessels, who were the usual tenants of the apartments which she let to hire; and at whose departure she was sure to find her well-scrubbed floor soiled with the relics of tobacco (which, spite of King James's Counterblast, was then forcing itself into use), and her best curtains impregnated with the odour of Geneva and strong waters, to Dame Nelly's great indignation; for, as she truly said, the smell of the shop and warehouse was bad enough without these additions.

But all Mr Olifaunt's habits were regular and cleanly, and his address, though frank and simple, showed so much of the courtier and gentleman, as formed a strong contrast with the loud halloo, coarse jests, and boisterous impatience of her maritime inmates. Dame Nelly saw that her guest was melancholy also, notwithstanding his efforts to seem contented and cheerful; and, in short, she took that sort of interest in him, without being herself aware of its extent, which an unscrupulous gallant might have been tempted to improve to the prejudice of honest John, who was at least a score of years older than his helpmate. Olifaunt, however, had not only other matters to think of, but would have regarded such an intrigue, had the idea ever occurred to him, as an abominable and ungrateful encroachment upon the laws of hospitality, his religion having been by his late father formed upon the strict principles of the national faith, and his morality upon those of the nicest honour. He had not escaped the predominant weakness of his country, an overweening sense of the pride of birth, and a disposition to value the worth and consequence of others according to the number and the fame of their deceased ancestors; but this pride of family was well subdued, and in general almost entirely concealed, by his good sense and general courtesy.

Such as we have described him, Nigel Olifaunt, or rather the young Lord Glenvarloch, was, when our narrative takes him up, under great perplexity respecting the fate of his trusty and only follower. Richard Moniplies had been dispatched by his young master, early in the preceding morning, as far as the court at Westminster, but had not yet returned. His evening adventures the reader is already acquainted with, and so far knows more of Richie than did his master, who had not heard of him for twenty-four hours. Dame Nelly Christie, in the meantime, regarded her guest with some anxiety, and a great desire to comfort him if possible. She placed on the breakfast-table a noble piece of cold powdered beef, with its usual guards of turnip and carrot, recommended her mustard as coming direct from her cousin at Tewkesbury, and spiced the toast with her own hands—and with her own hands, also, drew a jug of stout and nappy ale, all of which were elements of the substantial breakfast of the period.

When she saw that her guest's anxiety prevented him from doing justice to the good cheer which she set before him, she commenced her career of verbal consolation with the usual volubility of those women in her station, who, conscious of good looks, good intentions, and good lungs, entertain no fear either of wearying themselves, or of fatiguing their auditors.

"Now, what the good year! are we to send you down to Scotland as thin as you came up?—I am sure it would be contrary to the course of nature. There was my goodman's father, old Sandie Christie, I have heard he was an atomy when he came up from the north, and I am sure he died, Saint Barnaby was ten years, at twenty stone weight. I was a bare-headed girl at the time, and lived in the neighbourhood, though I had little thought of marrying John then, who had a score of years the better of me—but he is a thriving man, and a kind husband—and his father, as I was saying, died as fat as a churchwarden. Well, sir, but I hope I have not offended you for my little joke—and I hope the ale is to your honour's liking,—and the beef,—and the mustard?"

"All excellent—all too good," answered Olifaunt; "you have everything so clean and tidy, dame, that I shall not know how to live when I go back to my own country—if ever I go back there."

This was added as it seemed involuntarily, and with a deep sigh.

"I warrant your honour go back again if you like it," said the dame; "unless you think rather of taking a pretty, well-dowered English lady, as some of your country-folks have done. I assure you, some of the best of the city have married Scotsmen. There was Lady Trebleplumb, Sir Thomas Trebleplumb the great Turkey merchant's widow, married Sir Awley Macauley, whom your honour knows, doubtless; and pretty Mistress Doublefee, old Serjeant Doublefee's daughter, jumped out of window, and was married at May-fair to a Scotsman with a hard name; and old Pitchpost the timber-merchant's daughters did little better, for they married two Irishmen; and when folks jeer me about having a Scotsman for lodger, meaning your honour, I tell them they are afraid of their daughters and their mistresses; and sure I have a right to stand for the Scotch, since John Christie is half a Scotchman, and a thriving man, and a good husband, though there is a score of years between us; and so I would have your honour cast care away, and mend your breakfast with a morsel and a draught."

"At a word, my kind hostess, I cannot," said Olifaunt; "I am anxious about this knave of mine, who has been so long absent in this dangerous town of yours."

It may be noticed in passing, that Dame Nelly's ordinary mode of consolation was to disprove the existence of any cause of distress; and she is said to have carried this so far as to comfort a neighbour, who had lost her husband, with the assurance that the dear defunct would be better to-morrow, which perhaps might not have proved an appropriate, even if it had been a possible, mode of relief. On this occasion she denied stoutly that Richie had been absent altogether twenty hours; and as for people being killed in the streets of London, to be sure two men had been found in Tower-ditch last week, but that was far to the east, and the other poor man that had his throat cut in the fields, had met his mishap near by Islington; and he that was stabbed by the young Templar in a drunken frolic, by Saint Clement's in the Strand, was an Irishman. All which evidence she produced to show, that none of these

casualties had occurred in a case exactly parallel with that of Richie, a Scotchman, and on his return from Westminster.

"My better comfort is, my good dame," answered Olifaunt, "that the lad is no brawler or quarreler, unless strongly urged, and that he has no charge about him excepting papers of some moment."

"Your honour speaks very well," retorted the inexhaustible hostess, who protracted her task of taking away, and putting to rights, in order that she might prolong her gossip. "I'll uphold Master Monplies to be neither reveler nor brawler; for if he liked such things, he might be visiting and junketing with the young folks about here in the neighbourhood, and he never dreams of it; and when I asked the young man to go as far as my gossip's, Dame Drinkwater, to taste a glass of aniseed, and a bit of the groaning cheese,—for Dame Drinkwater has had twins, as I told your honour, sir,—and I meant it quite civilly to the young man, but he chose to sit and keep house with John Christie; and I dare say there is a score of years between them, for your honour's servant looks scarce much older than I am. I wonder what they could have to say to each other. I asked John Christie, but he bid me go to sleep."

"If he comes not soon," said his master, "I will thank you to tell me what magistrate I can address myself to; for besides my anxiety for the poor fellow's safety, he has papers of importance about him."

"O! your honour may be assured he will be back in a quarter of an hour," said Dame Nelly; "he is not the lad to stay out twenty-four hours at a stretch. And for the papers, I am sure your honour will pardon him for just giving me a peep at the corner as I was giving him a small cup, not so large as my thimble, of distilled waters, to fortify his stomach against the damps, and it was directed to the king's most excellent majesty; and so doubtless his majesty has kept Richie out of civility to consider of your honour's letter, and send back a fitting reply."

Dame Nelly here hit by chance on a more available topic of consolation than those she had hitherto touched upon; for the youthful lord had himself some vague hopes that his messenger might have been delayed at court until a fitting and favourable answer should be dispatched back to him. Inexperienced, however, in public affairs as he certainly was, it required only a moment's consideration to convince him of the improbability of an expectation so contrary to all he had heard of etiquette, as well as the dilatory proceeding in a court-suit, and he answered the good-natured hostess with a sigh, that he doubted whether the king would even look on the paper addressed to him, far less take it into his immediate consideration.

"Now, out upon you for a faint-hearted gentleman," said the good dame; "and why should he not do as much for us as our gracious Queen Elizabeth? Many people say this and that about a queen and a king, but I think a king comes more natural to us English folks; and this good gentleman goes as often down by water to Greenwich, and employs as many of the bargemen and watermen of all kinds; and maintains, in his royal grace, John Taylor the water poet, who keeps both a sculler and a pair of oars. And he has made a comely court at

Whitehall, just by the river; and since the king is so good a friend to the Thames, I cannot see, if it please your honour, why all his subjects, and your honour in specialty, should not have satisfaction by his hands."

"True, dame—true,—let us hope for the best; but I must take my cloak and rapier, and pray your husband in courtesy to teach me the way to a magistrate."

"Sure, sir," said the prompt dame, "I can do that as well as he, who has been a slow man of his tongue all his life, though I will give him his due for being a loving husband, and a man as well to pass in the world as any betwixt us and the top of the lane. And so there is the sitting alderman, that is always at the Guildhall, which is close by Paul's, and so I warrant you he puts all to rights in the city that wisdom can mend; and for the rest there is no help but patience. But I wish I were as sure of forty pounds, as I am that the young man will come back safe and sound."

Olifaunt, in great and anxious doubt of what the good dame so strongly averred, flung his cloak on one shoulder, and was about to belt on his rapier, when first the voice of Richie Moniplies on the stair, and then that faithful emissary's appearance in the chamber, put the matter beyond question. Dame Nelly, after congratulating Moniplies on his return, and paying several compliments to her own sagacity for having foretold it, was at length pleased to leave the apartment. The truth was, that, besides some instinctive feelings of good breeding which combated her curiosity, she saw there was no chance of Richie's proceeding in his narrative while she was in the room, and she therefore retreated, trusting that her own address would get the secret out of one or other of the young men, when she should have either by himself.

"Now, in Heaven's name, what is the matter?" said Nigel Olifaunt.—"Where have you been, or what have you been about? You look as pale as death. There is blood on your hand, and your clothes are torn. What barns-breaking have you been at? You have been drunk, Richard, and fighting."

"Fighting I have been," said Richard, "in a small way; but, for being drunk, that's a job ill to manage in this town, without money to come by liquor; and as for barns-breaking, the de'il a thing's broken but my head. It's not made of iron, I wot, nor my claithes of chenzie-mail; so a club smashed the tane, and a claucht damaged the tither. Some mislear'd rascals abused my country, but I think I cleared the causey of them. However, the haill hive was ower mony for me at last, and I got this eclipse on the crown, and then I was carried, beyond my kenning, to a sma' booth at the Temple-port, where they sell the whirly-gigs and mony-go-rounds, that measure out time as a man wad measure a tartan web; and then they bled me, wold I nold I, and were reasonably civil, especially an auld countryman of ours, of whom more hereafter."

"And at what o'clock might this be?" said Nigel.

"The twa iron carles yonder, at the kirk beside the port, were just banging out sax."

"And why came you not home so soon as you recovered?" said Nigel.

"In troth, my lord, every why has its wherefore, and this has a gude ane," answered his follower.

"To come hame, I behoved to ken whare hame was; now, I had clean tint the name of the wynd, and the mair I asked, the mair the folk leugh, and the farther they sent me wrang; sae I gave it up till God should send day-light to help me; and as I saw mysell near a kirk at the lang run, I e'en crap in to take up my night's quarters in the kirk-yard."

"In the church-yard?" said Nigel—"But I need not ask what drove you to such a pinch."

"It wasna sae much the want o' siller, my Lord Nigel," said Richie, with an air of mysterious importance, "for I was no sae absolute without means, of whilk mair anon; but I thought I wad never ware a saxpence sterling on ane of their saucy chamberlains at a hostelry, sae lang as I could sleep fresh and fine in a fair, dry, spring night. Mony a time whan I hae come hame ower late, and faund the West-port steekit, and the waiter ill-willy, I have garr'd the sexton of Saint Cuthbert's calf-ward serve me for my quarters. But then there are dainty green graffs in Saint Cuthbert's kirk-yard, whare ane may sleep as if they were in a down-bed, till they hear the lav'rock singing up in the air as high as the castle; whereas, and behold, these London kirk-yards are causeyed with through-stanes, panged hard and fast thegither; and my cloak, being something thread-bare, made but a thin mattress, so I was fain to give up my bed before every limb about me was crippled. Dead folks may sleep yonder sound enow, but de'il haet else."

"And what became of you next?" said his master.

"I just took to a canny bulk-head, as they ca' them here; that is, the boards on the tap of their bits of outshots of stalls and booths, and there I sleepit as sound as if I was in a castle. Not but I was disturbed with some of the night-walking queans and billies, but when they found there was nothing to be got by me but a slash of my Andrew Ferrara, they bid me good night for a beggarly Scot; and I was e'en weel pleased to be sae cheap rid of them. And in the morning, I cam daikering here, but sad wark I had to find the way, for I had been east as far as the place they ca' Mile-End, though it is mair like sax-mile-end."

"Well, Richie," answered Nigel, "I am glad all this has ended so well—go get something to eat. I am sure you need it."

"In troth do I, sir," replied Moniplies; "but, with your lordship's leave"—

"Forget the lordship for the present, Richie, as I have often told you before."

"Faith," replied Richie, "I could weel forget that your honour was a lord, but then I behoved to forget that I am a lord's man, and that's not so easy. But, however," he added, assisting his description with the thumb and the two fore-fingers of his right hand, thrust out after the fashion of a bird's-claw, while the little finger and ring-finger were closed upon the palm, "to the court I went, and my friend that promised me a sight of his majesty's most gracious presence was as gude as his word, and carried me into the hack offices, where I got the best breakfast I have had since we came here, and it did

me gude for the rest of the day; for as to what I have eaten in this accursed town, it is aye sauced with the disquieting thought that it maun be paid for. After a', there was but beef-banes and fat brose; but king's cauff, your honour kens, is better than ither folk's corn; at ony rate, it was a' in free awmous.—But I see," he added, stopping short, "that your honour waxes impatient."

"By no means, Richie," said the young nobleman, with an air of resignation, for he well knew his domestic would not mend his pace for goading; "you have suffered enough in the embassy to have got the right to tell the story in your own way. Only let me pray for the name of the friend who was to introduce you into the king's presence. You were very mysterious on the subject, when you undertook, through his means, to have the supplication put into his majesty's own hands, since those sent heretofore, I have every reason to think, went no farther than his secretary's."

"Weel, my lord," said Richie, "I did not tell you his name and quality at first, because I thought you would be affronted at the like of him having to do in your lordship's affairs. But mony a man climbs up in court by waur help. It was just Laurie Linklater, one of the yeomen of the kitchen, that was my father's apprentice lang syne."

"A yeoman of the kitchen—a scullion!" exclaimed Lord Nigel, pacing the room in displeasure.

"But consider, sir," said Richie, composedly, "that a' your great friends hung back, and shunned to own you, or to advocate your petition; and then, though I am sure I wish Laurie a higher office, for your lordship's sake and for mine, and specially for his ain sake, being a friendly lad, yet your lordship must consider, that a scullion, if a yeoman of the king's most royal kitchen may be called scullion, may weel rank with a master-cook elsewhere; being that king's cauff, as I said before, is better than"—

"You are right, and I was wrong," said the young nobleman, "I have no choice of means of making my case known, so that they be honest."

"Laurie is as honest a lad as ever lifted a ladle," said Richie; "not but what I dare to say he can lick his fingers like other folks, and reason good. But, in fine, for I see your honour is waxing impatient, he brought me to the palace, where a' was astir for the king going out to hunt or hawk on Blackheath, I think they ca'd it. And there was a horse stood with all the quarries about it, a bonnie grey as ever was foaled; and the saddle and the stirrups, and the curb and bit, o' burning gowd, or silver gilded at least; and down, sir, came the king, with all his nobles, dressed out in his hunting-suit of green, doubly laced, and laid down with gowd. I minded the very face o' him, though it was lang since I saw him. 'But, my certie, lad,' thought I, 'times are changed since ye came fleeing down the back-stairs of auld Holyrood-house, in grit fear, having your breeks in your hand without time to put them on, and Frank Stuart, the wild Earl of Bothwell, hard at your haunches; and if auld Lord Glenvarloch had-na cast his mantle about his arm, and taken bluidy wounds mair than ane in your behalf, you wad not have craw'd sae crouse this day;' and so saying, I

could not but think your lordship's sifflication could not be less than most acceptable; and so I banged in among the crowd of lords. Laurie thought me mad, and held me by the cloak-lap till the cloth rave in his hand; and so I banged in right before the king just as he mounted, and cram'd the sifflication into his hand, and he open'd it like in amaze; and just as he saw the first line, I was minded to make a reverence, and I had the ill luck to hit his jaud o' a beast on the nose with my hat, and scaur the creature, and she swarved aside, and the king, that sits na mickle better than a draff-pock on the saddle, was like to have gotten a clean coup, and that might have cost my craig a raxing—and he flung down the paper among the beast's feet, and cried, 'Away wi' the fause loon that brought it.' And they grippit me, and cried treason; and I thought of the Ruthvens that were dirked in their ain house, for, it may be, as small a forfeit. However, they spak only of scourging me, and had me away to the porter's lodge, to try the tawse on my back, and I was crying mercy as loud as I could; and the king, when he had righted himself on the saddle, and gathered his breath, cried to do me nae harm; 'For,' said he, 'he is ane of our ain norland stots, I ken by the rowt of him,'—and they a' laughed and rowted loud enough. And then he said, 'Gie him a copy of the proclamation, and let him go down to the north by the next light collier, before waur come o't.' So they let me go, and rode out a' sniggering, laughing, and rounding in ilk ither's lugs. A sair life I had wi' Laurie Linklater; for he said it wad be the ruin of him. And then, when I told him it was in your matter, he said if he had known before he would have risked a scauding for you, because he minded the brave old lord, your father. And then he showed how I suld have done,—and that I suld have held up my hand to my brow, as if the grandeur of the king, and his horse-graith thegither, had casten the glaiks in my een, and mair jack-an-ape tricks I suld hae played, instead of offering the sifflication, as if I had been bringing guts to a bear. 'For,' said he, 'Richie, the king is a weel-natured and just man of his ain kindly nature, but he has a wheen maggots that maun be cannily guided; and then, Richie,' says he, in a very laigh tone, 'I would tell it to nane but a wise man like yoursell, but the king has them about him wad corrupt an angel from heaven; but I could have gi'en you avisement how to have guided him, but now it's like after meat mustard.'—Aweel, aweel, Laurie," said I, "it may be as you say; but since I am clear of the tawse and the porter's lodge, sifflicate wha like, de'il hae Richie Moniplies if he come sifflicating here again."—And so away I came, and I wasna far by the Temple-port, or bar, or whatever they ca' it, when I met with the misadventure that I tauld you of before."

"Well, my honest Richie," said Lord Nigel, "your attempt was well meant, and not so ill conducted, I think, as to have deserved so bad an issue; but go to your beef and mustard, and we'll talk of the rest afterwards."

"There is nae mair to be spoken, sir," said his follower, "except that I met ane very honest, fair-spoken, weel-put-on gentleman, or rather burgher, as I think, that was in the whigmaleery man's back

shop; and when he learned wha I was, behold he was a Scot himsell, and, what is more, a town's-bairn o' the Gude Town, and he behoved to compel me to take this Portugal piece, to drink. forsooth—my certie, thought I, we ken better, for we will eat it—and he spoke of paying your lordship a visit."

"You did not tell him where I lived, you knave?" said the Lord Nigel, angrily. "'Sdeath, I shall have every clownish burgher from Edinburgh come to gaze on my distress, and pay a shilling for having seen the Motion* of the Poor Noble."

"Tell him where you lived?" said Richie, evading the question; "How could I tell him what I kenn'dna mysell? If I had minded the name of the wynd, I need not have slept in the kirk-yard yestreen."

"See then that you give no one notice of our lodging," said the young nobleman; "those with whom I have business I can meet at Paul's, or in the court of requests."

"This is steeking the stable-door when the steed is stolen," thought Richie to himself; "but I must put him on another pin."

So thinking, he asked the young lord what was in the proclamation, which he still held folded in his hand; "for, having little time to spell at it," said he, "your lordship well knows I ken nought about it but the grand blazon at the tap—the lion has gotten a claught of our auld Scottish shield now, but it was as weel upheld when it had a unicorn on ilk side of it."

Lord Nigel read the proclamation, and he coloured deep with shame and indignation as he read; for the purport was, to his injured feelings, like the pouring of ardent spirits upon a recent wound.

"What de'il's in the paper, my lord?" said Richie, unable to suppress his curiosity as he observed his master change colour; "I wadna ask such a thing, only the proclamation is not a private thing, but is meant for a' men's hearing."

"It is indeed meant for all men's hearing," replied Lord Nigel, "and it proclaims the shame of our country, and the ingratitude of our prince."

"Now the lord preserve us! and to publish it in London too!" ejaculated Moniplies.

"Hark ye, Richard," said Nigel Olifaunt, "in this paper the lords of the council set forth, that, 'in consideration of the resort of idle persons of low condition forth from his majesty's kingdom of Scotland to his English court—filling the same with their suits and supplications, and dishonouring the royal presence with their base, poor, and beggarly persons, to the disgrace of their country in the estimation of the English; these are to prohibit the skippers, masters of vessels, and others, in every part of Scotland, from bringing such miserable creatures up to court, under pain of fine and imprisonment.'"

"I marle the skipper took us on board," said Richie.

"Then you need not marvel how you are to get back again," said Lord Nigel, "for here is a clause which says, that such idle suitors are to be trans-

ported back to Scotland at his majesty's expense, and punished for their audacity with stripes, stocking, or incarceration, according to their demerits—that is to say, I suppose, according to the degree of their poverty, for I see no other demerit qualified."

"This will scarcely," said Richie, "square with our old proverb—

A king's face
Should give grace—

But what says the paper farther, my lord?"

"O, only a small clause which especially concerns us, making some still heavier denunciations against those suitors who shall be so bold as to approach the court, under pretext of seeking payment of old debts due to them by the king, which, the paper states, is of all species of importunity that which is most odious to his majesty."

"The king has neighbours in that matter," said Richie; "but it is not every one that can shift off that sort of cattle so easily as he does."

Their conversation was here interrupted by a knocking at the door. Olifaunt looked out at the window, and saw an elderly respectable person whom he knew not. Richie also peeped, and recognized, but, recognizing, chose not to acknowledge, his friend of the preceding evening. Afraid that his share in the visit might be detected, he made his escape out of the apartment under pretext of going to his breakfast; and left their landlady the task of ushering Master George into Lord Nigel's apartment, which she performed with much courtesy.

CHAPTER IV.

Ay, sir, the clouted shoe hath oft times craft in 't,
As says the rustic proverb; and your citizen,
In 's grogam suit, gold chain, and well-black'd shoes,
Bears under his flat cap oft-times a brain
Wiser than burns beneath the cap and feather,
Or seethes within the statesman's velvet night-cap.

Read me my Riddle.

THE young Scottish nobleman received the citizen with distant politeness, expressing that sort of reserve by which those of the higher ranks are sometimes willing to make a plebeian sensible that he is an intruder. But Master George seemed neither displeased nor disconcerted. He assumed the chair, which, in deference to his respectable appearance, Lord Nigel offered to him, and said, after a moment's pause, during which he had looked attentively at the young man, with respect not unmingled with emotion—"You will forgive me for this rudeness, my lord; but I was endeavouring to trace in your youthful countenance the features of my good old lord, your excellent father."

There was a moment's pause ere young Glenvarloch replied, still with a reserved manner,—“I have been reckoned like my father, sir,—and am happy to see any one that respects his memory. But the business which calls me to this city is of a hasty as well as a private nature, and”—

"I understand the hint, my lord," said Master George, "and would not be guilty of long detaining you from business, or more agreeable conversation.

* Motion—Puppet-show.

My errand is almost done when I have said, that my name is George Heriot, warmly befriended, and introduced into the employment of the royal family of Scotland, more than twenty years since, by your excellent father; and that, learning from a follower of yours that your lordship was in this city in prosecution of some business of importance, it is my duty—it is my pleasure—to wait on the son of my respected patron; and, as I am somewhat known both at the court and in the city, to offer him such aid in the furthering of his affairs, as my credit and experience may be able to afford.”

“I have no doubt of either, Master Heriot,” said Lord Nigel, “and I thank you heartily for the good-will with which you have placed them at a stranger’s disposal; but my business at court is done and ended, and I intend to leave London, and, indeed, the island, for foreign travel and military service. I may add, that the suddenness of my departure occasions my having little time at my disposal.”

Master Heriot did not take the hint, but sat fast, with an embarrassed countenance, however, like that of one who had something to say that he knew not exactly how to make effectual. At length he said, with a dubious smile, “You are fortunate, my lord, in having so soon dispatched your business at court. Your talking landlady informs me you have been but a fortnight in this city. It is usually months and years ere the court and a suitor shake hands and part.”

“My business,” said Lord Nigel, with a brevity which was intended to stop farther discussion, “was summarily dispatched.”

Still Master Heriot remained seated, and there was a cordial good-humour added to the reverence of his appearance, which rendered it impossible for Lord Nigel to be more explicit in requesting his absence.

“Your lordship has not yet had time,” said the citizen, still attempting to sustain the conversation, “to visit the places of amusement,—the play-houses, and other places to which youth resort. But I see in your lordship’s hand one of the new-invented plots of the piece, which they hand about of late.—May I ask what play?”

“Oh! a well-known piece,” said Lord Nigel, impatiently throwing down the proclamation, which he had hitherto been twisting to and fro in his hand,—“an excellent and well-approved piece—*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.”

Master Heriot stooped down, saying, “Ah! my old acquaintance, Philip Massinger;” but, having opened the paper and seen the purport, he looked at Lord Nigel Olifaunt with surprise, saying, “I trust your lordship does not think this prohibition can extend either to *your* person or your claims?”

“I should scarce have thought so myself,” said the young nobleman; “but so it proves. His majesty, to close this discourse at once, has been pleased to send me this proclamation, in answer to a respectful supplication for the repayment of large loans advanced by my father for the service of the state, in the king’s utmost emergencies.”

“It is impossible!” said the citizen—“it is absolutely impossible!—If the king could forget what

was due to your father’s memory, still he would not have wished—would not, I may say, have dared—to be so flagrantly unjust to the memory of such a man as your father, who, dead in the body, will long live in the memory of the Scottish people.”

“I should have been of your opinion,” answered Lord Nigel, in the same tone as before; “but there is no fighting with facts.”

“What was the tenor of this supplication?” said Heriot; “or by whom was it presented? Something strange there must have been in the contents, or”——

“You may see my original draught,” said the young lord, taking it out of a small travelling strong-box; “the technical part is by my lawyer in Scotland, a skilful and sensible man; the rest is my own, drawn, I hope, with due deference and modesty.”

Master Heriot hastily cast his eye over the draught. “Nothing,” he said, “can be more well-tempered and respectful. Is it possible the king can have treated this petition with contempt?”

“He threw it down on the pavement,” said the Lord of Glenvarloch, “and sent me for answer that proclamation, in which he classes me with the paupers and mendicants from Scotland, who disgrace his court in the eyes of the proud English—that is all. Had not my father stood by him with heart, sword, and fortune, he might never have seen the court of England himself.”

“But by whom was this supplication presented, my lord?” said Heriot; “for the distaste taken at the messenger, will sometimes extend itself to the message.”

“By my servant,” said the Lord Nigel; “by the man you saw, and, I think, were kind to.”

“By your servant, my lord?” said the citizen; “he seems a shrewd fellow, and doubtless a faithful; but surely”——

“You would say,” said Lord Nigel, “he is no fit messenger to a king’s presence?—Surely he is not; but what could I do? Every attempt I had made to lay my case before the king had miscarried, and my petitions got no farther than the budgets of clerks and secretaries; this fellow pretended he had a friend in the household that would bring him to the king’s presence,—and so”——

“I understand,” said Heriot; “but, my lord, why should you not, in right of your rank and birth, have appeared at court, and required an audience, which could not have been denied to you?”

The young lord blushed a little, and looked at his dress, which was very plain; and, though in perfect good order, had the appearance of having seen service.

“I know not why I should be ashamed of speaking the truth,” he said, after a momentary hesitation,—“I had no dress suitable for appearing at court. I am determined to incur no expenses which I cannot discharge; and I think you, sir, would not advise me to stand at the palace-door in person, and deliver my petition, along with those who are in very deed pleading their necessity, and begging an alms.”

“That had been, indeed, unseemly,” said the citizen; “but yet, my lord, my mind runs strangely

that there must be some mistake.—Can I speak with your domestic?"

"I see little good it can do," answered the young lord, "but the interest you take in my misfortunes seems sincere, and therefore"—He stamped on the floor, and in a few seconds afterwards Moniplies appeared, wiping from his beard and moustaches the crumbs of bread, and the froth of the ale-pot, which plainly showed how he had been employed.—

"Will your lordship grant permission," said Heriot, "that I ask your groom a few questions?"

"His lordship's page, Master George," answered Moniplies, with a nod of acknowledgment, "if you are minded to speak according to the letter."

"Hold your saucy tongue," said his master, "and reply distinctly to the questions you are to be asked."

"And *truly*, if it like your pageship," said the citizen, "for you may remember I have a gift to discover falset."

"Weel, weel, weel," replied the domestic, somewhat embarrassed, in spite of his effrontery—"though I think that the sort of truth that serves my master, may weel serve ony ane else."

"Pages lie to their masters by right of custom," said the citizen; "and you write yourself in that band, though I think you be among the oldest of such springalds; but to me you must speak truth, if you would not have it end in the whipping-post."

"And that's e'en a bad resting-place," said the well-grown page; "so come away with your questions, Maister George."

"Well, then," demanded the citizen, "I am given to understand that you yesterday presented to his majesty's hand a supplication, or petition, from this honourable lord, your master."

"Troth, there's nae gainsaying that, sir," replied Moniplies; "there were enow to see it besides me."

"And you pretend that his majesty flung it from him with contempt?" said the citizen. "Take heed, for I have means of knowing the truth; and you were better up to the neck in the Nor-loch, which you like so well, than tell a leasing where his majesty's name is concerned."

"There is nae occasion for leasing-making about the matter," answered Moniplies, firmly: "his majesty e'en flung it frae him as if it had dirtied his fingers."

"You hear, sir," said Olifaunt, addressing Heriot.

"Hush!" said the sagacious citizen; "this fellow is not ill named—he has more plies than one in his cloak.—Stay, fellow," for Moniplies, muttering somewhat about finishing his breakfast, was beginning to shamle towards the door, "answer me this farther question—When you gave your master's petition to his majesty, gave you nothing with it?"

"Ou, what should I give wi' it, ye ken, Maister George?"

"That is what I desire and insist to know," replied his interrogator.

"Weel then—I am not free to say, that maybe I might not just slip into the king's hand a wee bit sifflication of mine ain, along with my lord's—just to save his majesty trouble—and that he might consider them baith at ance."

"A supplication of your own, you varlet!" said his master.

"Ou, dear ay, my lord," said Richie—"puir bodies hae their bits of sifflications as weel as their betters."

"And pray, what might your worshipful petition import?" said Master Heriot.—"Nay, for Heaven's sake, my lord, keep your patience, or we shall never learn the truth of this strange matter.—Speak out, sirrah, and I will stand your friend with my lord."

"It's a lang story to tell—but the upshot is, that it's a scrape of an auld accompt due to my father's yestate by her majesty the king's maist gracious mother, when she lived in the castle, and had sundry providings and furnishings forth of our booth, whilk, nae doubt, was an honour to my father to supply, and whilk, doubtless, it will be a credit to his majesty to satisfy, as it will be grit convenience to me to receive the saam."

"What string of impertinence is this?" said his master.

"Every word as true as e'er John Knox spoke," said Richie; "here's the bit double of the sifflication."

Master George took a crumpled paper from the fellow's hand, and said, muttering betwixt his teeth—"Humbly sheweth—um—um—his majesty's maist gracious mother—um—um—justly addebted and owing the sum of fifteen merks—the compt whereof followeth—Twelve nowte's feet for jillies—an lamb, being Christmas—an roasted capin in grease for the privy chalmer, when my Lord of Bothwell suppit with her grace.—I think, my lord, you can hardly be surprised that the king gave this petition a brisk reception; and I conclude, Master Page, that you took care to present your own supplication before your master's?"

"Troth did I not," answered Moniplies, "I thought to have given my lord's first, as was reason gude; and besides that, it wad have redd the gate for my ain little bill. But what wi' the dirdum an' confusion, an' the loupin here and there of the skeigh brute of a horse, I believe I crammed them baith into his hand cheek-by-jowl, and maybe my ain was boonmost; and say there was aught wrang, I am sure I had a' the fright and a' the risk"—

"And shall have all the beating, you rascal knave," said Nigel; "am I to be insulted and dishonoured by your pragmatrical insolence, in blending your base concerns with mine?"

"Nay, nay, nay, my lord," said the good-humoured citizen, interposing; "I have been the means of bringing the fellow's blunder to light—allow me interest enough with your lordship to be bail for his bones. You have cause to be angry, but still I think the knave mistook more out of conceit than of purpose; and I judge you will have the better service of him another time, if you overlook this fault.—Get you gone, sirrah—I'll make your peace."

"Na, na," said Moniplies, keeping his ground firmly, "if he likes to strike a lad that has followed him for pure love, for I think there has been little servant's fee between us, a' the way frae Scotland, just let my lord be doing, and see the credit he will get by it—and I would rather (mony thanks to you though, Maister George) stand by a lick of his baton, than it suld e'er be said a stranger came between us."

"Go then," said his master, "and get out of my sight."

"Aweel I wot that is sune done," said Moniplies, retiring slowly; "I did not come without I had been ca'd for—and I wad have been away half an hour since with my gude will, only Maister George keepit me to answer his interrogation, forsooth, and that has made a' this stir."

And so he made his grumbling exit, with the tone much rather of one who has sustained an injury, than who has done wrong.

"There never was a man so plagued as I am with a malapert knave!—The fellow is shrewd, and I have found him faithful—I believe he loves me too, and he has given proofs of it—but then he is so uplifted in his own conceit, so self-willed, and so self-opinioned, that he seems to become the master and I the man; and whatever blunder he commits, he is sure to make as loud complaints, as if the whole error lay with me, and in no degree with himself."

"Cherish him, and maintain him, nevertheless," said the citizen; "for believe my grey hairs, that affection and fidelity are now rarer qualities in a servitor, than when the world was younger. Yet, trust him, my good lord, with no commission above his birth or breeding, for you see yourself how it may chance to fall."

"It is but too evident, Master Heriot," said the young nobleman; "and I am sorry I have done injustice to my sovereign and your master. But I am, like a true Scotsman, wise behind hand; the mistake has happened, my supplication has been refused, and my only resource is to employ the rest of my means to carry Moniplies and myself to some counterscarp, and die in the battle-front like my ancestors."

"It were better to live and serve your country, like your noble father, my lord," replied Master George. "Nay, nay, never look down or shake your head—the king has not refused your supplication, for he has not seen it—you ask but justice, and that his place obliges him to give to his subjects—ay, my lord, and I will say that his natural temper doth in this hold bias with his duty."

"I were well pleased to think so, and yet"—said Nigel Olifaunt—"I speak not of my own wrongs, but my country hath many that are unredressed."

"My lord," said Master Heriot, "I speak of my royal master, not only with the respect due from a subject—the gratitude to be paid by a favoured servant—but also with the frankness of a free and loyal Scotsman. The King is himself well disposed to hold the scales of justice even; but there are those around him who can throw without detection their own selfish wishes and base interests into the scale. You are already a sufferer by this, and without your knowing it."

"I am surprised, Master Heriot," said the young lord, "to hear you, upon so short an acquaintance, talk as if you were familiarly acquainted with my affairs."

"My lord," replied the goldsmith, "the nature of my employment affords me direct access to the interior of the palace; I am well known to be no meddler in intrigues or party affairs, so that no favourite has as yet endeavoured to shut against me the door of the royal closet; on the contrary, I have stood

well with each while he was in power, and I have not shared the fall of any. But I cannot be thus connected with the court without hearing, even against my will, what wheels are in motion, and how they are checked or forwarded. Of course, when I chuse to seek such intelligence, I know the sources in which it is to be traced. I have told you why I was interested in your lordship's fortunes. It was last night only that I knew you were in this city, yet I have been able, in coming hither this morning, to gain for you some information respecting the impediments to your suit."

"Sir, I am obliged by your zeal, however little it may be merited," answered Nigel, still with some reserve; "yet I hardly know how I have deserved this interest."

"First, let me satisfy you that it is real," said the citizen; "I blame you not for being unwilling to credit the fair professions of a stranger in my inferior class of society, when you have met so little friendship from relations and those of your own rank bound to have assisted you by so many ties. But mark the cause. There is a mortgage over your father's extensive estate, to the amount of 40,000 merks, due ostensibly to Peregrine Peterson, the Conservator of Scottish Privileges at Campvere."

"I know nothing of a mortgage," said the young lord; "but there is a wadset for such a sum, which, if unredeemed, will occasion the forfeiture of my whole paternal estate, for a sum not above a fourth of its value; and it is for that very reason that I press the king's government for a settlement of the debts due to my father, that I may be able to redeem my land from this rapacious creditor."

"A wadset in Scotland," said Heriot, "is the same with a mortgage on this side of the Tweed; but you are not acquainted with your real creditor. The Conservator Peterson only lends his name to shroud no less a man than the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, who hopes, under cover of this debt, to gain possession of the estate himself, or perhaps to gratify a yet more powerful third party. He will probably suffer his creature Peterson to take possession, and when the odium of the transaction shall be forgotten, the property and lordship of Glenvarloch will be conveyed to the great man by his obsequious instrument, under cover of a sale, or some similar device."

"Can this be possible?" said Lord Nigel; "the chancellor wept when I took leave of him—called me his cousin—even his son—furnished me with letters, and, though I asked him for no pecuniary assistance, excused himself unnecessarily for not pressing it on me, alleging the expenses of his rank and his large family. No, I cannot believe a nobleman would carry deceit so far."

"I am not, it is true, of noble blood," said the citizen; "but once more I bid you look on my grey hairs, and think what can be my interest in dishonouring them with falsehood in affairs in which I have no interest, save as they regard the son of my benefactor. Reflect also, have you had any advantage from the lord chancellor's letters?"

"None," said Nigel Olifaunt, "save cold deeds and fair words. I have thought for some time, their only object was to get rid of me—there was one who

yesterday pressed money on me when I talked of going abroad, in order that I might not want the means of exiling myself."

"Right," said Heriot; "rather than you fled not, they would themselves furnish wings for you to fly withal."

"I will to him this instant," said the incensed youth, "and tell him my mind of his baseness."

"Under your favour," said Heriot, detaining him, "you shall not do so. By a quarrel you would become the ruin of me your informer; and though I would venture half my shop to do your lordship a service, I think you would hardly wish me to come by damage, when it can be of no service to you."

The word *shop* sounded harshly in the ear of the young nobleman, who replied hastily—"Damage, sir?—so far am I from wishing you to incur damage, that I would to Heaven you would cease your fruitless offers of serving one whom there is no chance of ultimately assisting!"

"Leave me alone for that," said the citizen; "you have now erred as far on the bow-hand. Permit me to take this supplication—I will have it suitably engrossed, and take my own time (and it shall be an early one) for placing it, with more prudence, I trust, than that used by your follower, in the king's hand—I will almost answer for his taking up the matter as you would have him—but should he fail to do so, even then I will not give up the good cause."

"Sir," said the young nobleman, "your speech is so friendly, and my own estate so helpless, that I know not how to refuse your kind proffer, even while I blush to accept it at the hands of a stranger."

"We are, I trust, no longer such," said the goldsmith; "and for my guerdon, when my mediation proves successful, and your fortunes are reestablished, you shall order your first cupboard of plate from George Heriot."

"You would have a bad paymaster, Master Heriot," said Lord Nigel.

"I do not fear that," replied the goldsmith; "and I am glad to see you smile, my lord—methinks it makes you look still more like the good old lord your father; and it emboldens me, beside, to bring out a small request—that you would take a homely dinner with me to-morrow. I lodge hard beside, in Lombard-street. For the cheer, my lord, a mess of white broth, a fat capon well larded, a dish of beef collops for auld Scotland's sake, and it may be a cup of right old wine, that was barreled before Scotland and England were one nation—Then for company, one or two of our own loving countrymen—and maybe my housewife may find out a bonnie Scots lass or so."

"I would accept your courtesy, Master Heriot," said Nigel, "but I hear the city ladies of London like to see a man gallant—I would not like to let down a Scottish nobleman in their ideas, as doubtless you have said the best of our poor country, and I rather lack the means of bravery for the present."

"My lord, your frankness leads me a step farther," said Master George. "I—I owed your father some moneys; and—nay, if your lordship looks at me so fixedly, I shall never tell my story—and, to

VOL. III.

speaking plainly, for I never could carry a lie well through in my life—it is most fitting, that, to solicit this matter properly, your lordship should go to court in a manner befitting your quality. I am a goldsmith, and live by lending money as well as by selling plate. I am ambitious to put an hundred pounds to be at interest in your hands, till your affairs are settled.

"And if they are never favourably settled?" said Nigel.

"Then, my lord," returned the citizen, "the miscarriage of such a sum will be of little consequence to me, compared with other subjects of regret."

"Master Heriot," said the Lord Nigel, "your favour is generously offered, and shall be frankly accepted. I must presume that you see your way through this business, though I hardly do; for I think you would be grieved to add any fresh burthen to me, by persuading me to incur debts which I am not likely to discharge. I will therefore take your money, under the hope and trust that you will enable me to repay you punctually."

"I will convince you, my lord," said the goldsmith, "that I mean to deal with you as a creditor from whom I expect payment; and therefore, you shall, with your own good pleasure, sign an acknowledgment for these moneys, and an obligation to content and repay me."

He then took from his girdle his writing materials, and, writing a few lines to the purport he expressed, pulled out a small bag of gold from a side-pouch under his cloak, and, observing that it should contain an hundred pounds, proceeded to tell out the contents very methodically upon the table. Nigel Olifaunt could not help intimating that this was an unnecessary ceremonial, and that he would take the bag of gold on the word of his obliging creditor; but this was repugnant to the old man's forms of transacting business.

"Bear with me," he said, "my good lord,—we citizens are a wary and thrifty generation; and I should lose my good name for ever within the toll of Paul's, were I to grant quittance, or take acknowledgment, without bringing the money to actual tale. I think it be right now—and, body of me," he said, looking out at the window, "yonder come my boys with my mule; for I must westward hoe. Put your moneys aside, my lord; it is not well to be seen with such goldfinches chirping about one in the lodgings of London. I think the lock of your casket be indifferent good; if not, I can serve you at an easy rate with one that has held thousands;—it was the good old Sir Faithful Frugal's;—his spendthrift son sold the shell when he had eaten the kernel—and there is the end of a city-fortune."

"I hope yours will make a better termination, Master Heriot," said Lord Nigel.

"I hope it will, my lord," said the old man, with a smile; "but," to use honest John Bunyan's phrase—"therewithal the water stood in his eyes," "it has pleased God to try me with the loss of two children; and for one adopted child who lives—ah! woe is me! and well-a-day!—But I am patient and thankful; and for the wealth God has sent me, it shall not want inheritors while there are orphan lads in Auld Reekie—I wish you good morrow, my lord."

66

"One orphan has cause to thank you already," said Nigel, as he attended him to the door of his chamber, where, resisting farther escort, the old citizen made his escape.

As, in going down stairs, he passed the shop where Dame Christie stood becking, he made civil inquiries after her husband. The dame of course regretted his absence; but he was down, she said, at Deptford, to settle with a Dutch ship-master.

"Our way of business, sir," she said, "takes him much from home, and my husband must be the slave of every tarry jacket that wants but a pound of oakum."

"All business must be minded, dame," said the goldsmith. "Make my remembrances—George Heriot of Lombard-street's remembrances—to your goodman. I have dealt with him—he is just and punctual—true to time and engagements;—be kind to your noble guest, and see he wants nothing. Though it be his pleasure at present to lie private and retired, there be those that care for him, and I have a charge to see him supplied; so that you may let me know by your husband, my good dame, how my lord is, and whether he wants aught."

"And so he is a real lord after all?" said the good dame. "I am sure I always thought he looked like one. But why does he not go to parliament then?"

"He will, dame," answered Heriot, "to the Parliament of Scotland, which is his own country."

"Oh! he is but a Scots lord, then," said the good dame; "and that's the thing makes him ashamed to take the title, as they say."

"Let him not hear you say so, dame," replied the citizen.

"Who, I, sir?" answered she; "no such matter in my thought, sir. Scot or English, he is at any rate a likely man, and a civil man; and rather than he should want anything, I would wait upon him myself, and come as far as Lombard-street to wait upon your worship too."

"Let your husband come to me, good dame," said the goldsmith, who, with all his experience and worth, was somewhat of a formalist and disciplinarian. "The proverb says, 'House goes mad when women gad;' and let his lordship's own man wait upon his master in his chamber—it is more seemly. God give ye good morrow."

"Good morrow to your worship," said the dame, somewhat coldly; and so soon as the adviser was out of hearing, was ungracious enough to mutter, in contempt of his counsel, "Marry quep of your advice, for an old Scotch tinsmith, as you are! My husband is as wise, and very near as old, as yourself; and if I please him, it is well enough; and though he is not just so rich just now as some folks, yet I hope to see him ride upon his moyle, with a foot-cloth, and have his two blue-coats after him, as well as they do."

CHAPTER V.

Wherefore come ye not to court?

Certain 't is the rarest sport;

There are silks and jewels glistening,
Prattling fools, and wise men listening,

Bullies among brave men justling,

Beggars amongst nobles bustling;

Low-breath'd talkers, minion lispers,

Cutting honest throats by whispers;

Wherefore come ye not to court?

Skelton swears 't is glorious sport.

Skelton Skeltonizeth.

It was not entirely out of parade that the benevolent citizen was mounted and attended in that manner, which, as the reader has been informed, excited a gentle degree of spleen on the part of Dame Christie, which, to do her justice, vanished in the little soliloquy which we have recorded. The good man, besides the natural desire to maintain the exterior of a man of worship, was at present bound to Whitehall in order to exhibit a piece of valuable workmanship to King James, which he deemed his majesty might be pleased to view, or even to purchase. He himself was therefore mounted upon his caparisoned mule, that he might the better make his way through the narrow, dirty, and crowded streets; and while one of his attendants carried under his arm the piece of plate, wrapped up in red baize, the other two gave an eye to its safety; for such was the state of the police of the metropolis, that men were often assaulted in the public street for the sake of revenge or of plunder; and those who apprehended being beset, usually endeavoured, if their state admitted such expense, to secure themselves by the attendance of armed followers. And this custom, which was at first limited to the nobility and gentry, extended by degrees to those citizens of consideration, who, being understood to travel with a charge, as it was called, might otherwise have been selected as safe subjects of plunder by the street-robber.

As Master George Heriot paced forth westward with this gallant attendance, he paused at the shop-door of his countryman and friend, the ancient horologer, and having caused Tunstall, who was in attendance, to adjust his watch by the real time, he desired to speak with his master; in consequence of which summons, the old time-meter came forth from his den, his face like a bronze bust, darkened with dust, and glistening here and there with copper filings, and his senses so bemused in the intensity of calculation, that he gazed on his friend the goldsmith for a minute before he seemed personally to comprehend who he was, and heard him express his invitation to David Ramsay, and pretty Mistress Margaret, his daughter, to dine with him next day at noon, to meet with a noble young countryman, without returning any answer.

"I'll make thee speak, with a murrain to thee," muttered Heriot to himself; and suddenly changing his tone, he said aloud,—"I pray you, neighbour David, when are you and I to have a settlement for the bullion wherewith I supplied you to mount

yonder castle's hall-clock at Theobald's, and that other whirligig that you made for the Duke of Buckingham? I have had the Spanish house to satisfy for the ingots, and I must needs put you in mind that you have been eight months behind-hand."

There is something so sharp and aigre in the demand of a peremptory dun, that no human tympanum, however inaccessible to other tones, can resist the application. David Ramsay started at once from his reverie, and answered in a pettish tone, "Wow, George, man, what needs aw this din about sax score o' pounds? Aw the world kens I can answer aw claims on me, and you proffered yoursell fair time, till his maist gracious majesty and the noble duke suld make settled accompts wi' me; and ye may ken, by your ain experience, that I canna gang rowting like an unmannered Highland stot to their doors, as ye come to mine."

Heriot laughed, and replied, "Well, David, I see a demand of money is like a bucket of water about your ears, and makes you a man of the world at once. And now, friend, will you tell me, like a christian man, if you will dine with me to-morrow at noon, and bring pretty Mistress Margaret, my god-daughter, with you, to meet with our noble young countryman, the Lord of Glenvarloch?"

"The young Lord of Glenvarloch!" said the old mechanist; "wi' aw my heart, and blithe I will be to see him again. We have not met these forty years—he was two years before me at the humanity classes—he is a sweet youth."

"That was his father—his father—his father—you old dotard dot-and-carry-one that you are," answered the goldsmith. "A sweet youth he would have been by this time, had he lived, worthy nobleman. This is his son, the Lord Nigel."

"His son!" said Ramsay; "maybe he will want something of a chronometer, or watch—few gallants care to be without them now-a-days."

"He may buy half your stock-in-trade, if ever he comes to his own, for what I know," said his friend; "but, Davie, remember your bond, and use me not as you did when my housewife had the sheep's-head and the cock-a-leek boiling for you as late as two of the clock, afternoon."

"She had the more credit by her cookery," answered David, now fully awake; "a sheep's-head, overboiled, were poison, according to our saying."

"Well," answered Master George, "but as there will be no sheep's-head to-morrow, it may chance you to spoil a dinner which a proverb cannot mend. It may be you may forgather with your friend Sir Mungo Malagrowth, for I purpose to ask his worship; so, be sure and bide tryste, Davie."

"That will I—I will be true as a chronometer," said Ramsay.

"I will not trust you though," replied Heriot.—"Hear you, Jenkin boy, tell Scots Janet to tell pretty Mistress Margaret, my godchild, she must put her father in remembrance to put on his best doublet to-morrow, and to bring him to Lombard-street at noon. Tell her they are to meet a brave young Scots lord."

Jenkin coughed that sort of dry short cough uttered by those who are either charged with errands

which they do not like, or hear opinions to which they must not enter a dissent.

"Umph!" repeated Master George—who, as we have already noticed, was something of a martinet in domestic discipline—"what does *umph* mean? Will you do mine errand, or not, sirrah?"

"Sure, Master George Heriot," said the apprentice, touching his cap, "I only meant, that Mistress Margaret was not likely to forget such an invitation."

"Why, no," said Master George, "she is a dutiful girl to her godfather, though I sometimes call her a jill-flirt.—And, hark ye, Jenkin, you and your comrade had best come with your clubs, to see your master and her safely home; but first shut shop, and loose the bull-dog, and let the porter stay in the fore-shop till your return. I will send two of my knaves with you; for I hear these wild youngsters of the Temple are broken out worse and lighter than ever."

"We can keep their steel in order with good hand-bats," said Jenkin; "and never trouble your servants for the matter."

"Or, if need be," said Tunstall, "we have swords as well as the Templars."

"Fie upon it—fie upon it, young man," said the citizen;—"An apprentice with a sword!—Marry, Heaven forefend! I would as soon see him in a hat and feather."

"Well, sir," said Jenkin—"we will find arms fitting to our station, and will defend our master and his daughter, if we should tear up the very stones of the pavement."

"There spoke a London 'prentice bold," said the citizen; "and, for your comfort, my lads, you shall crush a cup of wine to the health of the fathers of the city. I have my eye on both of you—you are thriving lads, each in his own way.—God be wi' you, Davie. Forget not to-morrow, at noon." And, so saying, he again turned his mule's head westward, and crossed Temple-bar, at that slow and decent amble, which at once became his rank and civic importance, and put his pedestrian followers to no inconvenience to keep up with him.

At the Temple Gate he again paused, dismounted, and sought his way into one of the small booths occupied by scribes in the neighbourhood. A young man, with lank smooth hair combed straight to his ears, and then cropped short, rose, with a cringing reverence, pulled off a slouched hat, which he would upon no signal replace on his head, and answered, with much demonstration of reverence, to the goldsmith's question of, "How goes business, Andrew?"—"Aw the better for your worship's kind countenance and maintenance."

"Get a large sheet of paper, man, and make a new pen, with a sharp neb, and fine hair-stroke. Do not slit the quill up sae high, it's a wastife course in your trade, Andrew—they that do not mind corn-pickles, never come to forpits. I have known a learned man write a thousand pages with one quill."

"Ah! sir," said the lad, who listened to the goldsmith, though instructing him in his own trade, with an air of veneration and acquiescence, "how sune ony pair creature like mysell may rise in the

world, wi' the instruction of such a man as your worship!"

"My instructions are few, Andrew, soon told, and not hard to practise. Be honest—be industrious—be frugal—and you will soon win wealth and worship.—Here, copy me this supplication in your best and most formal hand. I will wait by you till it is done."

The youth lifted not his eye from the paper, and laid not the pen from his hand, until the task was finished to the employer's satisfaction. The citizen then gave the young scrivener an angel; and bidding him, on his life, be secret in all business intrusted to him, again mounted his mule, and rode on westward along the Strand.

It may be worth while to remind our readers, that the Temple-bar which Heriot passed, was not the arched screen, or gate-way, of the present day; but an open railing, or palisade, which, at night, and in times of alarm, was closed with a barricade of posts and chains. The Strand also, along which he rode, was not, as now, a continued street, although it was beginning already to assume that character. It still might be considered as an open road, along the south side of which stood various houses and hotels belonging to the nobility, having gardens behind them down to the water-side, with stairs to the river, for the convenience of taking boat; which mansions have bequeathed the names of their lordly owners to many of the streets leading from the Strand to the Thames. The north side of the Strand was also a long line of houses, behind which, as in Saint Martin's Lane, and other points, buildings were rapidly arising; but Covent Garden was still a garden, in the literal sense of the word, or at least but beginning to be studded with irregular buildings. All that was passing around, however, marked the rapid increase of a capital which had long enjoyed peace, wealth, and a regular government. Houses were arising in every direction; and the shrewd eye of our citizen already saw the period not distant, which should convert the nearly open highway on which he travelled, into a connected and regular street, uniting the court end of the town with the city of London.

He next passed Charing Cross, which was no longer the pleasant solitary village at which the judges were wont to breakfast on their way to Westminster Hall, but began to resemble the artery through which, to use Johnson's expression, "pours the full tide of London population." The buildings were rapidly increasing, yet scarcely gave even a faint idea of its present appearance.

At last Whitehall received our traveller, who passed under one of the beautiful gates designed by Holbein, and composed of tessellated brick-work, being the same to which Moniplies had profanely likened the West-port of Edinburgh, and entered the ample precincts of the palace of Whitehall, now full of all the confusion attending improvement.

It was just at the time when James,—little suspecting that he was employed in constructing a palace, from the window of which his only son was to pass to die upon a scaffold before it,—was busied in removing the ancient and ruinous buildings of De Burgh, Henry VIII., and Queen Elizabeth, to make way for the superb architecture on which Inigo Jones

exerted all his genius. The king, ignorant of futurity, was now engaged in pressing on his work; and, for that purpose, still maintained his royal apartments at Whitehall, amidst the rubbish of old buildings, and the various confusion attending the erection of the new pile, which formed at present a labyrinth not easily to be traversed.

The goldsmith to the royal household, and who, if fame spoke true, oftentimes acted as their banker,—for these professions were not as yet separated from each other,—was a person of too much importance to receive the slightest interruption from sentinel or porter; and, leaving his mule and two of his followers in the outer court, he gently knocked at a postern-gate of the building, and was presently admitted, while the most trusty of his attendants followed him closely, with the piece of plate under his arm. This man also he left behind him in an ante-room,—where three or four pages in the royal livery, but untrussed, unbuttoned, and dressed more carelessly than the place, and nearness to a king's person, seemed to admit, were playing at dice and draughts, or stretched upon benches, and slumbering with half-shut eyes. A corresponding gallery, which opened from the ante-room, was occupied by two gentlemen-ushers of the chamber, who gave each a smile of recognition as the wealthy goldsmith entered.

No word was spoken on either side; but one of the ushers looked first to Heriot, and then to a little door half-covered by the tapestry, which seemed to say, as plain as a look could, "Lies your business that way?" The citizen nodded; and the court-attendant, moving on tiptoe, and with as much caution as if the floor had been paved with eggs, advanced to the door, opened it gently, and spoke a few words in a low tone. The broad Scottish accent of King James was heard in reply,—“Admit him instanter, Maxwell. Have you hairboured sae lang at the court, and not learned that gold and silver are ever welcome?”

The usher signed to Heriot to advance, and the honest citizen was presently introduced into the cabinet of the sovereign.

The scene of confusion amid which he found the king seated, was no bad picture of the state and quality of James's own mind. There was much that was rich and costly in cabinet pictures and valuable ornaments; but they were slovenly arranged, covered with dust, and lost half their value, or at least their effect, from the manner in which they were presented to the eye. The table was loaded with huge folios, amongst which lay light books of jest and ribaldry; and, amongst notes of unmercifully long orations, and essays on king-craft, were mingled miserable roundels and ballads by the royal 'prentice, as he styled himself, in the art of poetry, and schemes for the general pacification of Europe, with a list of the names of the king's hounds, and remedies against canine madness.

The king's dress was of green velvet, quilted so full as to be dagger-proof—which gave him the appearance of clumsy and ungainly protuberance; while its being buttoned awry, communicated to his figure an air of distortion. Over his green doublet he wore a sad-coloured night-gown, out of the

pocket of which peeped his hunting-horn. His high-crowned grey hat lay on the floor, covered with dust, but encircled by a carcanet of large balas rubies; and he wore a blue velvet night-cap, in the front of which was placed the plume of a heron, which had been struck down by a favourite hawk in some critical moment of the flight, in remembrance of which the king wore this highly honoured feather.

But such inconsistencies in dress and appointments were mere outward types of those which existed in the royal character; rendering it a subject of doubt amongst his contemporaries, and bequeathing it as a problem to future historians. He was deeply learned, without possessing useful knowledge; sagacious in many individual cases, without having real wisdom; fond of his power, and desirous to maintain and augment it, yet willing to resign the direction of that, and of himself, to the most unworthy favourites; a big and bold assertor of his rights in words, yet one who tamely saw them trampled on in deeds; a lover of negotiations, in which he was always outwitted; and a fearer of war, where conquest might have been easy. He was fond of his dignity, while he was perpetually degrading it by undue familiarity; capable of much public labour, yet often neglecting it for the meanest amusement; a wit, though a pedant; and a scholar, though fond of the conversation of the ignorant and uneducated. Even his timidity of temper was not uniform; and there were moments of his life, and those critical, in which he showed the spirit of his ancestors. He was laborious in trifles, and a trifler where serious labour was required; devout in his sentiments, and yet too often profane in his language; just and beneficent by nature, he yet gave way to the iniquities and oppression of others. He was penurious respecting money which he had to give from his own hand, yet inconsiderately and unboundedly profuse of that which he did not see. In a word, those good qualities which displayed themselves in particular cases and occasions, were not of a nature sufficiently firm and comprehensive to regulate his general conduct; and, showing themselves as they occasionally did, only entitled James to the character bestowed on him by Sully—that he was the wisest fool in Christendom.

That the fortunes of this monarch might be as little of a piece as his character, he, certainly the least able of the Stuarts, succeeded peaceably to that kingdom, against the power of which his predecessors had, with so much difficulty, defended his native throne. And, lastly, although his reign appeared calculated to insure to Great Britain that lasting tranquillity and internal peace which so much suited the king's disposition, yet, during that very reign, were sown those seeds of dissension, which, like the teeth of the fabulous dragon, had their harvest in a bloody and universal civil war.

Such was the monarch, who, saluting Heriot familiarly by the name of Jingling Geordie (for it was his well-known custom to give nick-names to all his familiars), inquired what new clatter-traps he had brought with him, to cheat his lawful and native prince out of his siller.

"God forbid, my liege," said the citizen, "that

I should have any such disloyal purpose. I did but bring a piece of plate to show to your most gracious majesty, which, both for the subject and for the workmanship, I were loth to put into the hands of any subject until I knew your majesty's pleasure anent it."

"Body o' me, man, let's see it, Heriot; though, by my saul, Steenie's service o' plate was sae dear a bargain, I had 'maist pawned my word as a royal king, to keep my ain gold and silver in future, and let you, Geordie, keep yours."

"Respecting the Duke of Buckingham's plate," said the goldsmith, "your majesty was pleased to direct that no expense should be spared, and"—

"What signifies what I desired, man? when a wise man is with fules and bairns, he maun e'en play at the chucks. But you should have had mair sense and consideration than to gie Babie Charles and Steenie their ain gate; they wad hae floored the very rooms wi' silver, and I wonder they didna."

George Heriot bowed, and said no more. He knew his master too well to vindicate himself otherwise than by a distant allusion to his order; and James, with whom economy was only a transient and momentary twinge of conscience, became immediately afterwards desirous to see the piece of plate which the goldsmith proposed to exhibit, and dispatched Maxwell to bring it to his presence. In the meantime he demanded of the citizen whence he had procured it.

"From Italy, may it please your majesty," replied Heriot.

"It has naething in it tending to papistrie?" said the king, looking graver than his wont.

"Surely not, please your majesty," said Heriot; "I were not wise to bring anything to your presence that had the mark of the beast."

"You would be the mair beast yourself to do so," said the king; "it is weel kenn'd that I wrestled wi' Dagon in my youth, and smote him on the ground-sill of his own temple; a gude evidence that I should be in time called, however unworthy, the Defender of the Faith.—But here comes Maxwell, bending under his burthen, like the Golden Ass of Apuleius."

Heriot hastened to relieve the usher, and to place the embossed salver, for such it was, and of extraordinary dimensions, in a light favourable for his majesty's viewing the sculpture.

"Saul of my body, man," said the king, "it is a curious piece, and, as I think, fit for a king's chamber; and the subject, as you say, Master George, vera adequate and beseeming—being, as I see, the judgment of Solomon—a prince in whose paths it weel becomes a' leeving monarchs to walk with emulation."

"But whose footsteps," said Maxwell, "only one of them—if a subject may say so much—hath ever overtaken."

"Haud your tongue for a fause fleeching loon," said the king, but with a smile on his face that showed the flattery had done its part. "Look at the bonnie piece of workmanship, and haud your clavering tongue.—And whase handywork may it be, Geordie?"

"It was wrought, sir," replied the goldsmith, "by

the famous Florentine, Benvenuto Cellini, and designed for Francis the First of France; but I hope it will find a fitter master."

"Francis of France!" said the king; "send Solomon, king of the Jews, to Francis of France!—Body of me, man, it would have kythed Cellini mad, had he never done onything else out of the gate. Francis!—why, he was a fighting fule, man—a mere fighting fule,—got himsell ta'en at Pavia, like our ain David at Durham lang syne;—if they could hae sent him Solomon's wit, and love of peace and godliness, they wad hae dune him a better turn. But Solomon should sit in other gate company than Francis of France."

"I trust that such will be his good fortune," said Heriot.

"It is a curious and vera artificial sculpture," said the king, in continuation; "but yet, methinks, the carnifex, or executioner there, is brandishing his gulley ower near the king's face, seeing he is within reach of his weapon. I think less wisdom than Solomon's wad have taught him that there was danger in edge-tools, and that he wad have bidden the smaik either sheath his shabble or stand farther back."

George Heriot endeavoured to alleviate this objection, by assuring the king that the vicinity betwixt Solomon and the executioner was nearer in appearance than in reality, and that the perspective should be allowed for.

"Gang to the de'il wi' your prospective, man," said the king; "there canna be a waur prospective for a lawfu' king, wha wishes to reign in luv, and die in peace and honour, than to have naked swords flashing in his een. I am accounted as brave as maist folks; and yet I profess to ye I could never look on a bare blade without blinking and winking. But a' thegither it is a brave piece;—and what is the price of it, man?"

The goldsmith replied by observing, that it was not his own property, but that of a distressed countryman.

"Whilk you mean to mak your excuse for asking the double of its worth, I warrant," answered the king. "I ken the tricks of you burrows-town merchants, man."

"I have no hopes of baffling your majesty's sagacity," said Heriot; "the piece is really what I say, and the price a hundred and fifty pounds sterling, if it pleases your majesty to make present payment."

"A hundred and fifty punds, man! and as many witches and warlocks to raise them!" said the irritated monarch. "My saul, Jingling Geordie, ye are minded that your purse shall jingle to a bonnie tune!—How am I to tell you down a hundred and fifty punds for what will not weigh as many merks? and ye ken that my very household servitors, and the officers of my mouth, are sax months in arrear!"

The goldsmith stood his ground against all this objurgation, as being what he was well accustomed to, and only answered, that, if his majesty liked the piece, and desired to possess it, the price could be easily settled. It was true that the party could not want the money, but he, George Heriot, would advance it on his majesty's account, if such were

his pleasure, and wait his royal conveniency for payment, for that and other matters; the money, meanwhile, lying at the ordinary usage.

"By my honour," said James, "and that is speaking like an honest and reasonable tradesman. We maun get another subsidy frae the commons, and that will make ae compting of it. Awa wi' it, Maxwell—awa wi' it, and let it be set where Steenie and Babie Charles shall see it as they return from Richmond.—And now that we are secret, my good auld friend Geordie, I do truly opine, that, speaking of Solomon and ourselves, the haill wisdom in the country left Scotland, when we took our travels to the southland here."

George Heriot was courtier enough to say, "that the wise naturally follow the wisest, as stags follow their leader."

"Troth, I think there is something in what thou sayest," said James; "for we ourselves, and those of our court and household, as thou thyself, for example, are allowed by the English, for as self-opinioned as they are, to pass for reasonable good wits; but the brains of those we have left behind are all astir, and run clean hirdie-girdie, like sae mony warlocks and witches on the Devil's Sabbath-e'en."

"I am sorry to hear this, my liege," said Heriot. "May it please your grace to say what our countrymen have done to deserve such a character?"

"They are become frantic, man—clean brain-crazed," answered the king. "I cannot keep them out of the court by all the proclamations that the heralds roar themselves hoarse with. Yesterday nae farther gane, just as we were mounted, and about to ride forth, in rushed a thorough gutter-blood—a ragged rascal, every dud upon whose back was bidding good day to the other, with a coat and hat that would have served a pease-bogle, and, without havings or reverence, thrust into our hands, like a sturdy beggar, some supplication about debts owing by our gracious mother, and siclike trash; whereat the horse spangs on end, and, but for our admirable sitting, wherein we have been thought to excel maist sovereign princes, as well as subjects, in Europe, I promise you we would have been laid endlang on the causeway."

"Your majesty," said Heriot, "is their common father, and therefore they are the bolder to press into your gracious presence."

"I ken I am *pater patriæ* well enough," said James; "but one would think they had a mind to squeeze my puddings out, that they may divide the inheritance. Ud's death, Geordie, there is not a loon among them can deliver a supplication, as it suld be done in the face of majesty."

"I would I knew the most fitting and beseeming mode to do so," said Heriot, "were it but to instruct our poor countrymen in better fashions."

"By my halidome," said the king, "ye are a cee-vileezed fellow, Geordie, and I carena if I fling awa as much time as may teach ye. And, first, see you, sir—ye sall approach the presence of majesty thus,—shadowing your eyes with your hand, to testify that you are in the presence of the vicegerent of Heaven.—Vara weel, George, that is done in a comely manner.—Then, sir, ye sall kneel, and

make as if you would kiss the hem of our garment, the latch of our shoe, or such like.—Vera weel enacted—whilk we, as being willing to be debonair and pleasing towards our lieges, prevent thus,—and motion to you to rise ;—whilk, having a boon to ask, as yet you obey not, but, gliding your hand into your pouch, bring forth your supplication, and place it reverentially in our open palm.” The goldsmith, who had complied with great accuracy with all the prescribed points of the ceremonial, here completed it, to James’s no small astonishment, by placing in his hand the petition of the Lord of Glenvarloch. “What means this, ye fause loon?” said he, reddening and sputtering; “hae I been teaching you the manual exercise, that ye suld present your piece at our ain royal body?—Now, by this light, I had as lief that ye had bended a real pistolet against me, and yet this hae ye done in my very cabinet, where nought suld enter but at my ain pleasure.”

“I trust, your majesty,” said Heriot, as he continued to kneel, “will forgive my exercising the lesson you condescended to give me in the behalf of a friend?”

“Of a friend!” said the king; “so much the waur—so much the waur, I tell you. If it had been something to do *yoursell* good, there would have been some sense in it, and some chance that you wad not have come back on me in a hurry; but a man may have a hundred friends, and petitions for every ane of them, ilk ane after other.”

“Your majesty, I trust,” said Heriot, “will judge me by former experience, and will not suspect me of such presumption.”

“I kenna,” said the placable monarch; “the world goes daft, I think—*sed semel insanivimus omnes*—thou art my old and faithful servant, that is the truth; and, wer’t anything for thy own behoof, man, thou should’st not ask twice. But, troth, Steenie loves me so dearly, that he cares not that any one should ask favours of me but himself.—Maxwell (for the usher had re-entered after having carried off the plate), get into the ante-chamber wi’ your lang lugs.—In conscience, Geordie, I think as that thou hast been mine ain auld fiduciary, and wert my goldsmith when I might say with the ethnic poet—*Non mea renidet in domo lacunar*—for, faith, they had pillaged my mither’s auld house sae, that beechen bickers, and treen trenchers, and latten platters, were whiles the best at our board, and glad we were of something to put on them, without quarreling with the metal of the dishes. D’ye mind, for thou wert in maist of our complots, how we were fain to send sax of the Blue-banders to harry the Lady of Loganhouse’s dow-cote and poultry-yard, and what an awfu’ plaint the poor dame made against Jock of Milch, and the thieves of Annandale, wha were as sackless of the deed as I am of the sin of murther?”

“It was the better for Jock,” said Heriot; “for, if I remember weel, it saved him from a strapping up at Dumfries, which he had weel deserved for other misdeeds.”

“Ay, man, mind ye that?” said the king; “but he had other virtues, for he was a tight huntsman, moreover, that Jock of Milch, and could hollow to

a hound till all the woods rang again. But he came to an Annandale end at the last, for Lord Torthorwald run his lance out through him.—Cocksnails, man, when I think of these wild passages, in my conscience, I am not sure but we lived merrier in auld Holyrood in these shifting days, than now when we are dwelling at heck and manger. *Cantabit vacuus*—we had but little to care for.”

“And if your majesty please to remember,” said the goldsmith, “the awful task we had to gather silver-vessail and gold-work enough to make some show before the Spanish ambassador.”

“Vera true,” said the king, now in a full tide of gossip, “and I mind not the name of the right leal lord that helped us with every unce he had in his house, that his native prince might have some credit in the eyes of them that had the Indies at their beck.”

“I think, if your majesty,” said the citizen, “will cast your eye on the paper in your hand, you will recollect his name.”

“Ay!” said the king, “say ye sae, man?—Lord Glenvarloch, that was his name indeed—*Justus et tenax propositi*—A just man, but as obstinate as a baited bull. He stood whiles against us, that Lord Randal Olifaunt of Glenvarloch, but he was a loving and a leal subject in the main. But this supplicator maun be his son—Randal has been long gone where king and lord must go, Geordie, as well as the like of you—and what does his son want with us!”

“The settlement,” answered the citizen, “of a large debt due by your majesty’s treasury, for money advanced to your majesty in great state emergency, about the time of the Raid of Ruthven.”

“I mind the thing weel,” said King James—“Od’s death, man, I was just out of the clutches of the Master of Glamis and his complices, and there was never siller mair welcome to a born prince,—the mair the shame and pity that crowned king should need sic a petty sum. But what need he dun us for it, man, like a baxter at the breaking? We aught him the siller, and will pay him wi’ our convenience, or mak it otherwise up to him, whilk is enow between prince and subject—We are not *in meditatione fugæ*, man, to be arrested thus peremptorily.”

“Alas! an it please your majesty,” said the goldsmith, shaking his head, “it is the poor young nobleman’s extreme necessity, and not his will, that makes him importunate; for he must have money, and that briefly, to discharge a debt due to Peregrine Peterson, Conservator of the privileges at Campvere, or his haill hereditary barony and estate of Glenvarloch will be evicted in virtue of an unredeemed wadset.”

“How say ye, man—how say ye?” exclaimed the King, impatiently; “the carle of a conservator, the son of a Low-Dutch skipper, evict the auld estate and lordship of the house of Olifaunt?—God’s bread, man, that maun not be—we maun suspend the diligence by writ of favour, or otherwise.”

“I doubt that may hardly be,” answered the citizen, “if it please your majesty; your learned counsel in the law of Scotland advise, that there is no remeid but in paying the money.”

“Ud’s fish,” said the king, “let him keep haud by the strong hand against the carle, until we can take some order about his affairs.”

"Alas!" insisted the goldsmith, "if it like your majesty, your own pacific government, and your doing of equal justice to all men, has made main force a kittle line to walk by, unless just within the bounds of the Highlands."

"Weel—weel—weel, man," said the perplexed monarch, whose ideas of justice, expedience, and convenience, became on such occasions strangely embroiled; "just it is we should pay our debts, that the young man may pay his; and he must be paid, and *in verbo regis* he shall be paid—but how to come by the siller, man, is a difficult chapter—ye maun try the city, Geordie."

"To say the truth," answered Heriot, "please your gracious majesty, what betwixt loans and benevolences and subsidies, the city is at this present"—

"Donna tell me of what the city is," said King James; "our exchequer is as dry as Dean Giles's discourses on the penitentiary psalms—*Ex nihilo nihil fit*—It's ill taking the breeks aff a wild Highlandman—they that come to me for siller, should tell me how to come by it—the city ye maun try, Heriot; and donna think to be called Jingling Geordie for nothing—and *in verbo regis* I will pay the lad if you get me the loan—I wonnot haggle on the terms; and, between you and me, Geordie, we will redeem the brave auld estate of Glenvarloch.—But wherefore comes not the young lord to court, Heriot—is he comely—is he presentable in the presence?"

"No one can be more so," said George Heriot; "but"—

"Ay, I understand ye," said his majesty—"I understand ye—*Res angusta domi*—puir lad—puir lad!—and his father a right true leal Scots heart, though stiff in some opinions. Hark ye, Heriot, let the lad have twa hundred pounds to fit him out. And, here—here—(taking the carcanet of rubies from his old hat)—ye have had these in pledge before for a larger sum, ye auld Levite that ye are. Keep them in gage, till I gie ye back the siller out of the next subsidy."

"If it please your majesty to give me such directions in writing," said the cautious citizen.

"The de'il is in your nicety, George," said the king; "ye are as preceese as a puritan in form, and a mere nullifidian in the marrow of the matter. May not a king's word serve you for advancing your pitiful twa hundred pounds?"

"But not for detaining the crown jewels," said George Heriot.

And the king, who from long experience was inured to dealing with suspicious creditors, wrote an order upon George Heriot, his well-beloved goldsmith and jeweller, for the sum of two hundred pounds, to be paid presently to Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch, to be imputed as so much debts due to him by the crown; and authorizing the retention of a carcanet of balas rubies, with a great diamond, as described in a catalogue of his majesty's jewels, to remain in possession of the said George Heriot, advancer of the said sum, and so forth, until he was lawfully contented and paid thereof. By another rescript, his majesty gave the said George Heriot directions to deal with some

of the moneyed men, upon equitable terms, for a sum of money for his majesty's present use, not to be under 50,000 merks, but as much more as could conveniently be procured.

"And has he ony lair, this Lord Nigel of ours?" said the king.

George Heriot could not exactly answer this question; but believed "the young lord had studied abroad."

"He shall have our own advice," said the king, "how to carry on his studies to maist advantage; and it may be we will have him come to court, and study with Steenie, and Babie Charles. And, now we think on't, away,—away, George—for the bairns will be coming hame presently, and we would not as yet they kenn'd of this matter we have been treating anent. *Propera pedem*, O Geordie. Clap your mule between your houghs, and god-den with you."

Thus ended the conference betwixt the gentle King Jamie and his benevolent jeweller and goldsmith.

CHAPTER VI.

O I do know him—'t is the mouldy lemon,
Which our court wits will wet their lips withal,
When they would sauce their honeyed conversation
With somewhat sharper flavour.—Marry, sir,
That virtue 's well nigh left him—all the juice,
That was so sharp and poignant, is squeezed out;
While the poor rind, although as sour as ever,
Must season soon the draff we give our granters,
For two-legg'd things are weary on 't.

The Chamberlain—A Comedy.

THE good company invited by the hospitable citizen assembled at his house in Lombard-street at the "hollow and hungry hour" of noon, to partake of that meal which divides the day; being about the time when modern persons of fashion, turning themselves upon their pillow, begin to think, not without a great many doubts and much hesitation, that they will by and by commence it. Thither came the young Nigel, arrayed plainly, but in a dress, nevertheless, more suitable to his age and quality than he had formerly worn, accompanied by his servant Monipplies, whose outside also was considerably improved. His solemn and stern features glared forth from under a blue velvet bonnet, fantastically placed sideways on his head—he had a sound and tough coat of English blue broad-cloth, which, unlike his former vestment, would have stood the tug of all the apprentices in Fleet-street. The buckler and broad-sword he wore as the arms of his condition, and a neat silver badge, bearing his lord's arms, announced that he was an appendage of aristocracy. He sat down in the good citizen's buttery, not a little pleased to find his attendance upon the table in the hall was like to be rewarded with his share of a meal such as he had seldom partaken of.

Mr David Ramsay, that profound and ingenious mechanic, was safely conducted to Lombard-street, according to promise, well washed, brushed, and cleaned, from the soot of the furnace and the forge. His daughter came with him, a girl about twenty years old, very pretty, very demure, yet with lively

black eyes, that ever and anon contradicted the expression of sobriety, to which silence, reserve, a plain velvet hood, and a cambric ruff, had condemned Mistress Marget, as the daughter of a quiet citizen.

There were also two citizens and merchants of London, men ample in cloak, and many-linked golden chain, well to pass in the world, and experienced in their craft of merchandize, but who require no particular description. There was an elderly clergyman also, in his gown and cassock, a decent venerable man, partaking in his manners of the plainness of the citizens amongst whom he had his cure.

These may be dismissed with brief notice; but not so Sir Mungo Malagrowther, of Girnigo Castle, who claims a little more attention, as an original character of the time in which he flourished.

That good knight knocked at Master Heriot's door just as the clock began to strike twelve, and was seated in his chair ere the last stroke had chimed. This gave the knight an excellent opportunity of making sarcastic observations on all who came later than himself, not to mention a few rubs at the expense of those who had been so superfluous as to appear earlier.

Having little or no property save his bare designation, Sir Mungo had been early attached to court in the capacity of whipping-boy, as the office was then called, to King James the Sixth, and, with his majesty, trained to all polite learning by his celebrated preceptor, George Buchanan. The office of whipping-boy doomed its unfortunate occupant to undergo all the corporeal punishment which the Lord's Anointed, whose proper person was of course sacred, might chance to incur, in the course of travelling through his grammar and prosody. Under the stern rule, indeed, of George Buchanan, who did not approve of the vicarious mode of punishment, James bore the penance of his own faults, and Mungo Malagrowther enjoyed a sinecure; but James's other pedagogue, Master Patrick Young, went more ceremoniously to work, and appalled the very soul of the youthful king by the floggings which he bestowed on the whipping-boy, when the royal task was not suitably performed. And be it told to Sir Mungo's praise, that there were points about him in the highest respect suited to his official situation. He had even in youth a naturally irregular and grotesque set of features, which, when distorted by fear, pain, and anger, looked like one of the whimsical faces which present themselves in a Gothic cornice. His voice also was high-pitched and querulous, so that, when smarting under Master Peter Young's unsparing inflictions, the expression of his grotesque physiognomy, and the superhuman yells which he uttered, were well suited to produce all the effects on the monarch who deserved the lash, that could possibly be produced by seeing another and an innocent individual suffering for his delict.

Sir Mungo Malagrowther, for such he became, thus got an early footing at court, which another would have improved and maintained. But, when he grew too big to be whipped, he had no other means of rendering himself acceptable. A bitter, caustic, and backbiting humour, a malicious wit,

and an envy of others more prosperous than the possessor of such amiable qualities, have not, indeed, always been found obstacles to a courtier's rise; but then they must be amalgamated with a degree of selfish cunning and prudence, of which Sir Mungo had no share. His satire ran riot, his envy could not conceal itself, and it was not long after his majority till he had as many quarrels upon his hands as would have required a cat's nine lives to answer. In one of these rencontres he received, perhaps we should say fortunately, a wound, which served him as an excuse for answering no invitations of the kind in future. Sir Rullion Rattray, of Ranagullion, cut off, in mortal combat, three of the fingers of his right hand, so that Sir Mungo never could hold sword again. At a later period, having written some satirical verses upon the Lady Cockpen, he received so severe a chastisement from some persons employed for the purpose, that he was found half dead on the spot where they had thus dealt with him, and one of his thighs having been broken, and ill set, gave him a hitch in his gait, with which he hobbled to his grave. The lameness of his leg and hand, besides that they added considerably to the grotesque appearance of this original, procured him in future a personal immunity from the more dangerous consequences of his own humour; and he gradually grew old in the service of the court, in safety of life and limb, though without either making friends, or attaining preferment. Sometimes, indeed, the king was amused with his caustic sallies, but he had never art enough to improve the favourable opportunity; and his enemies (who were upon the matter the whole court) always found means to throw him out of favour again. The celebrated Archie Armstrong offered Sir Mungo, in his generosity, a skirt of his own fool's-coat, proposing thereby to communicate to him the privileges and immunities of a professed jester—"For," said the man of motley, "Sir Mungo, as he goes on just now, gets no more for a good jest than just the King's pardon for having made it."

Even in London, the golden shower which fell around him did not moisten the blighted fortunes of Sir Mungo Malagrowther. He grew old, deaf, and peevish—lost even the spirit which had formerly animated his strictures—and was barely endured by James, who, though himself nearly as far stricken in years, retained, to an unusual and even absurd degree, the desire to be surrounded by young people.

Sir Mungo, thus fallen into the yellow leaf of years and fortune, showed his emaciated form and faded embroidery at court as seldom as his duty permitted, and spent his time in indulging his food for satire in the public walks, and in the aisles of Saint Paul's, which were then the general resort of newsmongers and characters of all descriptions, associating himself chiefly with such of his countrymen as he accounted of inferior birth and rank to himself. In this manner, hating and contemning commerce and those who pursued it, he nevertheless lived a good deal among the Scottish artists and merchants who had followed the court to London. To these he could show his cynicism without much offence—for some submitted to his jeers and ill-

humour in deference to his birth and knighthood, which in those days conferred high privileges, and others, of more sense, pitied and endured the old man, unhappy alike in his fortunes and his temper.

Amongst the latter was George Heriot, who, though his habits and education induced him to carry aristocratical feelings to a degree which would now be thought extravagant, had too much spirit and good sense to permit himself to be intruded upon to an unauthorized excess, or used with the slightest improper freedom, by such a person as Sir Mungo, to whom he was, nevertheless, not only respectfully civil, but essentially kind, and even generous.

Accordingly, this appeared from the manner in which Sir Mungo Malagrowth conducted himself upon entering the apartment. He paid his respects to Master Heriot, and a decent, elderly, somewhat severe-looking female, in a coif, who, by the name of Aunt Judith, did the honours of his house and table, with little or no portion of the supercilious acidity which his singular physiognomy assumed when he made his bow successively to David Ramsay and the two sober citizens. He thrust himself into the conversation of the latter, to observe, he had heard in Paul's that the bankrupt concerns of Pindivide, a great merchant,—who, as he expressed it, had given the crows a pudding, and on whom he knew, from the same authority, each of the honest citizens had some unsettled claim,—was like to prove a total loss—"stock and block, ship and cargo, keel and rigging—all lost, now and for ever."

The two citizens grinned on each other; but, too prudent to make their private affairs the subject of public discussion, drew their heads together and evaded farther conversation by speaking in a whisper.

The old Scotch knight next attacked the watchmaker with the same unrespective familiarity.—"Davie," he said,—"Davie, ye donnard auld idiot, have ye no gane mad yet, with applying your mathematical science, as ye call it, to the Book of Apocalypse? I expected to have heard ye make out the sign of the beast, as clear as a tout on a bawbee whistle."

"Why, Sir Mungo," said the mechanist, after making an effort to recal to his recollection what had been said to him, and by whom, "it may be, that ye are nearer the mark than ye are yourself aware of; for, taking the ten horns o' the beast, ye may easily estimate by your digitals"—

"My digits! you d—d auld, rusty, good-for-nothing time-piecer!" exclaimed Sir Mungo, while, betwixt jest and earnest, he laid on his hilt his hand, or rather his claw (for Sir Rullion's broadsword had abridged it into that form),—"D'ye mean to upbraid me with my mutilation?"

Master Heriot interfered. "I cannot persuade our friend David," he said, "that scriptural prophecies are intended to remain in obscurity, until their unexpected accomplishment shall make, as in former days, that fulfilled which was written.—But you must not exert your knightly valour on him for all that."

"By my saul, and it would be throwing it away," said Sir Mungo, laughing. "I would as soon set

out, with hound and horn, to hunt a sturdied sheep, for he is in a doze again, and up to the chin in numerals, quotients, and dividends.—Mistress Margaret, my pretty honey," for the beauty of the young citizen made even Sir Mungo Malagrowth's grim features relax themselves a little, "is your father always as entertaining as he seems just now?"

Mistress Margaret simpered, bridled, looked to either side, then straight before her; and, having assumed all the airs of bashful embarrassment and timidity which were necessary, as she thought, to cover a certain shrewd readiness which really belonged to her character, at length replied, "That indeed her father was very thoughtful, but she had heard, that he took the habit of mind from her grandfather."

"Your grandfather!" said Sir Mungo,—after doubting if he had heard her aright,—"Said she her grandfather! The lassie is distraught!—I ken nae wench on this side of Temple-bar that is derived from so distant a relation."

"She has got a godfather, however, Sir Mungo," said George Heriot, again interfering; "and I hope you will allow him interest enough with you, to request you will not put his pretty godchild to so deep a blush."

"The better—the better," said Sir Mungo. "It is a credit to her, that, bred and born within the sound of Bow-bell, she can blush for anything; and by my saul, Master George," he continued, chucking the irritated and reluctant damsel under the chin, "she is bonnie enough to make amends for her lack of ancestry—at least in such a region as Cheapside, where, d'ye mind me, the kettle cannot call the porridge-pot"—

The damsel blushed, but not so angrily as before. Master George Heriot hastened to interrupt the conclusion of Sir Mungo's homely proverb, by introducing him personally to Lord Nigel.

Sir Mungo could not at first understand what his host said.—"Bread of Heaven, wha say ye, man?"

Upon the name of Nigel Olifaunt, Lord Glenvarloch, being again hollowed into his ear, he drew up, and, regarding his entertainer with some austerity, rebuked him for not making persons of quality acquainted with each other, that they might exchange courtesies before they mingled with other folks. He then made as handsome and courtly a congee to his new acquaintance as a man maimed in foot and hand could do; and, observing he had known my lord, his father, bid him welcome to London, and hoped he should see him at court.

Nigel in an instant comprehended, as well from Sir Mungo's manner, as from a strict compression of their entertainer's lips, which intimated the suppression of a desire to laugh, that he was dealing with an original of no ordinary description, and, accordingly, returned his courtesy with suitable punctiliousness. Sir Mungo, in the meanwhile, gazed on him with much earnestness; and, as the contemplation of natural advantages was as odious to him as that of wealth, or other adventitious benefits, he had no sooner completely perused the handsome form and good features of the young lord, than, like one of the comforters of the man of Uz, he drew close up to him, to enlarge on the former grandeur

of the Lords of Glenvarloch, and the regret with which he had heard, that their representative was not likely to possess the domains of his ancestry. Anon, he enlarged upon the beauties of the principal mansion of Glenvarloch—the commanding site of the old castle—the noble expanse of the lake, stocked with wild-fowl for hawking—the commanding screen of forest terminating in a mountain-ridge abounding with deer—and all the other advantages of that fine and ancient barony, till Nigel, in spite of every effort to the contrary, was unwillingly obliged to sigh.

Sir Mungo, skilful in discerning when the withers of those he conversed with were wrung, observed that his new acquaintance winced, and would willingly have pressed the discussion; but the cook's impatient knock upon the dresser with the haft of his dudgeon-knife, now gave a signal loud enough to be heard from the top of the house to the bottom, summoning, at the same time, the serving-men to place the dinner upon the table, and the guests to partake of it.

Sir Mungo, who was an admirer of good cheer,—a taste which, by the way, might have some weight in reconciling his dignity to these city visits,—was tolled off by the sound, and left Nigel and the other guests in peace, until his anxiety to place himself in his due place of pre-eminence at the genial board was duly gratified. Here, seated on the left hand of Aunt Judith, he beheld Nigel occupy the station of yet higher honour on the right, dividing that matron from pretty Mistress Margaret; but he saw this with the more patience, that there stood betwixt him and the young lord a superb larded capon.

The dinner proceeded according to the form of the times. All was excellent of the kind; and, besides the Scottish cheer promised, the board displayed beef and pudding, the statutory dainties of Old England. A small cupboard of plate, very choicely and beautifully wrought, did not escape the compliments of some of the company, and an oblique sneer from Sir Mungo, as intimating the owner's excellence in his own mechanical craft.

"I am not ashamed of the workmanship, Sir Mungo," said the honest citizen. "They say, a good cook knows how to lick his own fingers; and, methinks, it were unseemly that I, who have furnished half the cupboards in broad Britain, should have my own covered with paltry pewter."

The blessing of the clergyman now set the guests at liberty to attack what was placed before them; and the meal went forward with great decorum, until Aunt Judith, in farther recommendation of the capon, assured her company, that it was of a celebrated breed of poultry, which she had herself brought from Scotland.

"Then, like some of his countrymen, madam," said the pitiless Sir Mungo, not without a glance towards his landlord, "it has been well larded in England."

"There are some others of his countrymen," answered Master Heriot, "to whom all the lard in England has not been able to render that good office."

Sir Mungo sneered and reddened, the rest of the company laughed; and the satirist, who had his

reasons for not coming to extremity with Master George, was silent for the rest of the dinner.

The dishes were exchanged for confections, and wine of the highest quality and flavour; and Nigel saw the entertainments of the wealthiest burgomasters, which he had witnessed abroad, fairly outshone by the hospitality of a London citizen. Yet there was nothing ostentatious, or which seemed inconsistent with the degree of an opulent burgher.

While the collation proceeded, Nigel, according to the good-breeding of the time, addressed his discourse principally to Mrs Judith; whom he found to be a woman of a strong Scottish understanding, more inclined towards the puritans than was her brother George (for in that relation she stood to him, though he always called her aunt), attached to him in the strongest degree, and sedulously attentive to all his comforts. As the conversation of this good dame was neither lively nor fascinating, the young lord naturally addressed himself next to the old horologer's very pretty daughter, who sat upon his left hand. From her, however, there was no extracting any reply beyond the measure of a monosyllable; and when the young gallant had said the best and most complaisant things which his courtesy supplied, the smile that mantled upon her pretty mouth was so slight and evanescent, as scarce to be discernible.

Nigel was beginning to tire of his company, for the old citizens were speaking with his host of commercial matters in language to him totally unintelligible, when Sir Mungo Malagrowth suddenly summoned their attention.

That amiable personage had for some time withdrawn from the company into the recess of a projecting window, so formed and placed, as to command a view of the door of the house, and of the street. This situation was probably preferred by Sir Mungo on account of the number of objects which the streets of a metropolis usually offer, of a kind congenial to the thoughts of a splenetic man. What he had hitherto seen passing there, was probably of little consequence; but now a trampling of horse was heard without, and the knight suddenly exclaimed,—“By my faith, Master George, you had better go look to shop; for here comes Knighton, the Duke of Buckingham's groom, and two fellows after him, as if he were my lord duke himself.”

“My cash-keeper is below,” said Heriot, without disturbing himself, “and he will let me know if his grace's commands require my immediate attention.”

“Umph!—cash-keeper!” muttered Sir Mungo to himself; “he would have had an easy office when I first kenn'd ye.—But,” said he, speaking aloud, “will you not come to the window, at least? for Knighton has trundled a piece of silver-plate into your house—ha! ha! ha!—trundled it upon its edge, as a callan' would drive a hoop. I cannot help laughing—ha! ha! ha!—at the fellow's impudence.”

“I believe you could not help laughing,” said George Heriot, rising up and leaving the room, “if your best friend lay dying.”

“Better that, my lord—ha!” said Sir Mungo, addressing Nigel. “Our friend is not a goldsmith for nothing—he hath no leaden wit. But I will go down, and see what comes on't.”

Heriot, as he descended the stairs, met his cash-keeper coming up, with some concern in his face.—“Why, how now, Roberts,” said the goldsmith, “what means all this, man?”

“It is Knighton, Master Heriot, from the court—Knighton, the duke’s man. He brought back the salver you carried to Whitehall, flung it into the entrance as if it had been an old pewter-platter, and bade me tell you, the king would have none of your trumpery.”

“Ay, indeed!” said George Heriot—“None of my trumpery!—Come hither into the compting-room, Roberts.—Sir Mungo,” he added, bowing to the knight, who had joined, and was preparing to follow them, “I pray your forgiveness for an instant.”

In virtue of this prohibition, Sir Mungo, who, as well as the rest of the company, had overheard what passed betwixt George Heriot and his cash-keeper, saw himself condemned to wait in the outer business-room, where he would have endeavoured to slake his eager curiosity by questioning Knighton; but that emissary of greatness, after having added to the uncivil message of his master some rudeness of his own, had again scampered westward, with his satellites at his heels.

In the meanwhile, the name of the Duke of Buckingham, the omnipotent favourite both of the king and the Prince of Wales, had struck some anxiety into the party which remained in the great parlour. He was more feared than beloved, and, if not absolutely of a tyrannical disposition, was accounted haughty, violent, and vindictive. It pressed on Nigel’s heart, that he himself, though he could not conceive how, nor why, might be the original cause of the resentment of the duke against his benefactor. The others made their comments in whispers, until the sounds reached Ramsay, who had not heard a word of what had previously passed, but, plunged in those studies with which he connected every other incident and event, took up only the catch-word, and replied,—“The Duke—the Duke of Buckingham—George Villiers—ay—I have spoke with Lambe about him.”

“Our Lord and our Lady! Now how can you say so, father?” said his daughter, who had shrewdness enough to see that her father was touching upon dangerous ground.

“Why, ay, child,” answered Ramsay; “the stars do but incline, they cannot compel. But well you wot, it is commonly said of his grace, by those who have the skill to cast nativities, that there was a notable conjunction of Mars and Saturn—the apparent or true time of which, reducing the calculations of Eichstadius made for the latitude of Oranienburgh to that of London, gives seven hours, fifty-five minutes, and forty-one seconds”—

“Hold your peace, old soothsayer,” said Heriot, who at that instant entered the room with a calm and steady countenance; your calculations are true and undeniable when they regard brass and wire, and mechanical force; but future events are at the pleasure of Him who bears the hearts of kings in his hands.”

“Ay, but, George,” answered the watchmaker, “there was a concurrence of signs at this gentleman’s birth, which showed his course would be a

strange one. Long has it been said of him, he was born at the very meeting of night and day, and under crossing and contending influences that may affect both us and him.

Full moon and high sea,
Great man shalt thou be;
Red dawning, stormy sky,
Bloody death shalt thou die.”

“It is not good to speak of such things,” said Heriot, “especially of the great; stone walls have ears, and a bird of the air shall carry the matter.”

Several of the guests seemed to be of their host’s opinion. The two merchants took brief leave, as if under consciousness that something was wrong. Mistress Margaret, her body-guard of ‘prentices being in readiness, plucked her father by the sleeve, and rescuing him from a brown study (whether referring to the wheels of Time, or to that of Fortune, is uncertain), wished good night to her friend Mrs Judith, and received her godfather’s blessing, who, at the same time, put upon her slender finger a ring of much taste and some value; for he seldom suffered her to leave him without some token of his affection. Thus honourably dismissed, and accompanied by her escort, she set forth on her return to Fleet-street.

Sir Mungo had bid adieu to Master Heriot as he came out from the back compting-room, but such was the interest which he took in the affairs of his friend, that, when Master George went up stairs, he could not help walking into that sanctum sanctorum, to see how Master Roberts was employed. The knight found the cash-keeper busy in making extracts from those huge brass-clasped leathern-bound manuscript folios, which are the pride and trust of dealers, and the dread of customers whose year of grace is out. The good knight leant his elbows on the desk, and said to the functionary, in a condoling tone of voice,—“What! you have lost a good customer, I fear, Master Roberts, and are busied in making out his bill of charges?”

Now, it chanced that Roberts, like Sir Mungo himself, was a little deaf, and, like Sir Mungo, knew also how to make the most of it; so that he answered at cross purposes,—“I humbly crave your pardon, Sir Mungo, for not having sent in your bill of charge sooner, but my master bade me not disturb you. I will bring the items together in a moment.” So saying, he began to turn over the leaves of his book of fate, murmuring, “Repairing ane silver seal—new clasp to his chain of office—ane over-gilt brooch to his hat, being a Saint Andrew’s cross, with thistles—a copper gilt pair of spurs,—this to Daniel Driyer, we not dealing in the article.”

He would have proceeded; but Sir Mungo, not prepared to endure the recital of the catalogue of his own petty debts, and still less willing to satisfy them on the spot, wished the book-keeper, cavalierly, good night, and left the house without farther ceremony. The clerk looked after him with a civil city sneer, and immediately resumed the more serious labours which Sir Mungo’s intrusion had interrupted.

CHAPTER VII.

Things needful we have thought on; but the thing
Of all most needful—that which Scripture terms,
As if alone it merited regard,
The *one* thing needful—that 's yet unconsider'd.

The Chamberlain.

WHEN the rest of the company had taken their departure from Master Heriot's house, the young Lord of Glenvarloch also offered to take leave; but his host detained him for a few minutes, until all were gone excepting the clergyman.

"My lord," then said the worthy citizen, "we have had our permitted hour of honest and hospitable pastime, and now I would fain delay you for another and graver purpose; as it is our custom, when we have the benefit of good Mr Windsor's company, that he reads the prayers of the church for the evening before we separate. Your excellent father, my lord, would not have departed before family worship—I hope the same from your lordship."

"With pleasure sir," answered Nigel; "and you add in the invitation an additional obligation to those with which you have loaded me. When young men forget what is their duty, they owe deep thanks to the friend who will remind them of it."

While they talked together in this manner, the serving-men had removed the folding-tables, brought forward a portable reading-desk, and placed chairs and hassocks for their master, their mistress, and the noble stranger. Another low chair, or rather a sort of stool, was placed close beside that of Master Heriot; and though the circumstance was trivial, Nigel was induced to notice it, because, when about to occupy that seat, he was prevented by a sign from the old gentleman, and motioned to another of somewhat more elevation. The clergyman took his station behind the reading-desk. The domestics, a numerous family both of clerks and servants, including Moniplies, attended with great gravity, and were accommodated with benches.

The household were all seated, and, externally at least, composed to devout attention, when a low knock was heard at the door of the apartment; Mrs Judith looked anxiously at her brother, as if desiring to know his pleasure. He nodded his head gravely, and looked to the door. Mrs Judith immediately crossed the chamber, opened the door, and led into the apartment a beautiful creature, whose sudden and singular appearance might have made her almost pass for an apparition. She was deadly pale—there was not the least shade of vital red to enliven features, which were exquisitely formed, and might, but for that circumstance, have been termed transcendently beautiful. Her long black hair fell down over her shoulders and down her back, combed smoothly and regularly, but without the least appearance of decoration or ornament, which looked very singular at a period when head-gear, as it was called, of one sort or other, was generally used by all ranks. Her dress was of pure white, of the simplest fashion, and hiding all her person excepting the throat, face, and hands. Her form was rather beneath than above the middle

size, but so justly proportioned and elegantly made, that the spectator's attention was entirely withdrawn from her size. In contradiction of the extreme plainness of all the rest of her attire, she wore a necklace which a duchess might have envied, so large and lustrous were the brilliants of which it was composed; and around her waist a zone of rubies of scarce inferior value.

When this singular figure entered the apartment, she cast her eyes on Nigel, and paused, as if uncertain whether to advance or retreat. The glance which she took of him seemed to be one rather of uncertainty and hesitation, than of bashfulness or timidity. Aunt Judith took her by the hand, and led her slowly forward—her dark eyes, however, continued to be fixed on Nigel, with an expression of melancholy by which she felt strangely affected. Even when she was seated on the vacant stool, which was placed there probably for her accommodation, she again looked on him more than once with the same pensive, lingering, and anxious expression, but without either shyness or embarrassment, not even so much as to call the slightest degree of complexion into her cheek.

So soon as this singular female had taken up the prayer-book, which was laid upon her cushion, she seemed immersed in devotional duty; and although Nigel's attention to the service was so much disturbed by this extraordinary apparition, that he looked towards her repeatedly in the course of the service, he could never observe that her eyes or her thoughts strayed so much as a single moment from the task in which she was engaged. Nigel himself was less attentive, for the appearance of this lady seemed so extraordinary, that, strictly as he had been bred up by his father to pay the most reverential attention during performance of divine service, his thoughts in spite of himself were disturbed by her presence, and he earnestly wished the prayers were ended, that his curiosity might obtain some gratification. When the service was concluded, and each had remained, according to the decent and edifying practice of the church, concentrated in mental devotion for a short space, the mysterious visitant arose ere any other person stirred; and Nigel remarked that none of the domestics left their places, or even moved, until she had first kneeled on one knee to Heriot, who seemed to bless her with his hand laid on her head, and a melancholy solemnity of look and action. She then bended her body, but without kneeling, to Mrs Judith, and having performed these two acts of reverence, she left the room; yet, just in the act of her departure, she once more turned her penetrating eyes on Nigel with a fixed look, which compelled him to turn his own aside. When he looked towards her again, he saw only the skirt of her white mantle as she left the apartment.

The domestics then rose and dispersed themselves—wine, and fruit, and spices, were offered to Lord Nigel and to the clergyman, and the latter took his leave. The young lord would fain have accompanied him, in hope to get some explanation of the apparition which he had beheld, but he was stopped by his host, who requested to speak with him in his counting-room.

"I hope, my lord," said the citizen, "that your preparations for attending court are in such forwardness that you can go thither the day after to-morrow. It is, perhaps, the last day, for some time, that his majesty will hold open court for all who have pretensions by birth, rank, or office, to attend upon him. On the subsequent day he goes to Theobald's, where he is so much occupied with hunting and other pleasures, that he cares not to be intruded on."

"I shall be in all outward readiness to pay my duty," said the young nobleman, "yet I have little heart to do it. The friends from whom I ought to have found encouragement and protection, have proved cold and false—I certainly will not trouble *them* for their countenance on this occasion—and yet I must confess my childish unwillingness to enter quite alone upon so new a scene."

"It is bold of a mechanic like me to make such an offer to a nobleman," said Heriot; "but I must attend at court to-morrow.—I can accompany you as far as the presence-chamber, from my privilege as being of the household. I can facilitate your entrance, should you find difficulty, and I can point out the proper manner and time of approaching the king. But I do not know," he added, smiling, "whether these little advantages will not be overbalanced by the incongruity of a nobleman receiving them from the hand of an old smith."

"From the hands rather of the only friend I have found in London," said Nigel, offering his hand.

"Nay, if you think of the matter in that way," replied the honest citizen, "there is no more to be said—I will come for you to-morrow, with a barge proper to the occasion. But remember, my good young lord, that I do not, like some men of my degree, wish to take opportunity to step beyond it, and associate with my superiors in rank, and therefore do not fear to mortify my presumption, by suffering me to keep my distance in the presence, and where it is fitting for both of us to separate; and for what remains, most truly happy will I be in proving of service to the son of my ancient patron."

The style of conversation led so far from the point which had interested the young nobleman's curiosity, that there was no returning to it that night. He therefore exchanged thanks and greeting with George Heriot, and took his leave, promising to be equipped and in readiness to embark with him on the second successive morning at ten o'clock.

The generation of link-boys, celebrated by Count Anthony Hamilton, as peculiar to London, had already, in the reign of James I., begun their functions, and the service of one of them with his smoky torch, had been secured to light the young Scottish lord and his follower to their own lodgings, which, though better acquainted than formerly with the city, they might in the dark have run some danger of missing. This gave the ingenious Mr Moniplies an opportunity of gathering close up to his master, after he had gone through the form of slipping his left arm into the handles of his buckler, and loosening his broad-sword in the sheath, that he might be ready for whatever should befall.

"If it were not for the wine and the good cheer which we have had in yonder old man's house, my

lord," said this sapient follower, "and that I ken him by report to be a just living man in many respects, and a real Edinburgh gutter-blood, I should have been well pleased to have seen how his feet were shaped, and whether he had not a cloven foot under the braw roses and cordovan shoon of his."

"Why, you rascal," answered Nigel, "you have been too kindly treated; and now that you have filled your ravenous stomach, you are railing on the good gentleman that relieved you."

"Under favour, no, my lord," said Moniplies,—"I would only like to see something mair about him. I have eat his meat, it is true—more shame that the like of him should have meat to give, when your lordship and me could scarce have gotten, on our own account, brose and a bear bannock—I have drunk his wine too."

"I see you have," replied his master, "a great deal more than you should have done."

"Under your patience, my lord," said Moniplies, "you are pleased to say that, because I crushed a quart with that jolly boy Jenkin, as they call the 'prentice boy, and that was out of mere acknowledgment to his former kindness—I own that I, moreover, sung the good old song of Elsie Marley, so as they never heard it chaunted in their lives"—

And withal (as John Bunyan says), as they went on their way, he sung—

"O, do ye ken Elsie Marley, honey—
The wife that sells the barley, honey?
For Elsie Marley's grown sae fine,
She winna get up to feed the swine.—
O, do ye ken"—

Here in mid career was the songster interrupted by the stern gripe of his master, who threatened to baton him to death if he brought the city-watch upon them by his ill-timed melody.

"I crave pardon, my lord—I humbly crave pardon—only, when I think of that Jin Win, as they call him, I can hardly help humming—'O, do ye ken'—But I crave your honour's pardon, and will be totally dumb, if you command me so."

"No, sirrah!" said Nigel, "talk on, for I well know you would say and suffer more under pretence of holding your peace, than when you get an unbridled license. How is it then? What have you to say against Master Heriot?"

It seems more than probable, that in permitting this license, the young lord hoped his attendant would stumble upon the subject of the young lady who had appeared at prayers in a manner so mysterious. But whether this was the case, or whether he merely desired that Moniplies should utter, in a subdued and under tone of voice, those spirits which might otherwise have vented themselves in obstreperous song, it is certain he permitted his attendant to proceed with his story in his own way.

"And therefore," said the orator, availing himself of his immunity, "I would like to ken what for a carle this Maister Heriot is. He hath supplied your lordship with wealth of gold, as I can understand; and if he has, I make it for certain he hath had his ain end in it, according to the fashion of the world. Now, had your lordship your own good lands at your guiding, doubtless this person, with most of

his craft—goldsmiths they call themselves—I say usurers—wad be glad to exchange so many pounds of African dust, by whilk I understand gold, against so many fair acres, and hundreds of acres, of broad Scottish land."

"But you know I have no land," said the young lord, "at least none that can be affected by any debt which I can at present become obliged for—I think you need not have reminded me of that."

"True, my lord, most true; and, as your lordship says, open to the meanest capacity, without any unnecessary expositions. Now therefore, my lord, unless Maister George Heriot has something mair to allege as a motive for his liberality, vera different from the possession of your estate—and moreover, as he could gain little by the capture of your body, wherefore should it not be your soul that he is in pursuit of?"

"My soul, you rascal!" said the young lord; "What good should my soul do him?"

"What do I ken about that?" said Moniplies; "they go about roaring and seeking whom they may devour—doubtless, they like the food that they rage so much about—and, my lord, they say," added Moniplies, drawing up still closer to his master's side, "they say that Maister Heriot has one spirit in his house already."

"How, or what do you mean?" said Nigel; "I will break your head, you drunken knave, if you palter with me any longer."

"Drunken!" answered his trusty adherent, "and is this the story?—why, how could I but drink your lordship's health on my bare knees, when Maister Jenkin began it to me?—hang them that would not—I would have cut the impudent knave's hams with my broad-sword that should make scruple of it, and so have made him kneel when he should have found it difficult to rise again. But touching the spirit," he proceeded, finding that his master made no answer to his valorous tirade, "your lordship has seen her with your own eyes."

"I saw no spirit," said Glenvarloch, but yet breathing thick as one who expects some singular disclosure, "what mean you by a spirit?"

"You saw a young lady come in to prayers, that spoke not a word to any one, only made becks and bows to the old gentleman and lady of the house—ken ye wha she is?"

"No, indeed," answered Nigel; "some relation of the family, I suppose."

"De'il a bit—de'il a bit," answered Moniplies, hastily, "not a blood-drop's kin to them, if she had a drop of blood in her body—I tell you but what all human beings allege to be truth, that dwell within hue and cry of Lombard-street—that lady, or quean, or whatever you chuse to call her, has been dead in the body these many a year, though she haunts them, as we have seen, even at their very devotions."

"You will allow her to be a good spirit at least," said Nigel Olifaunt, "since she chuses such a time to visit her friends."

"For that I kenna, my lord," answered the superstitious follower; "I ken no spirit that would have faced the right down hammer blow of Mess John Knox, whom my father stood by in his very warst days, bating when the court was against him,

which my father supplied with butcher-meat. But yon divine has another airt from powerful Master Rollock, and Mess David Black, of North Leith, and sic like—Alack-a-day! wha can ken, if it please your lordship, whether sic prayers as the southron read out of their auld blethering black mess-book there, may not be as powerful to invite fiends, as a right red-het prayer warm frae the heart, may be powerful to drive them away, even as the evil spirit was driven by the smell of the fish's liver from the bridal-chamber of Sara, the daughter of Raguel? As to whilk story, nevertheless, I make scruple to say whether it be truth or not, better men than I am having doubted on that matter."

"Well, well, well," said his master, impatiently, "we are now near home, and I have permitted you to speak of this matter for once, that we may have an end of your prying folly, and your idiotical superstitions, for ever. For whom do you, or your absurd authors or informers, take this lady?"

"I can say naething preceesely as to that," answered Moniplies; "certain it is her body died and was laid in the grave many a day since, notwithstanding she still wanders on earth, and chiefly amongst Maister Heriot's family, though she hath been seen in other places by them that well knew her. But who she is, I will not warrant to say, or how she becomes attached, like a Highland brownie, to some peculiar family. They say she has a row of apartments of her own, ante-room, parlour, and bedroom; but de'il a bed she sleeps in but her own coffin, and the walls, doors, and windows, are so chinked up, as to prevent the least blink of day-light from entering; and then she dwells by torch-light"—

"To what purpose, if she be a spirit?" said Nigel Olifaunt.

"How can I tell your lordship?" answered his attendant. "I thank God, I know nothing of her likings, or mislikings—only her coffin is there; and I leave your lordship to guess what a live person has to do with a coffin. As little as a ghost with a lantern, I trow."

"What reason," repeated Nigel, "can a creature so young and so beautiful, have already habitually to contemplate her bed of last long rest?"

"In troth, I kenna, my lord," answered Moniplies; "but there is the coffin, as they told me who have seen it; it is made of heben-wood, with silver nails, and lined all through with three-piled damask, might serve a princess to rest in."

"Singular," said Nigel, whose brain, like that of most active young spirits, was easily caught by the singular and the romantic; "does she not eat with the family?"

"Who!—she!"—exclaimed Moniplies, as if surprised at the question; "they would need a long spoon would sup with her, I trow. Always there is something put for her into the tower, as they call it, whilk is a whigmaleery of a whirling-box, that turns round half on the tae-side o' the wa', half on the tother."

"I have seen the contrivance in foreign nunneries," said the lord of Glenvarloch. "And is it thus she receives her food?"

"They tell me something is put in ilka day, for fashion's sake," replied the attendant; "but it's not

to be supposed she would consume it, any mair than the images of Baal and the Dragon consumed the dainty vivers that were placed before them. There are stout yeomen and chamber-queans in the house, enow to play the part of Lick it up a', as well as the threescore and ten priests of Bel, besides their wives and children."

"And she is never seen in the family but when the hour of prayer arrives?" said the master.

"Never, that I hear of," replied the servant.

"It is singular," said Nigel Olifaunt, musing. "Were it not for the ornaments which she wears, and still more for her attendance upon the service of the protestant church, I would know what to think, and should believe her either a catholic votaress, who, for some cogent reason, was allowed to make her cell here in London, or some unhappy popish devotee, who was in the course of undergoing a dreadful penance. As it is, I know not what to deem of it."

His reverie was interrupted by the link-boy knocking at the door of honest John Christie, whose wife came forth with "quips, and becks, and wreathed smiles," to welcome her honoured guest on his return to his apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ay! mark the matron well—and laugh not, Harry,
At her old steeple-hat and velvet guard—
I've call'd her like the ear of Dionysius;
I mean that ear-form'd vault, built o'er his dungeon,
To catch the groans and discontented murmurs
Of his poor bondsmen.—Even so doth Martha
Drink up, for her own purpose, all that passes,
Or is supposed to pass, in this wide city—
She can retail it too, if that her profit
Shall call on her to do so; and retail it too
For your advantage, so that you can make
Your profit jump with hers.

The Conspiracy.

WE must now introduce to the reader's acquaintance another character, busy and important far beyond her ostensible situation in society—in a word, Dame Ursula Suddlechops, wife of Benjamin Suddlechops, the most renowned barber in all Fleet-street. This dame had her own particular merits, the principal part of which was (if her own report could be trusted) an infinite desire to be of service to her fellow-creatures. Leaving to her thin half-starved partner the boast of having the most dexterous snap with his fingers of any shaver in London, and the care of a shop where starved apprentices flayed the faces of those who were boobies enough to trust them, the dame drove a separate and more lucrative trade, which yet had so many odd turns and windings, that it seemed in many respects to contradict itself.

Its highest and most important duties were of a very secret and confidential nature, and Dame Ursula Suddlechops was never known to betray any transaction intrusted to her, unless she had either been indifferently paid for her service, or that some one found it convenient to give her a double douceur to make her disgorge the secret; and these contingencies happened in so few cases that her character

for trustiness remained as unimpeached as that for honesty and benevolence.

In fact, she was a most admirable matron, and could be useful to the impassioned and the frail in the rise, progress, and consequences of their passion. She could contrive an interview for lovers who could show proper reasons for meeting privately; she could relieve the frail fair one of the burden of a guilty passion, and perhaps establish the hopeful offspring of unlicensed love as the heir of some family whose love was lawful, but where an heir had not followed the union. More than this she could do, and had been concerned in deeper and dearer secrets. She had been a pupil of Mrs Turner, and learned from her the secret of making the yellow starch, and, it may be, two or three other secrets of more consequence—though perhaps none that went to the criminal extent of those whereof her mistress was accused. But all that was deep and dark in her real character was covered by the show of outward mirth and good-humour, the hearty laugh and buxom jest with which the dame knew well how to conciliate the elder part of her neighbours, and the many petty arts by which she could recommend herself to the younger, those especially of her own sex.

Dame Ursula was in appearance scarce past forty, and her full, but not overgrown form, and still comely features—although her person was plumped out, and her face somewhat coloured by good cheer—had a joyous expression of gaiety and good-humour, which set off the remains of beauty in the wane. Marriages, births, and christenings, were seldom thought to be performed with sufficient ceremony, for a considerable distance round her abode, unless Dame Ursley, as they called her, was present. She could contrive all sorts of pastimes, games, and jests, which might amuse the large companies which the hospitality of our ancestors assembled together on such occasions, so that her presence was literally considered as indispensable in the family of all citizens of ordinary rank, on such joyous occasions. So much also was she supposed to know of life and its labyrinths, that she was the willing confidant of half the loving couples in the vicinity, most of whom used to communicate their secrets to, and receive their counsel from, Dame Ursley. The rich rewarded her services with rings, owches, or gold pieces, which she liked still better; and she very generously gave her assistance to the poor, on the same mixed principles as young practitioners in medicine assist them—partly from compassion, and partly to keep her hand in use.

Dame Ursley's reputation in the city was the greater that her practice had extended beyond Temple-bar, and that she had acquaintances, nay, patrons and patronesses, among the quality, whose rank, as their members were much fewer, and the prospect of approaching the courtly sphere much more difficult, bore a degree of consequence unknown to the present day, when the toe of the citizen presses so close on the courtier's heel. Dame Ursley maintained her intercourse with this superior rank of customers, partly by driving a small trade in perfumes, essences, pomades, head-gears from France, dishes or ornaments from China, then al-

ready beginning to become fashionable; not to mention drugs of various descriptions, chiefly for the use of the ladies, and partly by other services, more or less connected with the esoteric branches of her profession heretofore alluded to.

Possessing such and so many various modes of thriving, Dame Ursley was nevertheless so poor, that she might probably have mended her own circumstances, as well as her husband's, if she had renounced them all, and set herself quietly down to the care of her own household, and to assist Benjamin in the concerns of his trade. But Ursula was luxurious and genial in her habits, and could no more have endured the stinted economy of Benjamin's board, than she could have reconciled herself to the bald chat of his conversation.

It was on the evening of the day on which Lord Nigel Olifaunt dined with the wealthy goldsmith, that we must introduce Ursula Suddlechops upon the stage. She had that morning made a long tour to Westminster, was fatigued, and had assumed a certain large elbow-chair, rendered smooth by frequent use, placed on one side of her chimney, in which there was lit a small but bright fire. Here she observed, betwixt sleeping and waking, the simmering of a pot of well-spiced ale, on the brown surface of which bobbed a small crab-apple, sufficiently roasted, while a little mulatto girl watched still more attentively the process of dressing a veal sweet-bread, in a silver stew-pan, which occupied the other side of the chimney. With these viands, doubtless, Dame Ursula proposed concluding the well-spent day, of which she reckoned the labour over, and the rest at her own command. She was deceived, however; for just as the ale, or, to speak technically, the lamb's-wool, was fitted for drinking, and the little dingy maiden intimated that the sweet-bread was ready to be eaten, the thin cracked voice of Benjamin was heard from the bottom of the stairs.

"Why, Dame Ursley—why, wife, I say—why, dame—why, love, you are wanted more than a strop for a blunt razor—why, dame!"

"I would some one would draw the razor across thy wind-pipe, thou bawling ass!" said the dame to herself, in the first moment of irritation, against her clamorous helpmate; and then called aloud,—
"Why, what is the matter, Master Suddlechops? I am just going to slip into bed; I have been daggled to and fro the whole day."

"Nay, sweetheart, it is not me," said the patient Benjamin, "but the Scotch laundry-maid from neighbour Ramsay's, who must speak with you incontinent."

At the word sweetheart, Dame Ursley cast a wistful look at the mess which was stewed to a second in the stew-pan, and then replied, with a sigh,—
"Bid Scotch Jenny come up, Master Suddlechops. I will be very happy to hear what she has to say;" then added in a lower tone, "and I hope she will go to the devil in the flame of a tar-barrel, like many a Scotch witch before her."

The Scotch laundress entered accordingly, and having heard nothing of the last kind wish of Dame Suddlechops, made her reverence with considerable respect, and said her young mistress was returned

home unwell, and wished to see her neighbour, Dame Ursley, directly.

"And why will it not do to-morrow, Jenny, my good woman?" said Dame Ursley; "for I have been as far as Whitehall to-day already, and I am well nigh worn off my feet, my good woman."

"Aweel!" answered Jenny, with great composure, "and if that sae be sae, I maun take the langer tramp mysell, and maun gae down the water-side for auld Mother Redcap, at the Hungerford Stairs, that deals in comforting young creatures, e'en as you do yoursell, hinny; for ane o' ye the bairn maun see before she sleeps, and that's a' that I ken on't."

So saying, the old emissary, without farther entreaty, turned on her heel, and was about to retreat, when Dame Ursley exclaimed,—
"No, no—if the sweet child, your mistress, has any necessary occasion for good advice and kind tendance, you need not go to Mother Redcap, Janet. She may do very well for skippers' wives, chandlers' daughters, and such like; but nobody shall wait on pretty Mistress Margaret, the daughter of his most sacred majesty's horologer, excepting and saving myself. And so I will but take my chopines and my cloak, and put on my muffler, and cross the street to neighbour Ramsay's in an instant. But tell me yourself, good Jenny, are you not something tired of your young lady's frolics and change of mind twenty times a-day?"

"In troth, not I," said the patient drudge, "unless it may be when she is a wee fashious about washing her laces; but I have been her keeper since she was a bairn, neighbour Suddlechops, and that makes a difference."

"Ay," said Dame Ursley, still busied putting on additional defences against the night air; "and you know for certain that she has two hundred pounds a-year in good land, at her own free disposal?"

"Left by her grandmother, Heaven rest her soul!" said the Scotchwoman; "and to a daintier lassie she could not have bequeathed it."

"Very true, very true, mistress; for with all her little whims, I have always said Mistress Margaret Ramsay was the prettiest girl in the ward; and, Jenny, I warrant the poor child has had no supper?"

Jenny could not say but it was the case, for, her master being out, the twa 'prentice lads had gone out after shutting shop, to fetch them home, and she and the other maid had gone out to Sandy MacGivan's to see a friend frae Scotland.

"As was very natural, Mrs Janet," said Dame Ursley, who found her interest in assenting to all sorts of propositions from all sorts of persons.

"And so the fire went out, too,"—said Jenny.

"Which was the most natural of the whole," said Dame Suddlechops; "and so, to cut the matter short, Jenny, I'll carry over the little bit of supper that I was going to eat. For dinner I have tasted none, and it may be my young pretty Mistress Marget will eat a morsel with me; for it is mere emptiness, Mistress Jenny, that often puts these fancies of illness into young folk's heads." So saying, she put the silver posset-cup with the ale into Jenny's hands, and assuming her mantle with the alacrity of one determined to sacrifice inclination to duty, she hid the stew-pan under its folds, and commanded

Wilsa, the little mulatto girl, to light them across the street.

"Whither away, so late?" said the barber, whom they passed seated with his starveling boys round a mess of stock-fish and parsnips in the shop below.

"If I were to tell you, Gaffie," said the dame, with most contemptuous coolness, "I do not think you could do my errand, so I will e'en keep it to myself." Benjamin was too much accustomed to his wife's independent mode of conduct, to pursue his inquiry farther; nor did the dame tarry for farther question, but marched out at the door, telling the eldest of the boys "to sit up till her return, and look to the house the whilst."

The night was dark and rainy, and although the distance betwixt the two shops was short, it allowed Dame Ursula leisure enough, while she strode along with high-tucked petticoats, to embitter it by the following grumbling reflections—"I wonder what I have done, that I must needs trudge at every old beldame's bidding, and every young minx's maggot! I have been marched from Temple-bar to White-chapel, on the matter of a pin-maker's wife having pricked her finger—marry, her husband that made the weapon might have salved the wound.—And here is this fantastic ape, pretty Mistress Margaret, forsooth—such a beauty as I could make of a Dutch doll, and as fantastic, and humorous, and conceited, as if she were a duchess. I have seen her in the same day as changeful as a marmozet, and as stubborn as a mule. I should like to know whether her little conceited noddle, or her father's old crazy, calculating jolter-pate, breeds most whimsies. But then there's that two hundred pounds a-year in dirty land, and the father is held a close chuff, though a fanciful—he is our landlord beside, and she has begged a late day from him for our rent; so, God help me, I must be conformable—besides, the little capricious devil is my only key to get at Master George Heriot's secret, and it concerns my character to find that out; and so, *andiamos*, as the lingua franca hath it."

Thus pondering, she moved forward with hasty strides until she arrived at the watchmaker's habitation. The attendant admitted them by means of a pass-key. Onward glided Dame Ursula, now in glimmer and now in gloom, not like the lovely Lady Cristabelle through Gothic sculpture and ancient armour, but creeping and stumbling amongst relics of old machines, and models of new inventions in various branches of mechanics, with which wrecks of useless ingenuity, either in a broken or half-finished shape, the apartment of the fanciful, though ingenious, mechanist was continually lumbered.

At length they attained, by a very narrow staircase, pretty Mistress Margaret's apartment, where she, the cynosure of the eyes of every bold young bachelor in Fleet-street, sat in a posture which hovered between the discontented and the disconsolate. For her pretty back and shoulders were rounded into a curve, her round and dimpled chin reposed in the hollow of her little palm, while her fingers were folded over her mouth; her elbow rested on a table, and her eyes seemed fixed upon the dying charcoal, which was expiring in a small grate. She scarce turned her head when Dame Ursula entered,

and when the presence of that estimable matron was more precisely announced in words by the old Scotchwoman, Mistress Margaret, without changing her posture, muttered some sort of answer that was wholly unintelligible.

"Go your ways down to the kitchen with Wilsa, good Mistress Jenny," said Dame Ursula, who was used to all sorts of freaks on the part of her patients or clients, whichever they might be termed; "put the stew-pan and the porringer by the fire-side, and go down below—I must speak to my pretty love, Mistress Margaret, by myself—and there is not a bachelor betwixt this and Bow but will envy me the privilege."

The attendants retired as directed, and Dame Ursula, having availed herself of the embers of charcoal, to place her stew-pan to the best advantage, drew herself as close as she could to her patient, and began in a low, soothing, and confidential tone of voice, to inquire what ailed her pretty flower of neighbours.

"Nothing, dame," said Margaret, somewhat pettishly, and changing her posture so as rather to turn her back upon the kind inquirer.

"Nothing, lady-bird!" answered Dame Suddlechops; "and do you use to send for your friends out of bed at this hour for nothing?"

"It was not I who sent for you, dame," replied the malcontent maiden.

"And who was it, then?" said Ursula; "for if I had not been sent for, I had not been here at this time of night, I promise you!"

"It was the old Scotch fool Jenny, who did it out of her own head, I suppose," said Margaret; "for she has been stunning me these two hours about you and Mother Redcap."

"Me and Mother Redcap!" said Dame Ursula, "an old fool indeed, that couples folk up so.—But come, come, my sweet little neighbour, Jenny is no such fool after all; she knows young folks want more and better advice than her own, and she knows too where to find it for them; so you must take heart of grace, my pretty maiden, and tell me what you are moping about, and then let Dame Ursula alone for finding out a cure."

"Nay, an ye be so wise, Mother Ursula," replied the girl, "you may guess what I ail without my telling you."

"Ay, ay, child," answered the complaisant matron, "no one can play better than I at the good old game of What is my thought like? Now I'll warrant that little head of yours is running on a new head-tire, a foot higher than those our city dames wear—or you are all for a trip to Islington or Ware, and your father is cross and will not consent—or—"

"Or you are an old fool, Dame Suddlechops," said Margaret, peevishly, "and must needs trouble yourself about matters you know nothing of."

"Fool as much as you will, mistress," said Dame Ursula, offended in her turn, "but not very many years older than yourself, mistress."

"Oh! we are angry, are we?" said the beauty; "and pray, Madam Ursula, how come you, that are not so many years older than me, to talk about such nonsense to me, who am so many years younger, and

who yet have too much sense to care about head-gears and Islington?"

"Well, well, young mistress," said the sage counsellor, rising, "I perceive I can be of no use here; and methinks, since you know your own matters so much better than other people do, you might dispense with disturbing folks at midnight to ask their advice."

"Why, now you are angry, mother," said Margaret, detaining her; "this comes of your coming out at even-tide without eating your supper—I never heard you utter a cross word after you had finished your little morsel.—Here, Janet, a trencher and salt for Dame Ursula;—and what have you in that porringer, dame?—Filthy clammy ale, as I would live—Let Janet fling it out of the window, or keep it for my father's morning draught; and she shall bring you the pottle of sack that was set ready for him—good man, he will never find out the difference, for ale will wash down his dusty calculations quite as well as wine."

"Truly, sweetheart, I am of your opinion," said Dame Ursula, whose temporary displeasure vanished at once before these preparations for good cheer; and so, settling herself on the great easy-chair, with a three-legged table before her, she began to dispatch, with good appetite, the little delicate dish which she had prepared for herself. She did not, however, fail in the duties of civility, and earnestly, but in vain, pressed Mistress Margaret to partake her dainties. The damsel declined the invitation.

"At least pledge me in a glass of sack," said Dame Ursula; "I have heard my grandame say, that before the gospellers came in, the old catholic father confessors and their penitents always had a cup of sack together before confession; and you are my penitent."

"I shall drink no sack, I am sure," said Margaret; "and I told you before, that if you cannot find out what ails me, I shall never have the heart to tell it."

So saying, she turned away from Dame Ursula once more, and resumed her musing posture, with her hand on her elbow, and her back, at least one shoulder, turned towards her confidant.

"Nay then," said Dame Ursula, "I must exert my skill in good earnest.—You must give me this pretty hand, and I will tell you by palmistry, as well as any gipsy of them all, what foot it is you halt upon."

"As if I halted on any foot at all," said Margaret, something scornfully, but yielding her left hand to Ursula, and continuing at the same time her averted position.

"I see brave lines here," said Ursula, "and not ill to read neither—pleasure and wealth, and merry nights and late mornings, to my beauty, and such an equipage as shall shake Whitehall. O, have I touched you there?—and smile you now, my pretty one?—for why should not he be lord mayor, and go to court in his gilded caroch, as others have done before him?"

"Lord mayor? pshaw!" replied Margaret.

"And why pshaw at my lord mayor, sweetheart? or perhaps you pshaw at my prophecy; but there is a cross in every one's line of life as well as

in yours, darling. And what though I see a 'prentice's flat cap in this pretty palm, yet there is a sparkling black eye under it, hath not its match in the Ward of Farringdon-without."

"Whom do you mean, dame?" said Margaret, coldly.

"Whom should I mean," said Dame Ursula, "but the prince of 'prentices, and king of good company, Jenkin Vincent?"

"Out, woman—Jenkin Vincent—a clown—a cockney!" exclaimed the indignant damsel.

"Ay, sets the wind in that quarter, beauty!" quoth the dame; "why, it has changed something since we spoke together last, for then I would have sworn it blew fairer for poor Jin Vin; and the poor lad doats on you too, and would rather see your eyes than the first glimpse of the sun on the great holiday on May-day."

"I would my eyes had the power of the sun to blind his then," said Margaret, "to teach the drudge his place."

"Nay," said Dame Ursula, "there be some who say that Frank Tunstall is as proper a lad as Jin Vin, and of surety he is third cousin to a knight-hood, and come of a good house; and so mayhap you may be for northward ho!"

"Maybe I may"—answered Margaret, "but not with my father's 'prentice—I thank you, Dame Ursula."

"Nay then, the devil may guess your thoughts for me," said Dame Ursula; "this comes of trying to shoe a filly that is eternally wincing and shifting ground!"

"Hear me then," said Margaret, "and mind what I say.—This day I dined abroad"—

"I can tell you where," answered her counsellor,—"with your godfather the rich goldsmith—ay, you see I know something—nay, I could tell you, an I would, with whom too."

"Indeed!" said Margaret, turning suddenly round with an accent of strong surprise, and colouring up to the eyes.

"With old Sir Mungo Malagrowther," said the oracular dame,—"he was trimmed in my Benjamin's shop in his way to the city."

"Pshaw! the frightful old mouldy skeleton!" said the damsel.

"Indeed you say true, my dear," replied the confidant,—"it is a shame to him to be out of Saint Pancras's charnel-house, for I know no other place he is fit for, the foul-mouthed old railer. He said to my husband"—

"Somewhat which signifies nothing to our purpose, I dare say," interrupted Margaret. "I *must* speak then.—There dined with us a nobleman"—

"A nobleman! the maiden's mad!" said Dame Ursula.

"There dined with us, I say," continued Margaret, without regarding the interruption, "a nobleman—a Scottish nobleman."

"Now Our Lady keep her!" said the confidant, "she is quite frantic!—heard ever any one of a watchmaker's daughter falling in love with a nobleman—and a Scotch nobleman, to make the matter complete, who are all as proud as Lucifer, and as poor as Job?—A Scotch nobleman, quotha? I had

as lief you told me of a Jew pedlar. I would have you think how all this is to end, pretty one, before you jump in the dark."

"That is nothing to you, Ursula—it is your assistance," said Mistress Margaret, "and not your advice that I am desirous to have, and you know I can make it worth your while."

"O, it is not for the sake of lucre, Mistress Margaret," answered the obliging dame; "but truly I would have you listen to some advice—bethink you of your own condition."

"My father's calling is mechanical," said Margaret, "but our blood is not so. I have heard my father say that we are descended, at a distance indeed, from the great Earls of Dalwalsey."

"Ay, ay," said Dame Ursula; "even so—I never knew a Scot of you but was descended, as ye call it, from some great house or other; and a piteous descent it often is—and as for the distance you speak of, it is so great as to put you out of sight of each other.—Yet do not toss your pretty head so scornfully, but tell me the name of this lordly northern gallant, and we will try what can be done in the matter."

"It is Lord Glenvarloch, whom they call Lord Nigel Olifaunt," said Margaret, in a low voice, and turning away to hide her blushes.

"Marry, Heaven forefend!" exclaimed Dame Suddlechops; "this is the very devil, and something worse!"

"How mean you?" said the damsel, surprised at the vivacity of her exclamation.

"Why, know ye not," said the dame, "what powerful enemies he has at court? know ye not—But blisters on my tongue, it runs too fast for my wit—enough to say, that you had better make your bridal-bed under a falling house than think of young Glenvarloch."

"He is unfortunate then," said Margaret; "I knew it—I divined it—there was sorrow in his voice when he said even what was gay—there was a touch of misfortune in his melancholy smile—he had not thus clung to my thoughts had I seen him in all the mid-day glare of prosperity."

"Romances have cracked her brain!" said Dame Ursula; "she is a castaway girl—utterly distraught—loves a Scotch lord,—and likes him the better for being unfortunate! Well, mistress, I am sorry this is a matter I cannot aid you in—it goes against my conscience, and it is an affair above my condition, and beyond my management;—but I will keep your secret."

"You will not be so base as to desert me, after having drawn my secret from me?" said Margaret, indignantly; "if you do, I know how to have my revenge; and if you do not, I will reward you well. Remember the house your husband dwells in is my father's property."

"I remember it but too well, Mistress Margaret," said Ursula, after a moment's reflection, "and I would serve you in anything in my condition; but to meddle with such high matters—I shall never forget poor Mistress Turner, my honoured patroness, peace be with her!—she had the ill-luck to meddle in the matter of Somerset and Overbury, and so the great earl and his lady slipt their necks out of the collar,

and left her and some half dozen others to suffer in their stead. I shall never forget the sight of her standing on the scaffold with the ruff round her pretty neck, all done up with the yellow starch which I had so often helped her to make, and that was so soon to give place to a rough hempen cord. Such a sight, sweetheart, will make one loth to meddle with matters that are too hot or heavy for your handling."

"Out, you fool!" answered Mistress Margaret; "am I one to speak to you about such criminal practices as that wretch died for? All I desire of you is, to get me precise knowledge of what affair brings this young nobleman to court."

"And when you have his secret," said Ursula, "what will it avail you, sweetheart?—and yet I would do your errand, if you could do as much for me."

"And what is it you would have of me?" said Mistress Margaret.

"What you have been angry with me for asking before," answered Dame Ursula. "I want to have some light about the story of your godfather's ghost, that is only seen at prayers."

"Not for the world," said Mistress Margaret, "will I be a spy on my kind godfather's secrets—No, Ursula—that I will never pry into, which he desires to keep hidden. But thou knowest that I have a fortune of my own, which must at no distant day come under my own management—think of some other recompense."

"Ay, that I well know," said the counsellor—"it is that two hundred per year, with your father's indulgence, that makes you so wilful, sweetheart."

"It may be so,"—said Margaret Ramsay; "meanwhile, do you serve me truly, and here is a ring of value in pledge, that when my fortune is in my own hand, I will redeem the token with fifty broad pieces of gold."

"Fifty broad pieces of gold!" repeated the dame; "and this ring, which is a right fair one, in token you fail not of your word!—Well, sweetheart, if I must put my throat in peril, I am sure I cannot risk it for a friend more generous than you; and I would not think of more than the pleasure of serving you, only Benjamin gets more idle every day, and our family"—

"Say no more of it," said Margaret; "we understand each other. And now, tell me what you know of this young man's affairs, which made you so unwilling to meddle with them?"

"Of that I can say no great matter, as yet," answered Dame Ursula; "only I know, the most powerful among his own countrymen are against him, and also the most powerful at the court here. But I will learn more of it; for it will be a dim print that I will not read for your sake, pretty Mistress Margaret. Know you where this gallant dwells?"

"I heard by accident," said Margaret, as if ashamed of the minute particularity of her memory upon such an occasion,—“he lodges, I think—at one Christie's—if I mistake not—at Paul's Wharf—a ship-chandler's."

"A proper lodging for a young baron!—Well, but cheer you up, Mistress Margaret.—If he has

come up a caterpillar, like some of his countrymen, he may cast his slough like them, and come out a butterfly.—So I drink good night, and sweet dreams to you, in another parting cup of sack; and you shall hear tidings of me within four-and-twenty hours. And, once more, I commend you to your pillow, my pearl of pearls, and Marguerite of Marguerites!”

So saying, she kissed the reluctant cheek of her young friend, or patroness, and took her departure with the light and stealthy pace of one accustomed to accommodate her footsteps to the purposes of dispatch and secrecy.

Margaret Ramsay looked after her for some time, in anxious silence. “I did ill,” she at length murmured, “to let her wring this out of me; but she is artful, bold, and serviceable—and I think faithful—or, if not, she will be true at least to her interest, and that I can command. I would I had not spoken, however,—I have begun a hopeless work. For what has he said to me, to warrant my meddling in his fortunes?—Nothing but words of the most ordinary import—mere table-talk, and terms of course. Yet who knows?”—she said, and then broke off, looking at the glass the while; which, as it reflected back a face of great beauty, probably suggested to her mind a more favourable conclusion of the sentence than she cared to trust her tongue withal.

CHAPTER IX.

So pitiful a thing is suitor's state!
Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to court to sue, for *Had I wist*,
That few have found, and many a one hath miss'd!
Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide:
To lose good days, that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peers';
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares—
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs.
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.

Mother Hubbard's Tale.

ON the morning of the day on which George Heriot had prepared to escort the young Lord of Glenvarloch to the court at Whitehall, it may be reasonably supposed, that the young man, whose fortunes were likely to depend on this cast, felt himself more than usually anxious. He rose early, made his toilette with unusual care, and, being enabled, by the generosity of his more plebeian countryman, to set out a very handsome person to the best advantage, he obtained a momentary approbation from himself as he glanced at the mirror, and a loud and distinct plaudit from his landlady, who declared at once, that, in her judgment, he would take the wind out of the sail of every gallant in the presence—so much had she been able to enrich her discourse with the metaphors of those with whom her husband dealt.

At the appointed hour, the barge of Master George Heriot arrived, handsomely manned and ap-

pointed, having a tilt, with his own cypher, and the arms of his company, painted thereupon.

The young Lord of Glenvarloch received the friend who had evinced such disinterested attachment, with the kind courtesy which well became him.

Master Heriot then made him acquainted with the bounty of his sovereign; which he paid over to his young friend, declining what he had himself formerly advanced to him. Nigel felt all the gratitude which the citizen's disinterested friendship had deserved, and was not wanting in expressing it suitably.

Yet, as the young and high-born nobleman embarked to go to the presence of his prince, under the patronage of one whose best, or most distinguished qualification, was his being an eminent member of the goldsmiths' incorporation, he felt a little surprised, if not abashed, at his own situation; and Richie Moniplies, as he stepped over the gang-way to take his place forward in the boat, could not help muttering,—“It was a changed day betwixt Maister Heriot and his honest father in the Kræmes;—but, doubtless, there was a difference between clinking on gold and silver, and clattering upon pewter.”

On they glided, by the assistance of the oars of four stout watermen, along the Thames, which then served for the principal high-road betwixt London and Westminster; for few ventured on horseback through the narrow and crowded streets of the city, and coaches were then a luxury reserved only for the higher nobility, and to which no citizen, whatever was his wealth, presumed to aspire. The beauty of the banks, especially on the northern side, where the gardens of the nobility descended from their hotels, in many places, down to the water's edge, was pointed out to Nigel by his kind conductor, and was pointed out in vain. The mind of the young Lord of Glenvarloch was filled with anticipations, not the most pleasant, concerning the manner in which he was likely to be received by that monarch, in whose behalf his family had been nearly reduced to ruin; and he was, with the usual mental anxiety of those in such a situation, framing imaginary questions from the king, and overtoiling his spirit in devising answers to them.

His conductor saw the labour of Nigel's mind, and avoided increasing it by farther conversation; so that, when he had explained to him briefly the ceremonies observed at court on such occasions of presentation, the rest of their voyage was performed in silence.

They landed at Whitehall-stairs, and entered the palace after announcing their names,—the guards paying to Lord Glenvarloch the respect and honours due to his rank.

The young man's heart beat high and thick within him as he came within the royal apartments. His education abroad, conducted, as it had been, on a narrow and limited scale, had given him but imperfect ideas of the grandeur of a court; and the philosophical reflections which taught him to set ceremonial and exterior splendour at defiance, proved, like other maxims of mere philosophy, ineffectual, at the moment they were weighed against the impression naturally made on the mind of an inexpe-

rienced youth, by the unusual magnificence of the scene. The splendid apartments through which they passed, the rich apparel of the grooms, guards, and domestics in waiting, and the usual ceremonial attending their passage through the long suite of apartments, had something in it, trifling and common-place as it might appear to practised courtiers, embarrassing, and even alarming, to one who went through these forms for the first time, and who was doubtful what sort of reception was to accompany his first appearance before his sovereign.

Heriot, in anxious attention to save his young friend from the least momentary embarrassment, had taken care to give the necessary pass-word to the warders, grooms of the chambers, ushers, or by whatever name they were designated; so they went onward without interruption.

In this manner they passed several ante-rooms, filled chiefly with guards, attendants of the court, and their acquaintances, male and female, who, dressed in their best apparel, and with eyes rounded by eager curiosity to make the most of their opportunity, stood, with beseeming modesty, ranked against the wall, in a manner which indicated that they were spectators, not performers, in the courtly exhibition.

Through these exterior apartments Lord Glenvarloch and his city friend went onward into a large and splendid withdrawing-room, communicating with the presence-chamber, into which ante-room were admitted those only, who, from birth, their posts in the state or household, or by the particular grant of the king, had right to attend the court, as men entitled to pay their respects to their sovereign.

Amid this favoured and selected company, Nigel observed Sir Mungo Malagrowth, who, shaken off and discountenanced by those who knew how low he stood in court interest and favour, was but too happy in the opportunity of hooking himself upon a person of Lord Glenvarloch's rank, who was, as yet, so inexperienced, as to feel it difficult to shake off an intruder.

The knight forthwith framed his grim features to a ghastly smile, and, after a preliminary and patronizing nod to George Heriot, accompanied with an aristocratic wave of the hand, which intimated at once superiority and protection, he laid aside altogether the honest citizen, to whom he owed many a dinner, to attach himself exclusively to the young lord, although he suspected he might be occasionally in the predicament of needing one as much as himself. And even the notice of this original, singular and unamiable as he was, was not entirely indifferent to the Lord Glenvarloch, since the absolute and somewhat constrained silence of his good friend Heriot, which left him at liberty to retire painfully to his own agitating reflections, was now relieved; while, on the other hand, he could not help feeling interest in the sharp and sarcastic information poured upon him by an observant, though discontented, courtier, to whom a patient auditor, and he a man of title and rank, was as much a prize, as his acute and communicative disposition rendered him an entertaining companion to Nigel Olifaunt. Heriot, in the meantime, neglected by Sir Mungo, and avoiding every attempt by which the grateful politeness of Lord

Glenvarloch strove to bring him into the conversation, stood by, with a kind of half smile on his countenance; but whether excited by Sir Mungo's wit, or arising at his expense, did not exactly appear.

In the meantime, the trio occupied a nook of the ante-room, next to the door of the presence-chamber, which was not yet thrown open, when Maxwell, with his rod of office, came bustling into the apartment, where most men, excepting those of high rank, made way for him. He stopped beside the party in which we are interested, looked for a moment at the young Scotch nobleman, then made a slight obeisance to Heriot, and, lastly, addressing Sir Mungo Malagrowth, began a hurried complaint to him of the misbehaviour of the gentlemen-pensioners and warders, who suffered all sort of citizens, suitors, and scriveners, to sneak into the outer apartments, without either respect or decency.—“The English,” he said, “were scandalized, for such a thing durst not be attempted in the queen's days. In her time, there was then the court-yard for the mobility, and the apartments for the nobility; and it reflects on your place, Sir Mungo,” he added, “belonging to the household as you do, that such things should not be better ordered.”

Here Sir Mungo, afflicted, as was frequently the case on such occasions, with one of his usual fits of deafness, answered, “It was no wonder the mobility used freedoms, when those whom they saw in office were so little better in blood and havings than themselves.”

“You are right, sir—quite right,” said Maxwell, putting his hand on the tarnished embroidery on the old knight's sleeve,—“when such fellows see men in office dressed in cast-off suits, like paltry stage-players, it is no wonder the court is thronged with intruders.”

“Were you lauding the taste of my embroidery, Maister Maxwell?” answered the knight, who apparently interpreted the deputy-chamberlain's meaning rather from his action than his words;—“it is of an ancient and liberal pattern, having been made by your mother's father, auld James Stitchell, a master-fashioner of honest repute, in Merlin's Wynd, whom I made a point to employ, as I am now happy to remember, seeing your father thought fit to intermarry with sic a person's daughter.”

Maxwell looked stern; but conscious there was nothing to be got of Sir Mungo in the way of amends, and that prosecuting the quarrel with such an adversary would only render him ridiculous, and make public a mis-alliance of which he had no reason to be proud, he covered his resentment with a sneer; and, expressing his regret that Sir Mungo was become too deaf to understand or attend to what was said to him, walked on, and planted himself beside the folding-doors of the presence-chamber, at which he was to perform the duty of deputy-chamberlain, or usher, so soon as they should be opened.

“The door of the presence is about to open,” said the goldsmith, in a whisper, to his young friend; “my condition permits me to go no farther with you. Fail not to present yourself boldly, according to your birth, and offer your supplication, which the king will not refuse to accept, and, as I hope, to consider favourably.”

As he spoke, the door of the presence-chamber opened accordingly, and, as is usual on such occasions, the courtiers began to advance towards it, and to enter in a slow, but continuous and uninterrupted stream.

As Nigel presented himself in his turn at the entrance, and mentioned his name and title, Maxwell seemed to hesitate. "You are not known to any one," he said. "It is my duty to suffer no one to pass to the presence, my lord, whose face is unknown to me, unless upon the word of a responsible person."

"I came with Master George Heriot," said Nigel, in some embarrassment at this unexpected interruption.

"Master Heriot's name will pass current for much gold and silver, my lord," replied Maxwell, with a civil sneer, "but not for birth and rank. I am compelled by my office to be peremptory.—The entrance is impeded—I am much concerned to say it—your lordship must stand back."

"What is the matter?" said an old Scottish nobleman, who had been speaking with George Heriot, after he had separated from Nigel, and who now came forward, observing the altercation betwixt the latter and Maxwell.

"It is only Master Deputy-chamberlain Maxwell," said Sir Mungo Malagrowth, "expressing his joy to see Lord Glenvarloch at court, whose father gave him his office—at least I think he is speaking to that purport—for your lordship kens my imperfection." A subdued laugh, such as the situation permitted, passed round amongst those who heard this specimen of Sir Mungo's sarcastic temper. But the old nobleman stepped still more forward, saying,—"What!—the son of my gallant old opponent, Ochtred Olifaunt?—I will introduce him to the presence myself."

So saying, he took Nigel by the arm, without farther ceremony, and was about to lead him forward, when Maxwell, still keeping his rod across the door, said, but with hesitation and embarrassment—"My lord, this gentleman is not known, and I have orders to be scrupulous."

"Tutti-tatti, man," said the old lord, "I will be answerable he is his father's son, from the cut of his eye-brow—and thou, Maxwell, knew his father well enough to have spared thy scruples. Let us pass, man." So saying, he put aside the deputy-chamberlain's rod, and entered the presence-room, still holding the young nobleman by the arm.

"Why, I must know you, man," he said; "I must know you. I knew your father well, man, and I have broke a lance and crossed a blade with him; and it is to my credit that I am living to brag of it. He was king's-man, and I was queen's-man, during the Douglas wars—young fellows both, that feared neither fire nor steel; and we had some old feudal quarrels beside, that had come down from father to son, with our seal-rings, two-handed broad-swords, and pale-coats, and the crests on our burgonets."

"Too loud, my Lord of Huntinglen," whispered a gentleman of the chamber.—"The king!—the king!"

The old earl (for such he proved) took the hint, and was silent; and James, advancing from a side-

door, received in succession the compliments of strangers, while a little group of favourite courtiers, or officers of the household, stood around him, to whom he addressed himself from time to time. Some more pains had been bestowed on his toilette than upon the occasion when we first presented the monarch to our readers; but there was a natural awkwardness about his figure which prevented his clothes from sitting handsomely, and the prudence or timidity of his disposition had made him take the custom, already noticed, of wearing a dress so thickly quilted as might withstand the stroke of a dagger, which added an ungainly stiffness to his whole appearance, contrasting oddly with the frivolous, ungraceful, and fidgeting motions with which he accompanied his conversation. And yet, though the king's deportment was very undignified, he had a manner so kind, familiar, and good-humoured, was so little apt to veil over or conceal his own foibles, and had so much indulgence and sympathy for those of others, that his address, joined to his learning, and a certain proportion of shrewd mother-wit, failed not to make a favourable impression on those who approached his person.

When the Earl of Huntinglen had presented Nigel to his sovereign, a ceremony which the good peer took upon himself, the king received the young lord very graciously, and observed to his introducer, that he "was fain to see them twa stand side by side; for I trow, my Lord Huntinglen," continued he, "your ancestors, ay, and e'en your lordship's self and this laddie's father, have stood front to front at the sword's point, and that is a worse posture."

"Until your majesty," said Lord Huntinglen, "made Lord Ochtred and me cross palms, upon the memorable day when your majesty feasted all the nobles that were at feud together, and made them join hands in your presence"—

"I mind it weel," said the king; "I mind it weel—it was a blessed day, being the nineteen of September, of all days in the year—and it was a blithe sport to see how some of the carles girmed as they clapped loofs together. By my saul, I thought some of them, mair special the Hieland chiels, wad have broken out in our own presence; but we caused them to march hand in hand to the Cross, ourselves leading the way, and there drink a blithe cup of kindness with ilk other, to the staunching of feud, and perpetuation of amity. Auld John Anderson was provost that year—the carle grat for joy, and the baillies and councillors danced bare-headed in our presence like five-year-auld colts, for very triumph."

"It was indeed a happy day," said Lord Huntinglen, "and will not be forgotten in the history of your majesty's reign."

"I would not that it were, my lord," replied the monarch—"I would not that it were prætermitted in our annals. Ay, ay—*Beati pacifici*. My English lieges here may weel make much of me, for I would have them to know, they have gotten the only peaceable man that ever came of my family. If James with the Fiery Face had come amongst you," he said, looking round him, "or my great grandsire, of Flodden memory!"

"We should have sent him back to the north again," whispered one English nobleman.

"At least," said another, in the same inaudible tone, "we should have had a *man* to our sovereign, though he were but a Scotchman."

"And now, my young springald," said the king to Lord Glenvarloch, "where have you been spending your calf-time?"

"At Leyden, of late, may it please your majesty," answered Lord Nigel.

"Aha! a scholar," said the king; "and, by my saul, a modest and ingenuous youth, that hath not forgotten how to blush, like most of our travelled monsieurs. We will treat him conformably."

Then drawing himself up, coughing slightly, and looking around him with the conscious importance of superior learning, while all the courtiers who understood, or understood not, Latin, pressed eagerly forward to listen, the sapient monarch prosecuted his inquiries as follows.—

"Hem! hem! *Salve bis, quaterque salve, Glenvarlochides noster! Nuperumne a Lugduno Batavorum Britanniam rediisti?*"

The young nobleman replied, bowing low—

"*Imo, rex augustissime—biennium fere apud Lugdunenses moratus sum.*"

James proceeded—

"*Biennium, dicis? bene, bene, optime factum est—Non uno die quod dicunt,—intelligisti, Domine Glenvarlochiensis? Aha!*"

Nigel replied by a reverent bow, and the king, turning to those behind him, said—

"*Adolescens quidem ingenui vultus ingenuique pudoris:*" then resumed his learned queries. "*Et quid hodie Lugdunenses loquuntur—Vossius vester nihilne novi scripsit?—nihil certe, quod doleo, typis recenter edidit.*"

"*Valet quidem Vossius, rex benevole,*" replied Nigel, "*ast senex veneratissimus annum agit, ni fallor, septuagesimum.*"

"*Virum, mehercle, vix tam grandævum crediderim,*" replied the monarch. "*Et Vorstius iste?—Arminii improbi successor æque ac sectator—Herosne adhuc, ut cum Homero loquar, Ζωός ἐστι καὶ ἐπὶ χροὺ δερχών;*"

Nigel, by good fortune, remembered that Vorstius, the divine last mentioned in his majesty's queries about the state of Dutch literature, had been engaged in a personal controversy with James, in which the king had taken so deep an interest, as at length to hint in his public correspondence with the United States, that they would do well to apply the secular arm to stop the progress of heresy by violent measures against the professor's person—a demand which their mighty mightinesses' principles of universal toleration induced them to elude, though with some difficulty. Knowing all this, Lord Glenvarloch, though a courtier of five minutes' standing, had address enough to reply—

"*Vivum quidem, haud diu est, hominem videbam—vigere autem quis dicat qui sub fulminibus eloquentiæ tuæ, rex magne, jamdudum pronus jacet, et prostratus?*"*

* Lest any lady or gentleman should suspect there is aught of mystery concealed under the sentences printed in Italics, they will be pleased to understand that they con-

This last tribute to his polemical powers completed James's happiness, which the triumph of exhibiting his erudition had already raised to a considerable height.

He rubbed his hands, snapped his fingers, fidgeted, chuckled, exclaimed—"Euge! belle! optime!" and turning to the bishops of Exeter and Oxford, who stood behind him, he said,—“Ye see, my lords, no bad specimen of our Scottish latinity, with which language we would all our subjects of England were as well imbued as this, and other youths of honourable birth, in our auld kingdom; also, we keep the genuine and Roman pronunciation, like other learned nations on the Continent, sae that we can hold communing with any scholar in the universe, who can but speak the Latin tongue; whereas ye, our learned subjects of England, have introduced into your universities, otherwise most learned, a fashion of pronouncing like unto the “nip-pit foot and clippit foot” of the bride in the fairy tale, whilk manner of speech (take it not amiss that I be round with you) can be understood by no nation on earth saving yourselves; whereby Latin, *quoad Anglos*, ceaseth to be *communis lingua*, the general dragoman, or interpreter, between all the wise men of the earth.”

The Bishop of Exeter bowed, as in acquiescence to the royal censure; but he of Oxford stood upright, as mindful over what subjects his see extended, and as being equally willing to become food for fagots in defence of the latinity of the university, as for any article of his religious creed.

The king, without awaiting an answer from either prelate, proceeded to question Lord Nigel, but in the vernacular tongue,—“Weel, my likely Alumnus of the Muses, and what make you so far from the north?”

“To pay my homage to your majesty,” said the young nobleman, kneeling on one knee, “and to lay before you,” he added, “this my humble and dutiful supplication.”

The presenting of a pistol would certainly have startled King James more, but could (setting apart the fright) hardly have been more displeasing to his indolent disposition.

“And is it even so, man?” said he; “and can no single man, were it but for the rarity of the case, ever come up frae Scotland, excepting *ex proposito*—on set purpose, to see what he can make out of his loving sovereign? It is but three days syne that we had weel nigh lost our life and put three kingdoms into dule-weeds, from the over haste of a clumsy-handed peasant, to thrust a packet into our hand, and now we are beset by the like impediment in our very court. To our secretary with that gear, my lord—to our secretary with that gear.”

“I have already offered my humble supplication to your majesty's secretary of state,” said Lord Glenvarloch—“but it seems”—

“That he would not receive it, I warrant!” said the king, interrupting him; “by my saul, our secretary kens that point of king-craft, called refusing, better than we do, and will look at nothing but what

tain only a few common-place Latin phrases, relating to the state of letters in Holland, which neither deserve, nor would endure, a literal translation.

he likes himsell—I think I wad make a better secretary to him than he to me.—Weel, my lord, you are welcome to London; and, as ye seem an acute and learned youth, I advise ye to turn your neb northward as soon as ye like, and settle yoursell for a while at Saint Andrews, and we will be right glad to hear that you prosper in your studies.—*Incumbite remis fortiter.*”

While the king spoke thus, he held the petition of the young lord carelessly, like one who only delayed till the suppliant's back was turned, to throw it away, or at least lay it aside to be no more looked at. The petitioner, who read this in his cold and indifferent looks, and in the manner in which he twisted and crumpled together the paper, arose with a bitter sense of anger and disappointment, made a profound obeisance, and was about to retire hastily. But Lord Huntinglen, who stood by him, checked his intention by an almost imperceptible touch upon the skirt of his cloak, and Nigel, taking the hint, retreated only a few steps from the royal presence, and then made a pause. In the meantime, Lord Huntinglen kneeled before James in his turn, and said—“May it please your majesty to remember, that upon one certain occasion you did promise to grant me a boon every year of your sacred life?”

“I mind it weel, man,” answered James, “I mind it weel, and good reason why—it was when you unclasped the fause traitor Ruthven's fangs from about our royal throat, and drove your dirk into him like a true subject. We did then, as you remind us (whilk was unnecessary), being partly beside ourselves with joy at our liberation, promise we would grant a free boon every year; whilk promise, on our coming to menseful possession of our royal faculties, we did confirm, *restrictive* always and *conditionaliter*, that your lordship's demand should be such as we, in our royal discretion, should think reasonable.”

“Even so, gracious sovereign,” said the old earl, “and may I yet farther crave to know if I have ever exceeded the bounds of your royal benevolence?”

“By my word, man, no!” said the king; “I cannot remember you have asked much for yourself, if it be not a dog, or a hawk, or a buck out of our park at Theobald's, or such like. But to what serves this preface?”

“To the boon which I am now to ask of your grace,” said Lord Huntinglen; “which is, that your majesty would be pleased, on the instant, to look at the placet of Lord Glenvarloch, and do upon it what your own just and royal nature shall think meet and just, without reference to your secretary or any other of your council.”

“By my saul, my lord, this is strange,” said the king; “ye are pleading for the son of your enemy!”

“Of one who *was* my enemy till your majesty made him my friend,” answered Lord Huntinglen.

“Well spoken, my lord!” said the king; “and with a true christian spirit. And, respecting the supplication of this young man, I partly guess where the matter lies; and in plain troth I had promised to George Heriot to be good to the lad—But then, here the shoe pinches. Steenie and Babie Charles cannot abide him—neither can your own son, my lord; and so methinks he had better go down to Scotland before he comes to ill luck by them.”

VOL. III.

“My son, an it please your majesty, so far as he is concerned, shall not direct my doings,” said the earl, “nor any wild-headed young man of them all.”

“Why, neither shall they mine,” replied the monarch; “by my father's saul, none of them all shall play *rex* with me—I will do what I will, and what I ought, like a free king.”

“Your majesty will then grant me my boon?” said the Lord Huntinglen.

“Ay, marry will I—marry will I,” said the king; “but follow me this way, man, where we may be more private.”

He led Lord Huntinglen with rather a hurried step through the courtiers, all of whom gazed earnestly on this unwonted scene, as is the fashion of all courts on similar occasions. The king passed into a little cabinet, and bade, in the first moment, Lord Huntinglen lock or bar the door; but countermanded his direction in the next, saying,—“No, no, no—bread o' life, man, I am a free king—will do what I will and what I should—I am *justus et tenax propositi*, man—nevertheless, keep by the door, Lord Huntinglen, in case Steenie should come in with his mad humour.”

“O my poor master!” groaned the Earl of Huntinglen. “When you were in your own cold country, you had warmer blood in your veins.”

The king hastily glanced over the petition or memorial, every now and then glancing his eye towards the door, and then sinking it hastily on the paper, ashamed that Lord Huntinglen, whom he respected, should suspect him of timidity.

“To grant the truth,” he said, after he had finished his hasty perusal, “this is a hard case; and harder than it was represented to me, though I had some inkling of it before. And so the lad only wants payment of the siller due from us, in order to reclaim his paternal estate? But then, Huntinglen, the lad will have other debts—and for what burthen himsell with sae mony acres of barren woodland? let the land gang, man, let the land gang; Steenie has the promise of it from our Scottish Chancellor—it is the best hunting ground in Scotland—and Babie Charles and Steenie want to kill a buck there this next year—they maun hae the land—they maun hae the land; and our debt shall be paid to the young man plack and bawbee, and he may have the spending of it at our court; or, if he has such an eard hunger, wouns! man, we'll stuff his stomach with English land, which is worth twice as much, ay, ten times as much, as these accursed hills and heughs, and mosses and muirs, that he is sae keen after.”

All this while the poor king ambled up and down the apartment in a piteous state of uncertainty, which was made more ridiculous by his shambling circular mode of managing his legs, and his ungainly fashion of fiddling on such occasions with the bunches of ribbons which fastened the lower part of his dress.

Lord Huntinglen listened with great composure, and answered, “An it please your majesty, there was an answer yielded by Naboth when Ahab coveted his vineyard—‘The lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.’”

“Ey, my lord—ey, my lord!” ejaculated James,

while all the colour mounted both to his cheek and nose, "I hope you mean not to teach me divinity? Ye need not fear, my lord, that I will shun to do justice to every man; and, since your lordship will give me no help to take up this in a more peaceful manner—whilk, methinks, would be better for the young man, as I said before,—why—since it maun be so—'sdeath, I am a free king, man, and he shall have his money and redeem his land, and make a kirk and a miln of it, an he will." So saying, he hastily wrote an order on the Scottish exchequer for the sum in question, and then added, "How they are to pay it I see not; but I warrant he will find money on the order among the goldsmiths, who can find it for every one but me.—And now you see, my Lord of Huntinglen, that I am neither an untrue man, to deny you the boon whilk I became bound for, nor an Ahab, to covet Naboth's vineyard; nor a mere nose-of-wax, to be twisted this way and that, by favourites and counsellors at their pleasure. I think you will grant now that I am none of those?"

"You are my own native and noble prince," said Huntinglen, as he knelt to kiss the royal hand—"just and generous, whenever you lister to the workings of your own heart."

"Ay, ay," said the king, laughing good-naturedly, as he raised his faithful servant from the ground, "that is what ye all say when I do anything to please ye. There—there, take the sign-manual, and away with you and this young fellow. I wonder Steenie and Babie Charles have not broken in on us before now."

Lord Huntinglen hastened from the cabinet, foreseeing a scene at which he was unwilling to be present, but which sometimes occurred when James roused himself so far as to exert his own free will, of which he boasted so much, in spite of that of his imperious favourite Steenie, as he called the Duke of Buckingham, from a supposed resemblance betwixt his very handsome countenance and that with which the Italian artists represented the proto-martyr Stephen. In fact, the haughty favourite, who had the unusual good fortune to stand as high in the opinion of the heir-apparent as of the existing monarch, had considerably diminished his respect towards the latter, and it was apparent to the more shrewd courtiers that James endured his domination rather from habit, timidity, and a dread of encountering his stormy passions, than from any heartfelt continuation of regard towards him whose greatness had been the work of his own hands. To save himself the pain of seeing what was likely to take place on the duke's return, and to preserve the king from the additional humiliation which the presence of such a witness must have occasioned, the earl left the cabinet as speedily as possible, having first carefully pocketed the important sign-manual.

No sooner had he entered the presence-room than he hastily sought Lord Glenvarloch, who had withdrawn into the embrasure of one of the windows from the general gaze of men who seemed disposed only to afford him the notice which arises from surprise and curiosity, and, taking him by the arm, without speaking, led him out of the presence-chamber into the first ante-room. Here they found

the worthy goldsmith, who approached them with looks of curiosity, which were checked by the old lord, who said hastily—"All is well. Is your barge in waiting?" Heriot answered in the affirmative. "Then," said Lord Huntinglen, "you shall give me a cast in it, as the watermen say, and I, in requital, will give you both your dinner, for we must have some conversation together."

They both followed the earl without speaking, and were in the second ante-room when the important annunciation of the ushers, and the hasty murmur with which all made ample way as the company repeated to each other, "The duke, the duke!" made them aware of the approach of the omnipotent favourite.

He entered—that unhappy minion of court favour—sumptuously dressed in the picturesque attire which will live for ever on the canvas of Vandyke, and which marks so well the proud age when aristocracy, though undermined and nodding to its fall, still, by external show and profuse expense, endeavoured to assert its paramount superiority over the inferior orders. The handsome and commanding countenance, stately form, and graceful action and manners of the Duke of Buckingham made him become that picturesque dress beyond any man of his time. At present, however, his countenance seemed discomposed, his dress a little more disordered than became the place, his step hasty, and his voice imperative.

All marked the angry spot upon his brow, and bore back so suddenly to make way for him, that the Earl of Huntinglen, who affected no extraordinary haste on the occasion, with his companions, who could not, if they would, have decently left him, remained as it were by themselves in the middle of the room, and in the very path of the angry favourite. He touched his cap sternly as he looked on Huntinglen, but unbonneted to Heriot, and sunk his beaver with its shadowy plume as low as the floor, with a profound air of mock respect. In returning his greeting—which he did simply and unaffectedly—the citizen only said,—"Too much courtesy, my lord duke, is often the reverse of kindness."

"I grieve you should think so, Master Heriot," answered the duke; "I only meant, by my homage, to claim your protection, sir—your patronage. You are become, I understand, a solicitor of suits—a promoter—an undertaker—a fautor of court suitors of merit and quality, who chance to be pennyless. I trust your bags will bear you out in your new boast."

"They will bear me the farther, my lord duke," answered the goldsmith, "that my boast is but small."

"O, you do yourself less than justice, my good Master Heriot," continued the duke, in the same tone of irony; "you have a marvelous court-faction, to be the son of an Edinburgh tinker. Have the goodness to prefer me to the knowledge of the high-born nobleman who is honoured and advantaged by your patronage."

"That shall be *my* task," said Lord Huntinglen, with emphasis. "My lord duke, I desire you to know Nigel Olifaunt, Lord Glenvarloch, represent-

ative of one of the most ancient and powerful baronial houses in Scotland.—Lord Glenvarloch, I present you to his Grace the Duke of Buckingham, representative of Sir George Villiers, knight, of Brookesby, in the county of Leicester.”

The duke coloured still more high as he bowed to Lord Glenvarloch scornfully, a courtesy which the other returned haughtily, and with restrained indignation. “We know each other, then,” said the duke, after a moment’s pause, and as if he had seen something in the young nobleman which merited more serious notice than the bitter raillery with which he commenced—“We know each other—and you know me, my lord, for your enemy.”

“I thank you for your plainness, my lord duke,” replied Nigel; “an open enemy is better than a hollow friend.”

“For you, my Lord Huntinglen,” said the duke, “methinks you have but now overstepped the limits of the indulgence permitted to you, as the father of the prince’s friend, and my own.”

“By my faith, my lord duke,” replied the earl, “it is easy for any one to outstep boundaries, of the existence of which he was not aware. It is neither to secure my protection nor approbation, that my son keeps such exalted company.”

“O, my lord, we know you, and indulge you,” said the duke; “you are one of those who presume for a life-long upon the merit of one good action.”

“In faith, my lord, and if it be so,” said the old Earl, “I have at least the advantage of such as presume more than I do, without having done any action of merit whatever. But I mean not to quarrel with you, my lord—we can neither be friends nor enemies—you have your path, and I have mine.”

Buckingham only replied by throwing on his bonnet, and shaking its lofty plume with a careless and scornful toss of the head. They parted thus; the duke walking onwards through the apartments, and the others leaving the palace and repairing to Whitehall-stairs, where they embarked on board the barge of the citizen.

CHAPTER X.

Bid not thy fortune troll upon the wheels
Of yonder dancing cubes of mottled bone;
And drown it not, like Egypt’s royal harlot,
Dissolving her rich pearl in the brimm’d wine-cup.
These are the arts, Lothario, which shrink acres
Into brief yards—bring sterling pounds to farthings,
Credit to infamy; and the poor gull,
Who might have lived an honour’d, easy life,
To ruin, and an unregarded grave.

The Changes.

WHEN they were fairly embarked on the Thames, the earl took from his pocket the supplication, and, pointing out to George Heriot the royal warrant indorsed thereon, asked him, if it were in due and regular form? The worthy citizen hastily read it over, thrust forth his hand as if to congratulate the Lord Glenvarloch, then checked himself, pulled out his barnacles (a present from old David Ramsay), and again perused the warrant with the most business-like critical attention. “It is strictly correct

and formal,” he said, looking to the Earl of Huntinglen; “and I sincerely rejoice at it.”

“I doubt nothing of its formality,” said the earl; “the king understands business well, and if he does not practise it often, it is only because indolence obscures parts which are naturally well-qualified for the discharge of affairs. But what is next to be done for our young friend, Master Heriot? You know how I am circumstanced. Scottish lords living at the English court have seldom command of money; yet, unless a sum can be presently raised on this warrant, matters standing as you hastily hinted to me, the mortgage, wadset, or whatever it is called, will be foreclosed.”

“It is true,” said Heriot, in some embarrassment; “there is a large sum wanted in redemption—yet, if it is not raised, there will be an expiry of the legal, as our lawyers call it, and the estate will be evicted.”

“My noble—my worthy friends, who have taken up my cause so undeservedly, so unexpectedly,” said Nigel, “do not let me be a burden on your kindness. You have already done too much where nothing was merited.”

“Peace, man, peace,” said Lord Huntinglen, “and let old Heriot and I puzzle this scent out. He is about to open—hark to him!”

“My lord,” said the citizen, “the Duke of Buckingham sneers at our city money-bags; yet they can sometimes open, to prop a falling and a noble house.”

“We know they can,” said Lord Huntinglen—“mind not Buckingham, he is a Peg-a-Ramsay—and now for the remedy.”

“I partly hinted to Lord Glenvarloch already,” said Heriot, “that the redemption-money might be advanced upon such a warrant as the present, and I will engage my credit that it can. But then, in order to secure the lender, he must come in the shoes of the creditor to whom he advances payment.”

“Come in his shoes?” replied the earl; “Why, what have boots or shoes to do with this matter, my good friend?”

“It is a law phrase, my lord. My experience has made me pick up a few of them,” said Heriot.

“Ay, and of better things alongst with them, Master George,” replied Lord Huntinglen; “but what means it?”

“Simply this,” resumed the citizen, “that the lender of this money will transact with the holder of the mortgage, or wadset, over the estate of Glenvarloch, and obtain from him such a conveyance to his right as shall leave the lands pledged for the debt, in case the warrant upon the Scottish exchequer should prove unproductive. I fear, in this uncertainty of public credit, that without some such counter-security, it will be very difficult to find so large a sum.”

“Ho la!” said the Earl of Huntinglen, “halt there! a thought strikes me.—What if the new creditor should admire the estate as a hunting-field, as much as my Lord Grace of Buckingham seems to do, and should wish to kill a buck there in the summer season? It seems to me, that on your plan, Master George, our new friend will be as well entitled to

block Lord Glenvarloch out of his inheritance as the present holder of the mortgage."

The citizen laughed. "I will engage," he said, "that the keenest sportsman to whom I may apply on this occasion, shall not have a thought beyond the Lord Mayor's Easter-hunt, in Epping Forest. But your lordship's caution is reasonable. The creditor must be bound to allow Lord Glenvarloch sufficient time to redeem his estate by means of the royal warrant—they must waive in his favour the right of instant foreclosure, which may be, I should think, the more easily managed, as the right of redemption must be exercised in his own name."

"But where shall we find a person in London fit to draw the necessary writings?" said the earl. "If my old friend Sir John Skene of Halyards had lived, we should have had his advice; but time presses, and"—

"I know," said Heriot, "an orphan lad, a scrivener, that dwells by Temple-bar; he can draw deeds both after the English and Scotch fashion, and I have trusted him often in things of weight and of importance. I will send one of my serving-men for him, and the mutual deeds may be executed in your lordship's presence; for as things stand, there should be no delay." His lordship readily assented; and, as they now landed upon the private stairs leading down to the river from the gardens, of the handsome hotel which he inhabited, the messenger was dispatched without loss of time.

Nigel, who had sat almost stupified while these zealous friends volunteered for him in arranging the measures by which his fortune was to be disembarassed, now made another eager attempt to force upon them his broken expressions of thanks and gratitude. But he was again silenced by Lord Huntinglen, who declared he would hear no word on that topic, and proposed instead, that they should take a turn in the pleached alley, or sit upon the stone bench which overlooked the Thames, until his son's arrival should give the signal for dinner.

"I desire to introduce Dalgarno and Lord Glenvarloch to each other," he said, "as two who will be near neighbours, and I trust will be more kind ones than their fathers were formerly. There is but three Scots miles betwixt the castles, and the turrets of the one are visible from the battlements of the other."

The old earl was silent for a moment, and appeared to muse upon the recollections which the vicinity of the castles had summoned up.

"Does Lord Dalgarno follow the court to Newmarket next week?" said Heriot, by way of removing the conversation.

"He proposes so, I think," answered Lord Huntinglen, relapsed into his reverie for a minute or two, and then addressed Nigel somewhat abruptly—

"My young friend, when you attain possession of your inheritance, as I trust you soon will, I hope you will not add one to the idle followers of the court, but reside on your patrimonial estate, cherish your ancient tenants, relieve and assist your poor kinsmen, protect the poor against subaltern oppression, and do what our fathers used to do, with fewer lights and with less means than we have."

"And yet the advice to keep the country," said

Heriot, "comes from an ancient and constant ornament of the court."

"From an old courtier indeed," said the earl, "and the first of my family that could so write himself—my grey beard falls on a cambric ruff, and a silken doublet—my father's descended upon a buff coat and a breast-plate. I would not that those days of battle returned; but I should love well to make the oaks of my old forest of Dalgarno ring once more with halloo, and horn, and hound, and to have the old stone-arched hall return the hearty shout of my vassals and tenants, as the bicker and the quaigh walked their rounds amongst them. I should like to see the broad Tay once more before I die—not even the Thames can match it, in my mind."

"Surely, my lord," said the citizen, "all this might be easily done—it costs but a moment's resolution, and the journey of some brief days, and you will be where you desire to be.—What is there to prevent you?"

"Habits, Master George, habits," replied the earl, "which to young men are like threads of silk, so lightly are they worn, so soon broken; but which hang on our old limbs as if time had stiffened them into gyves of iron. To go to Scotland for a brief space were but labour in vain; and when I think of abiding there, I cannot bring myself to leave my old master, to whom I fancy myself sometimes useful, and whose weal and woe I have shared for so many years. But Dalgarno shall be a Scottish noble."

"Has he visited the north?" said Heriot.

"He was there last year, and made such a report of the country, that the prince has expressed a longing to see it."

"Lord Dalgarno is in high grace with his highness, and the Duke of Buckingham?" observed the goldsmith.

"He is so," answered the earl,—"I pray it may be for the advantage of them all. The prince is just and equitable in his sentiments, though cold and stately in his manners, and very obstinate in his most trifling purposes; and the duke, noble and gallant, and generous and open, is fiery, ambitious, and impetuous. Dalgarno has none of these faults, and such as he may have of his own may perchance be corrected by the society in which he moves.—See, here he comes"

Lord Dalgarno accordingly advanced from the farther end of the alley to the bench on which his father and his guests were seated, so that Nigel had full leisure to peruse his countenance and figure. He was dressed point-device, and almost to extremity, in the splendid fashion of the time, which suited well with his age, probably about five-and-twenty, with a noble form and fine countenance, in which last could easily be traced the manly features of his father, but softened by a more habitual air of assiduous courtesy than the stout old earl had ever condescended to assume towards the world in general. In other respects, his address was gallant, free, and unencumbered either by pride or ceremony—far remote certainly from the charge either of haughty coldness or forward impetuosity; and so far his father had justly freed him from the marked faults which he ascribed to the manners of the prince and his favourite Buckingham.

While the old earl presented his young acquaintance Lord Glenvarloch to his son, as one whom he would have him love and honour, Nigel marked the countenance of Lord Dalgarno closely, to see if he could detect aught of that secret dislike which the king had, in one of his broken expostulations, seemed to intimate, as arising from a clashing of interests betwixt his new friend and the great Buckingham. But nothing of this was visible; on the contrary, Lord Dalgarno received his new acquaintance with the open frankness and courtesy which makes conquest at once, when addressed to the feelings of an ingenuous young man.

It need hardly be told that his open and friendly address met equally ready and cheerful acceptance from Nigel Olifaunt. For many months, and while a youth not much above two-and-twenty, he had been restrained by circumstances from the conversation of his contemporaries. When, on his father's sudden death, he left the Low Countries for Scotland, he had found himself involved, apparently inextricably, with the details of the law, all of which threatened to end in the alienation of the patrimony which should support his hereditary rank. His term of sincere mourning, joined to injured pride, and the swelling of the heart under unexpected and undeserved misfortune, together with the uncertainty attending the issue of his affairs, had induced the young Lord of Glenvarloch to lead, while in Scotland, a very private and reserved course of life. How he had passed his time in London, the reader is acquainted with. But this melancholy and secluded course of life was neither agreeable to his age nor to his temper, which was genial and sociable. He hailed, therefore, with sincere pleasure, the approaches which a young man of his own age and rank made towards him; and, when he had exchanged with Lord Dalgarno some of those words and signals, by which, as surely as by those of free-masonry, young people recognize a mutual wish to be agreeable to each other, it seemed as if the two noblemen had been acquainted for some time.

Just as this tacit intercourse had been established, one of Lord Huntinglen's attendants came down the alley, marshaling onwards a man dressed in black buckram, who followed him with considerable speed, considering that, according to his sense of reverence and propriety, he kept his body bent and parallel to the horizon from the moment that he came in sight of the company to which he was about to be presented.

"Who is this, you cuckoldy knave?" said the old lord, who had retained the keen appetite and impatience of a Scottish baron even during a long alienation from his native country; "and why does John Cook, with a murrain to him, keep back dinner?"

"I believe we are ourselves responsible for this person's intrusion," said George Heriot; "this is the scrivener whom we desired to see.—Look up, man, and see us in the face as an honest man should, instead of bearing thy noddle charged against us thus like a battering-ram."

The scrivener did look up accordingly, with the action of an automaton which suddenly obeys the

impulse of a pressed spring. But, strange to tell, not even the haste he had made to attend his patron's mandation, a business, as Master Heriot's message expressed, of weight and importance—nay, not even the state of depression in which, out of sheer humility, doubtless, he had his head stooped to the earth from the moment he had trod the demesnes of the Earl of Huntinglen, had called any colour into his countenance. The drops stood on his brow from haste and toil, but his cheek was still pale and tallow-coloured as before; nay, what seemed stranger, his very hair, when he raised his head, hung down on either cheek as straight and sleek and undisturbed as it was when we first introduced him to our readers, seated at his quiet and humble desk.

Lord Dalgarno could not forbear a stifled laugh at the ridiculous and puritanical figure which presented itself like a starved anatomy to the company, and whispered at the same time into Lord Glenvarloch's ear,—

"The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon,
Where got'st thou that goose-look?"

Nigel was too little acquainted with the English stage, to understand a quotation which had already grown matter of common allusion in London. Lord Dalgarno saw that he was not understood, and continued, "that fellow, by his visage, should either be a saint, or a most hypocritical rogue—and such is my excellent opinion of human nature, that I always suspect the worst. But they seem deep in business. Will you make a turn with me in the garden, my lord, or will you remain a member of the serious conclave?"

"With you, my lord, most willingly," said Nigel; and they were turning away accordingly, when George Heriot, with the formality belonging to his station, observed, that, "as their business concerned Lord Glenvarloch, he had better remain, to make himself master of it, and witness to it."

"My presence is utterly needless, my good lord;—and, my best friend, Master Heriot," said the young nobleman, "I shall understand nothing the better for cumbering you with my ignorance in these matters; and can only say at the end, as I now say at the beginning, that I dare not take the helm out of the hand of the kind pilots who have already guided my course within sight of a fair and unhopèd-for haven. Whatever you recommend to me as fitting, I shall sign and seal; and the import of the deeds I will better learn by a brief explanation from Master Heriot, if he will bestow so much trouble in my behalf, than by a thousand learned words and law terms from this person of skill."

"He is right," said Lord Huntinglen; "our young friend is right, in confiding these matters to you and me, Master George Heriot—he has not misplaced his confidence."

Master George Heriot cast a long look after the two young noblemen, who had now walked down the alley arm-in-arm, and at length said, "He hath not, indeed, misplaced his confidence, as your lordship well and truly says—but, nevertheless, he is not in the right path; for it behoves every man to

become acquainted with his own affairs, so soon as he hath any that are worth attending to."

When he had made this observation, they applied themselves, with the scrivener, to look into various papers, and to direct in what manner writings should be drawn, which might at once afford sufficient security to those who were to advance the money, and at the same time preserve the right of the young nobleman to redeem the family estate, provided he should obtain the means of doing so, by the expected reimbursement from the Scottish exchequer, or otherwise. It is needless to enter into these details. But it is not unimportant to mention, as an illustration of character, that Heriot entered into the most minute legal details with a precision which showed that experience had made him master even of the intricacies of Scottish conveyancing; and that the Earl of Huntinglen, though far less acquainted with technical detail, suffered no step of the business to pass over, until he had attained a general but distinct idea of its import and its propriety.

They seemed to be admirably seconded in their benevolent intentions towards the young Lord Glenvarloch, by the skill and eager zeal of the scrivener, whom Heriot had introduced to this piece of business, the most important which Andrew had ever transacted in his life, and the particulars of which were moreover agitated in his presence between an actual earl, and one whose wealth and character might entitle him to be alderman of his ward, if not to be lord mayor, in his turn.

While they were thus in eager conversation on business, the good earl even forgetting the calls of his appetite, and the delay of dinner, in his anxiety to see that the scrivener received proper instructions, and that all was rightly weighed and considered, before dismissing him to engross the necessary deeds, the two young men walked together on the terrace which overhung the river, and talked on the topics which Lord Dalgarno, the eldest, and the most experienced, thought most likely to interest his new friend.

These naturally regarded the pleasures attending a court life; and Lord Dalgarno expressed much surprise at understanding that Nigel proposed an instant return to Scotland.

"You are jesting with me," he said. "All the court rings—it is needless to mince it—with the extraordinary success of your suit—against the highest interest, it is said, now influencing the horizon at Whitehall. Men think of you—talk of you—fix their eyes on you—ask each other, who is this young Scotch lord, who has stepped so far in a single day? They augur, in whispers to each other, how high and how far you may push your fortune—and all that you design to make of it is, to return to Scotland, eat raw oatmeal cakes, baked upon a peat-fire, have your hand shaken by every loon of a blue-bonnet who chuses to dub you cousin, though your relationship comes by Noah; drink Scots twopenny ale, eat half-starved red-deer venison, when you can kill it, ride upon a galloway, and be called my right honourable and maist worthy lord."

"There is no great gaiety in the prospect before me, I confess," said Lord Glenvarloch, "even if your father and good Master Heriot should succeed

in putting my affairs on some footing of plausible hope. And yet I trust to do something for my vassals, as my ancestors before me, and to teach my children, as I have myself been taught, to make some personal sacrifices, if they be necessary, in order to maintain with dignity the situation in which they are placed by Providence."

Lord Dalgarno, after having once or twice stifled his laughter during this speech, at length broke out into a fit of mirth, so hearty and so resistless, that, angry as he was, the call of sympathy swept Nigel along with him, and, despite of himself, he could not forbear to join in a burst of laughter, which he thought not only causeless, but almost impertinent.

He soon recollected himself, however; and said, in a tone qualified to allay Lord Dalgarno's extreme mirth, "This is all well, my lord; but how am I to understand your merriment?" Lord Dalgarno only answered him with redoubled peals of laughter, and at length held by Lord Glenvarloch's cloak, as if to prevent his falling down on the ground, in the extremity of his convulsion.

At length, while Nigel stood half abashed, half angry, at becoming thus the subject of his new acquaintance's ridicule, and was only restrained from expressing his resentment against the son, by a sense of the obligations he owed the father, Lord Dalgarno recovered himself, and spoke in a half-broken voice, his eyes still running with tears. "I crave your pardon, my dear Lord Glenvarloch—ten thousand times do I crave your pardon. But that last picture of rural dignity, accompanied by your grave and angry surprise at my laughing at what would have made any court-bred hound laugh, that had but so much as bayed the moon once from the courtyard at Whitehall, totally overcame me. Why, my liefest and dearest lord, you, a young and handsome fellow, with high birth, a title, and the name of an estate, so well received by the king at your first starting, as makes your further progress scarce matter of doubt, if you know how to improve it—for the king has already said you are a 'braw lad, and well studied in the more humane letters'—you, too, whom all the women, and the very marked beauties of the court, desire to see, because you came from Leyden, were born in Scotland, and have gained a hard-contested suit in England—you, I say, with a person like a prince, an eye of fire, and a wit as quick, to think of throwing your cards on the table when the game is in your very hand, running back to the frozen north, and marrying—let me see—a tall, stalking, blue-eyed, fair-skinned bonny wench, with eighteen quarters in her scutcheon, a sort of Lot's wife, newly descended from her pedestal, and with her to shut yourself up in your tapestried chamber! Uh, gad!—Swouns, I shall never survive the idea!"

It is seldom that youth, however high-minded, is able, from mere strength of character and principle, to support itself against the force of ridicule. Half angry, half mortified, and, to say truth, half ashamed of his more manly and better purpose, Nigel was unable, and flattered himself it was unnecessary, to play the part of a rigid moral patriot, in presence of a young man whose current fluency of language, as well as his experience in the highest circles of

society, gave him, in spite of Nigel's better and firmer thoughts, a temporary ascendancy over him. He sought, therefore, to compromise the matter, and avoid farther debate, by frankly owning, that, if to return to his own country were not his choice, it was at least a matter of necessity. "His affairs," he said, "were unsettled, his income precarious."

"And where is he whose affairs are settled, or whose income is less than precarious, that is to be found in attendance on the court?" said Lord Dalgarno; "all are either losing or winning. Those who have wealth, come hither to get rid of it, while the happy gallants who, like you and I, dear Glenvarloch, have little or none, have every chance to be sharers in their spoils."

"I have no ambition of that sort," said Nigel, "and, if I had, I must tell you plainly, Lord Dalgarno, I have not the means to do so. I can scarce as yet call the suit I wear my own; I owe it, and I do not blush to say so, to the friendship of yonder good man."

"I will not laugh again, if I can help it," said Lord Dalgarno. "But, Lord! that you should have gone to a wealthy goldsmith for your habit—why, I could have brought you to an honest, confiding tailor, who should have furnished you with half-a-dozen, merely for love of the little word 'lordship,' which you place before your name;—and then your goldsmith, if he be really a friendly goldsmith, should have equipped you with such a purse of fair rose-nobles, as would have bought you thrice as many suits, or done better things for you."

"I do not understand these fashions, my lord," said Nigel, his displeasure mastering his shame; "were I to attend the court of my sovereign, it should be when I could maintain, without shifting or borrowing, the dress and retinue which my rank requires."

"Which my rank requires!" said Lord Dalgarno, repeating his last words; "that, now, is as good as if my father had spoke it. I fancy you would love to move to court like him, followed by a round score of old blue-bottles, with white heads and red noses, with bucklers and broad-swords, which their hands, trembling betwixt age and strong waters, can make no use of—as many huge silver badges on their arms, to show whose fools they are, as would furnish forth a court cupboard of plate—rogues fit for nothing but to fill our ante-chambers with the flavour of onions and genièvre—pah!"

"The poor knaves!" said Lord Glenvarloch; "they have served your father, it may be, in the wars. What would become of them were he to turn them off?"

"Why let them go to the hospital," said Dalgarno, "or to the bridge-end, to sell switches. The king is a better man than my father, and you see those who have served in *his* wars do so every day; or, when their blue coats were well worn out, they would make rare scare-crows. Here is a fellow, now, comes down the walk; the stoutest raven dared not come within a yard of that copper nose. I tell you, there is more service, as you will soon see, in my valet of the chamber, and such a lither lad as my page Lutin, than there is in a score of these old memorials of the Douglas wars, where they cut

each other's throats for the chance of finding twelve pennies Scots on the person of the slain. Marry, my lord, to make amends, they will eat mouldy victuals, and drink stale ale, as if their bellies were puncheons.—But the dinner-bell is going to sound—hark, it is clearing its rusty throat with a preliminary jowl. That is another clamorous relic of antiquity, that, were I master, should soon be at the bottom of the Thames. How the foul fiend can it interest the peasants and mechanics in the Strand, to know that the Earl of Huntinglen is sitting down to dinner? But my father looks our way—we must not be late for the grace, or we shall be in *dis*-grace, if you will forgive a quibble, which would have made his majesty laugh. You will find us all of a piece, and, having been accustomed to eat in saucers abroad, I am ashamed you should witness our larded capons, our mountains of beef, and oceans of brewis, as large as Highland hills and lochs; but you shall see better cheer to-morrow. Where lodge you? I will call for you. I must be your guide through the peopled desert, to certain enchanted lands, which you will scarce discover without chart and pilot. Where lodge you?"

"I will meet you in Paul's," said Nigel, a good deal embarrassed, "at any hour you please to name."

"O, you would be private," said the young lord; "nay, fear not me—I will be no intruder. But we have attained this huge larder of flesh, fowl, and fish. I marvel the oaken boards groan not under it."

They had, indeed, arrived at the dining-parlour of the mansion, where the table was superabundantly loaded, and where the number of attendants, to a certain extent, vindicated the sarcasms of the young nobleman. The chaplain and Sir Mungo Malagrowther were of the party. The latter complimented Lord Glenvarloch upon the impression he had made at court. "One would have thought ye had brought the apple of discord in your pouch, my lord, or that you were the very fire-brand of whilk Althea was delivered, and that she had lain in in a barrel of gunpowder; for the king, and the prince, and the duke, have been by the lugs about ye, and so have many more, that kenn'dna before this blessed day that there was such a man living on the face of the earth."

"Mind your victuals, Sir Mungo," said the earl, "they get cold while you talk."

"Troth, and that needsna, my lord," said the knight; "your lordship's dinners seldom scald one's mouth—the serving-men are turning auld, like our-sells, my lord, and it is far between the kitchen and the ha'."

With this little explosion of his spleen, Sir Mungo remained satisfied until the dishes were removed, when, fixing his eyes on the brave new doublet of Lord Dalgarno, he complimented him on his economy, pretending to recognize it as the same which his father had worn in Edinburgh in the Spanish ambassador's time. Lord Dalgarno, too much a man of the world to be moved by anything from such a quarter, proceeded to crack his nuts with great deliberation as he replied that the doublet was in some sort his father's, as it was likely to cost him fifty pounds some day soon. Sir Mungo forth-

with proceeded in his own way to convey this agreeable intelligence to the earl, observing, that his son was a better maker of bargains than his lordship, for he had bought a doublet as rich as that his lordship wore when the Spanish ambassador was at Holyrood, and it had cost him but fifty pounds Scots; "that was no fool's bargain, my lord."

"Pounds sterling, if you please, Sir Mungo," answered the earl, calmly; "and a fool's bargain it is, in all the tenses. Dalgarno *was* a fool when he bought—I *will* be a fool when I pay—and you, Sir Mungo, craving your pardon, *are* a fool *in præsenti*, for speaking of what concerns you not."

So saying, the earl addressed himself to the serious business of the table, and sent the wine around with a profusion which increased the hilarity, but rather threatened the temperance, of the company, until their joviality was interrupted by the annunciation that the scrivener had engrossed such deeds as required to be presently executed.

George Heriot rose from the table, observing that wine-cups and legal documents were unseemly neighbours. The earl asked the scrivener if they had laid a trencher and set a cup for him in the buttery? and received the respectful answer, that Heaven forbid he should be such an ungracious beast as to eat or drink until his lordship's pleasure was performed.

"Thou shalt eat before thou goest," said Lord Huntinglen; "and I will have thee try, moreover, whether a cup of sack cannot bring some colour into these cheeks of thine. It were a shame to my household, thou should glide into the Strand after such a spectre-fashion as thou now wearest.—Look to it, Dalgarno, for the honour of our roof is concerned."

Lord Dalgarno gave directions that the man should be attended to. Lord Glenvarloch and the citizen, in the meanwhile, signed and interchanged, and thus closed a transaction, of which the principal party concerned understood little, save that it was under the management of a zealous and faithful friend, who undertook that the money should be forthcoming, and the estate released from forfeiture, by payment of the stipulated sum for which it stood pledged, and at the term of Lambmas, and at the hour of noon, and beside the tomb of the Regent Earl of Murray, in the High Kirk of Saint Giles, at Edinburgh, being the day and place assigned for such redemption.

When this business was transacted, the old earl would fain have renewed his carouse; but the citizen, alleging the importance of the deeds he had about him, and the business he had to transact betimes the next morning, not only refused to return to table, but carried with him to his barge Lord Glenvarloch, who might, perhaps, have been otherwise found more tractable.

When they were seated in the boat, and fairly once more afloat in the river, George Heriot looked back seriously on the mansion they had left—"There live," he said, "the old fashion and the new. The father is like a noble old broad-sword, but harmed with rust, from neglect and inactivity; the son is your modern rapier, well mounted, fairly gilt, and fashioned to the taste of the time—and it is time must

show if the metal be as good as the show. God grant it prove so, says an old friend to the family."

Nothing of consequence passed betwixt them, until Lord Glenvarloch, landing at Paul's Wharf, took leave of his friend the citizen, and retired to his own apartment; where his attendant, Richie, not a little elevated with the events of the day, and with the hospitality of Lord Huntinglen's housekeeping, gave a most splendid account of them to the buxom Dame Nelly, who rejoiced to hear that the sun at length was shining upon what Richie called the right side of the hedge.

CHAPTER XI.

You are not for the manner nor the times.
They have their vices now most like to virtues;
You cannot know them apart by any difference,
They wear the same clothes, eat the same meat—
Sleep in the self-same beds, ride in those coaches,
Or very like four horses in a coach,
As the best men and women.

BEN JONSON.

ON the next morning, while Nigel, his breakfast finished, was thinking how he should employ the day, there was a little bustle upon the stairs which attracted his attention, and presently entered Dame Nelly, blushing like scarlet, and scarce able to bring out—"A young nobleman, sir—no one less," she added, drawing her hand slightly over her lips, "would be so saucy—a young nobleman, sir, to wait on you!"

And she was followed into the little cabin by Lord Dalgarno, gay, easy, disembarassed, and apparently as much pleased to rejoin his new acquaintance, as if he had found him in the apartments of a palace. Nigel, on the contrary (for youth is slave to such circumstances), was dicountenanced and mortified at being surprised by so splendid a gallant in a chamber, which, at the moment the elegant and high-dressed cavalier appeared in it, seemed yet lower, narrower, darker, and meaner to its inhabitant, than it had ever shown before. He would have made some apology for the situation, but Lord Dalgarno cut him short.

"Not a word of it," he said, "not a single word—I know why you ride at anchor here—but I can keep counsel—so pretty a hostess would recommend worse quarters."

"On my word—on my honour," said Lord Glenvarloch—

"Nay, nay, make no words of the matter," said Lord Dalgarno; "I am no tell-tale, nor shall I cross your walk; there is game enough in the forest, thank Heaven, and I can strike a doe for myself."

All this he said in so significant a manner, and the explanation which he had adopted seemed to put Lord Glenvarloch's gallantry on so respectable a footing, that Nigel ceased to try to undeceive him; and, less ashamed, perhaps (for such is human weakness), of supposed vice than of real poverty, changed the discourse to something else, and left poor Dame Nelly's reputation and his own at the mercy of the young courtier's misconstruction.

He offered refreshments with some hesitation.

Lord Dalgarno had long since breakfasted, but had just come from playing a set of tennis, he said, and would willingly taste a cup of the pretty hostess's single beer. This was easily procured, was drunk, was commended, and, as the hostess failed not to bring the cup herself, Lord Dalgarno profited by the opportunity to take a second and more attentive view of her, and then gravely drank to her husband's health, with an almost imperceptible nod to Lord Glenvarloch. Dame Nelly was much honoured, smoothed her apron down with her hands, and said—"Her John was greatly and truly honoured by their lordships—he was a kind, pains-taking man for his family, as was in the alley, or, indeed, as far north as Paul's Chain."

She would have proceeded probably to state the difference betwixt their ages, as the only alloy to their nuptial happiness; but her lodger, who had no mind to be farther exposed to his gay friend's raillery, gave her, contrary to his wont, a signal to leave the room.

Lord Dalgarno looked after her, then looked at Glenvarloch, shook his head, and repeated the well-known lines—

"My lord, beware of jealousy—
It is the green-eyed monster which doth make
The meat it feeds on.—"

But come," he said, changing his tone, "I know not why I should worry you thus—I who have so many follies of my own, when I should rather make excuse for being here at all, and tell you wherefore I came."

So saying, he reached a seat, and, placing another for Lord Glenvarloch, in spite of his anxious haste to anticipate this act of courtesy, he proceeded in the same tone of easy familiarity:—

"We are neighbours, my lord, and are just made known to each other. Now, I know enough of the dear north, to be well aware that Scottish neighbours must be either dear friends or deadly enemies—must either walk hand-in-hand, or stand sword-point to sword-point; so I chuse the hand-in-hand, unless you should reject my proffer."

"How were it possible, my lord," said Lord Glenvarloch, "to refuse what is offered so frankly, even if your father had not been a second father to me?"—And, as he took Lord Dalgarno's hand, he added—"I have, I think, lost no time, since, during one day's attendance at court, I have made a kind friend and a powerful enemy."

"The friend thanks you," replied Lord Dalgarno, "for your just opinion; but, my dear Glenvarloch—or rather, for titles are too formal between us of the better file—what is your christian name?"

"Nigel," replied Lord Glenvarloch.

"Then we will be Nigel and Malcolm to each other," said his visitor, "and my lord to the plebeian world around us. But I was about to ask you whom you supposed your enemy?"

"No less than the all-powerful favourite, the great Duke of Buckingham."

"You dream! What could possess you with such an opinion?" said Dalgarno.

"He told me so himself," replied Glenvarloch;

VOL. III.

"and, in so doing, dealt frankly and honourably with me."

"O, you know him not yet," said his companion; "the duke is moulded of an hundred noble and fiery qualities, that prompt him, like a generous horse, to spring aside in impatience at the least obstacle to his forward course. But he means not what he says in such passing heats—I can do more with him, I thank Heaven, than most who are around him; you shall go visit him with me, and you will see how you shall be received."

"I told you, my lord," said Glenvarloch, firmly, and with some haughtiness, "the Duke of Buckingham, without the least offence, declared himself my enemy in the face of the court; and he shall retract that aggression as publicly as it was given, ere I will make the slightest advance towards him."

"You would act becomingly in every other case," said Lord Dalgarno, "but here you are wrong. In the court horizon, Buckingham is Lord of the Ascendant, and as he is adverse or favouring, so sinks or rises the fortune of a suitor. The king would bid you remember your Phædrus,

Arripiens geminas, ripis cedentibus, ollas,

and so forth. You are the vase of earth; beware of knocking yourself against the vase of iron."

"The vase of earth," said Glenvarloch, "will avoid the encounter, by getting ashore out of the current—I mean to go no more to court."

"O, to court you necessarily must go; you will find your Scotch suit move ill without it, for there is both patronage and favour necessary to enforce the sign-manual you have obtained. Of that we will speak more hereafter; but tell me in the meanwhile, my dear Nigel, whether you did not wonder to see me here so early?"

"I am surprised that you could find me out in this obscure corner," said Lord Glenvarloch.

"My page Lutin is a very devil for that sort of discovery," replied Lord Dalgarno; "I have but to say, 'Goblin, I would know where he or she dwells,' and he guides me thither as if by art magic."

"I hope he waits not now in the street, my lord," said Nigel: "I will send my servant to seek him."

"Do not concern yourself—he is by this time," said Lord Dalgarno, "playing at hustle-cap and chuck-farthing with the most blackguard imps upon the wharf, unless he hath foregone his old customs."

"Are you not afraid," said Lord Glenvarloch, "that in such company his morals may become depraved?"

"Let his company look to their own," answered Lord Dalgarno, coolly; "for it will be a company of real fiends in which Lutin cannot teach more mischief than he can learn; he is, I thank the gods, most thoroughly versed in evil for his years. I am spared the trouble of looking after his moralities, for nothing can make them either better or worse."

"I wonder you can answer this to his parents, my lord," said Nigel.

"I wonder where I should find his parents," replied his companion, "to render an account to them."

"He may be an orphan," said Lord Nigel; "but

surely, being a page in your lordship's family, his parents must be of rank."

"Of as high rank as the gallows could exalt them to," replied Lord Dalgarno, with the same indifference; "they were both hanged, I believe—at least the gipseys, from whom I bought him five years ago, intimated as much to me.—You are surprised at this, now, but is it not better, that, instead of a lazy, conceited, whey-faced slip of gentility, to whom, in your old-world idea of the matter, I was bound to stand Sir Pedagogue, and see that he washed his hands and face, said his prayers, learned his *accidens*, spoke no naughty words, brushed his hat, and wore his best doublet only of Sunday,—that, instead of such a Jacky Goodchild, I should have something like this?"

He whistled shrill and clear, and the page he spoke of darted into the room, almost with the effect of an actual apparition. From his height he seemed but fifteen, but, from his face, might be two or even three years older, very neatly made, and richly dressed; with a thin bronzed visage, which marked his gipsy descent, and a pair of sparkling black eyes, which seemed almost to pierce through those whom he looked at.

"There he is," said Lord Dalgarno, "fit for every element—prompt to execute every command, good, bad, or indifferent—unmatched in his tribe, as rogue, thief, and liar."

"All which qualities," said the undaunted page, "have each in turn stood your lordship in stead."

"Out, you imp of Satan!" said his master; "vanish—begone—or my conjuring rod goes about your ears." The boy turned, and disappeared as suddenly as he had entered. "You see," said Lord Dalgarno, "that, in chusing my household, the best regard I can pay to gentle blood, is to exclude it from my service—that very gallows-bird were enough to corrupt a whole ante-chamber of pages, though they were descended from kings and kaisars."

"I can scarce think that a nobleman should need the offices of such an attendant as your goblin," said Nigel; "you are but jesting with my inexperience."

"Time will show whether I jest or not, my dear Nigel," replied Dalgarno; "in the meantime, I have to propose to you to take the advantage of the flood-tide, to run up the river for pastime; and at noon I trust you will dine with me."

Nigel acquiesced in a plan which promised so much amusement; and his new friend and he, attended by Lutin and Moniplies, who greatly resembled, when thus associated, the conjunction of a bear and a monkey, took possession of Lord Dalgarno's wherry, which, with its badged watermen, bearing his lordship's crest on their arms, lay in readiness to receive them. The air was delightful upon the river; and the lively conversation of Lord Dalgarno added zest to the pleasures of the little voyage. He could not only give an account of the various public buildings and noblemen's houses which they passed in ascending the Thames, but knew how to season his information with abundance of anecdote, political inuendo, and personal scandal: if he had not very much wit, he was at least completely master of the fashionable tone, which, in

that time as in ours, more than amply supplies any deficiency of the kind.

It was a style of conversation entirely new to his companion, as was the world which Lord Dalgarno opened to his observation; and it is no wonder that Nigel, notwithstanding his natural good sense and high spirit, admitted, more readily than seemed consistent with either, the tone of authoritative instruction which his new friend assumed towards him. There would, indeed, have been some difficulty in making a stand. To attempt a high and stubborn tone of morality, in answer to the light strain of Lord Dalgarno's conversation, which kept on the frontiers between jest and earnest, would have seemed pedantic and ridiculous; and every attempt which Nigel made to combat his companion's propositions, by reasoning as jocose as his own, only showed his inferiority in that gay species of controversy. And it must be owned, besides, though internally disapproving much of what he heard, Lord Glenvarloch was less alarmed by the language and manners of his new associate, than in prudence he ought to have been.

Lord Dalgarno was unwilling to startle his proselyte, by insisting upon any topic which appeared particularly to jar with his habits or principles; and he blended his mirth and his earnest so dexterously, that it was impossible for Nigel to discover how far he was serious in his propositions, or how far they flowed from a wild and extravagant spirit of raillery. And, ever and anon, those flashes of spirit and honour crossed his conversation, which seemed to intimate, that, when stirred to action by some adequate motive, Lord Dalgarno would prove something very different from the court-haunting and ease-loving voluptuary, which he was pleased to represent as his chosen character.

As they returned down the river, Lord Glenvarloch remarked, that the boat passed the mansion of Lord Huntinglen, and noticed the circumstance to Lord Dalgarno, observing, that he thought they were to have dined there. "Surely no," said the young nobleman; "I have more mercy on you than to gorge you a second time with raw beef and canary wine. I propose something better for you, I promise you, than such a second Scythian festivity. And as for my father, he proposes to dine to-day with my grave, ancient Earl of Northampton, whilom that celebrated putter-down of pretended prophecies, Lord Henry Howard."

"And do you not go with him?" said his companion.

"To what purpose?" said Lord Dalgarno. "To hear his wise lordship speak musty politics in false Latin, which the old fox always uses, that he may give the learned Majesty of England an opportunity of correcting his slips in grammar? That were a rare employment!"

"Nay," said Lord Nigel, "but out of respect, to wait on my lord your father."

"My lord my father," replied Lord Dalgarno, "has blue-bottles enough to wait on him, and can well dispense with such a butterfly as myself. He can lift the cup of sack to his head without my assistance; and, should the said paternal head turn something giddy, there be men enough to guide his

right honourable lordship to his lordship's right honourable couch. Now, do not stare at me, Nigel, as if my words were to sink the boat with us. I love my father—I love him dearly—and I respect him, too, though I respect not many things; a trustier old Trojan never belted a broad-sword by a loop of leather. But what then? He belongs to the old world, I to the new. He has his follies, I have mine; and the less either of us sees of the other's peccadilloes, the greater will be the honour and respect—that, I think, is the proper phrase—I say, the *respect* in which we shall hold each other. Being apart, each of us is himself, such as nature and circumstances have made him; but, couple us up too closely together, you will be sure to have in your leash either an old hypocrite or a young one, or perhaps both the one and t'other."

As he spoke thus, the boat put into the landing-place at Blackfriars. Lord Dalgarno sprung ashore, and, flinging his cloak and rapier to his page, recommended to his companion to do the like. "We are coming among press of gallants," he said; "and, if we walk thus muffled, we shall look like your tawny-visaged Don, who wraps him close in his cloak, to conceal the defects of his doublet."

"I have known many an honest man do that, if it please your lordship," said Richie Moniplies, who had been watching for an opportunity to intrude himself on the conversation, and probably remembered what had been his own condition, in respect to cloth and doublet, at a very recent period.

Lord Dalgarno stared at him, as if surprised at his assurance; but immediately answered, "You may have known many things, friend; but, in the meanwhile, you do not know what principally concerns your master, namely, how to carry his cloak, so as to show to advantage the gold-laced seams, and the lining of sables. See how Lutin holds the sword, with the cloak cast partly over it, yet so as to set off the embossed hilt, and the silver work of the mounting.—Give your familiar your sword, Nigel," he continued, addressing Lord Glenvarloch, "that he may practise a lesson in an art so necessary."

"Is it altogether prudent," said Nigel, unclasp- ing his weapon, and giving it to Richie, "to walk entirely unarmed?"

"And wherefore not?" said his companion. "You are thinking now of Auld Reekie, as my father fondly calls your good Scotch capital, where there is such bandying of private feuds and public factions, that a man of any note shall not cross your High-street twice, without endangering his life thrice. Here, sir, no brawling in the street is permitted. Your bull-headed citizen takes up the case so soon as the sword is drawn, and *clubs* is the word."

"And a hard word it is," said Richie, "as my brain-pan kens at this blessed moment."

"Were I your master, sirrah," said Lord Dalgarno, "I would make your brain-pan, as you call it, boil over, were you to speak a word to me before you were spoken to."

Richie murmured some indistinct answer, but took the hint, and ranked himself behind his master along with Lutin, who failed not to expose his new companion to the ridicule of the passers-by, by mimicking, as often as he could do so unobserved by Richie, his

stiff and upright stalking gait and discontented physiognomy.

"And tell me now, my dear Malcolm," said Nigel, "where we are bending our course, and whether we shall dine at an apartment of yours?"

"An apartment of mine—yes, surely," answered Lord Dalgarno, "you shall dine at an apartment of mine, and an apartment of yours, and of twenty gallants beside; and where the board shall present better cheer, better wine, and better attendance, than if our whole united exhibitions went to maintain it. We are going to the most noted ordinary of London."

"That is, in ordinary language, an inn, or a tavern," said Nigel.

"An inn, or a tavern, my most green and simple friend!" exclaimed Lord Dalgarno. "No, no—these are places where greasy citizens take pipe and pot, where the knavish pettifoggers of the law sponge on their most unhappy victims—where Templars crack jests as empty as their nuts, and where small gentry imbibe such thin potations, that they get dropsies instead of getting drunk. An ordinary is a late-invented institution, sacred to Bacchus and Comus, where the first noble gallants of the time meet with the first and most ethereal wits of the age,—where the wine is the very soul of the choicest grape, refined as the genius of the poet, and ancient and generous as the blood of the nobles. And then the fare is something beyond your ordinary gross terrestrial food! Sea and land are ransacked to supply it; and the invention of six ingenious cooks kept eternally upon the rack to make their art hold pace with, and if possible enhance, the exquisite quality of the materials."

"By all which rhapsody," said Lord Glenvarloch, "I can only understand, as I did before, that we are going to a choice tavern, where we shall be handsomely entertained, on paying probably as handsome a reckoning."

"Reckoning!" exclaimed Lord Dalgarno, in the same tone as before, "perish the peasantly phrase! What profanation! Monsieur le Chevalier de Beaujeu, pink of Paris and flower of Gascony—he who can tell the age of his wine by the bare smell, who distils his sauces in an alembic by the aid of Lullie's philosophy,—who carves with such exquisite precision, that he gives to noble knight and squire the portion of the pheasant which exactly accords with his rank—nay, he who shall divide a becafico into twelve parts with such scrupulous exactness, that of twelve guests not one shall have the advantage of the other in a hair's breadth, or the twentieth part of a drachm, yet you talk of him and of a reckoning in the same breath! Why, man, he is the well-known and general referee in all matters affecting the mysteries of Passage, Hazard, In and In, Pen- neeck, and Verquire, and what not—why, Beaujeu is king of the card-pack, and duke of the dice-box—he call a reckoning like a green-aproned, red-nosed son of the vulgar spigot! Oh, my dearest Nigel, what a word you have spoken, and of what a person! That you know him not, is your only apology for such blasphemy; and yet I scarce hold it adequate, for to have been a day in London and not to know Beaujeu, is a crime of its own kind. But you *shall*

know him this blessed moment, and shall learn to hold yourself in horror for the enormities you have uttered."

"Well, but mark you," said Nigel, "this worthy chevalier keeps not all this good cheer at his own cost, does he?"

"No, no," answered Lord Dalgarno; "there is a sort of ceremony which my chevalier's friends and intimates understand, but with which you have no business at present. There is, as majesty might say, a *symbolum* to be disbursed—in other words a mutual exchange of courtesies takes place betwixt Beaujeu and his guests. He makes them a free present of the dinner and wine, as often as they chuse to consult their own felicity by frequenting his house at the hour of noon, and they, in gratitude, make the chevalier a present of a jacobus. Then you must know, that, besides Comus and Bacchus, that princess of sublunary affairs, the Diva Fortuna, is frequently worshipped at Beaujeu's, and he, as officiating high-priest, hath, as in reason he should, a considerable advantage from a share of the sacrifice."

"In other words," said Lord Glenvarloch, "this man keeps a gaming-house."

"A house in which you may certainly game," said Lord Dalgarno, "as you may in your own chamber, if you have a mind; nay, I remember old Tom Tally played a hand at putt for a wager with Quinze le Va, the Frenchman, during morning prayers in Saint Paul's; the morning was misty, and the parson drowsy, and the whole audience consisted of themselves and a blind old womam, and so they escaped detection."

"For all this, Malcolm," said the young lord, gravely, "I cannot dine with you to-day, at this same ordinary."

"And wherefore, in the name of Heaven, should you draw back from your word?" said Lord Dalgarno.

"I do not retract my word, Malcolm; but I am bound, by an early promise to my father, never to enter the doors of a gaming-house."

"I tell you this is none," said Lord Dalgarno; "it is but, in plain terms, an eating-house, arranged on civil terms, and frequented by better company, than others in this town; and if some of them do amuse themselves with cards and hazard, they are men of honour, and who play as such, and for no more than they can well afford to lose. It was not, and could not be, such houses that your father desired you to avoid. Besides, he might as well have made you swear you would never take the accommodation of an inn, tavern, eating-house, or place of public reception of any kind; for there is no such place of public resort but what your eyes may be therein contaminated by the sight of a pack of pieces of painted pasteboard, and your ears profaned by the rattle of those little spotted cubes of ivory. The difference is, that where we go, we may happen to see persons of quality amusing themselves with a game; and in the ordinary houses you will meet bullies and sharpers, who will strive either to cheat or to swagger you out of your money."

"I am sure you would not willingly lead me to do what is wrong," said Nigel; "but my father had a

horror of games of chance, religious, I believe, as well as prudential. He judged from I know not what circumstance, a fallacious one, I should hope, that I had a propensity to such courses, and I have told you the promise which he exacted from me."

"Now, by my honour," said Dalgarno, "what you have said, affords the strongest reason for my insisting that you go with me. A man who would shun any danger, should first become acquainted with its real bearing and extent, and that in the company of a confidential guide and guard. Do you think I myself game? Good faith, my father's oaks grow too far from London, and stand too fast rooted in the rocks of Perthshire, for me to troll them down with a die, though I have seen whole forests go down like nine-pins. No, no—these are sports for the wealthy southron, not for the poor Scottish noble. The place is an eating-house, and as such you and I will use it. If others use it to game in, it is their fault, but neither that of the house nor ours."

Unsatisfied with this reasoning, Nigel still insisted upon the promise he had given to his father, until his companion appeared rather displeased, and disposed to impute to him injurious and unhandsome suspicions. Lord Glenvarloch could not stand this change of tone: He recollected that much was due from him to Lord Dalgarno, on account of his father's ready and efficient friendship, and something also on account of the frank manner in which the young man himself had offered him his intimacy. He had no reason to doubt his assurances, that the house where they were about to dine did not fall under the description of places to which his father's prohibition referred; and, finally, he was strong in his own resolution to resist every temptation to join in games of chance. He therefore pacified Lord Dalgarno, by intimating his willingness to go along with him, and, the good humour of the young courtier instantaneously returning, he again ran on in a grotesque and rhodomontade account of the host, Monsieur de Beaujeu, which he did not conclude until they had reached the temple of hospitality over which that eminent professor presided.

CHAPTER XII.

— This is the very barn-yard,
Where muster daily the prime cocks o' the game,
Ruffle their pinions, crow till they are hoarse,
And spar about a barley-corn. Here two chickens,
The callow, unfledged brood of forward folly,
Learn first to rear the crest, and aim the spur,
And tune their note like full-plumed chanticleer.

The Bear-Garden.

THE ordinary, now an ignoble sound, was, in the days of James, a new institution, as fashionable among the youth of that age as the first-rate modern club-houses are amongst those of the present day. It differed chiefly, in being open to all whom good clothes and good assurance combined to introduce there. The company usually dined together at an hour fixed, and the manager of the establishment presided as master of the ceremonies.

Monsieur Le Chevalier (as he qualified himself),

Saint Priest de Beaujeu, was a sharp, thin Gascon, about sixty years old, banished from his own country, as he said, on account of an affair of honour, in which he had the misfortune to kill his antagonist, though the best swordsman in the south of France. His pretensions to quality were supported by a feathered hat, a long rapier, and a suit of embroidered taffeta, not much the worse for wear, in the extreme fashion of the Parisian court, and fluttering like a maypole with many knots of ribbon, of which it was computed he bore at least five hundred yards about his person. But, notwithstanding this profusion of decoration, there were many who thought Monsieur le Chevalier so admirably calculated for his present situation, that nature could never have meant to place him an inch above it. It was, however, part of the amusement of the place, for Lord Dalgarno and other young men of quality to treat Monsieur de Beaujeu with a great deal of mock ceremony, which being observed by the herd of more ordinary and simple gulls, they paid him, in imitation, much real deference. The Gascon's natural forwardness being much enhanced by these circumstances, he was often guilty of presuming beyond the limits of his situation, and of course had sometimes the mortification to be disagreeably driven back into them.

When Nigel entered the mansion of this eminent person, which had been but of late the residence of a great baron of Queen Elizabeth's court, who had retired to his manors in the country on the death of that great princess, he was surprised at the extent of the accommodation which it afforded, and the number of guests who were already assembled. Feathers waved, spurs jingled, lace and embroidery glanced everywhere; and, at first sight at least, it certainly made good Lord Dalgarno's encomium, who represented the company as composed almost entirely of youth of the first quality. A more close review was not quite so favourable. Several individuals might be discovered who were not exactly at their ease in the splendid dresses which they wore, and who, therefore, might be supposed not habitually familiar with such finery. Again, there were others, whose dress, though upon the general view it did not seem inferior to that of the rest of the company, displayed, on being observed more closely, some of those petty expedients, by which vanity endeavours to disguise poverty.

Nigel had very little time to make such observations, for the entrance of Lord Dalgarno created an immediate bustle and sensation among the company, as his name passed from one mouth to another. Some stood forward to gaze, others stood back to make way—those of his own rank hastened to welcome him—those of inferior degree endeavoured to catch some point of his gesture, or of his dress, to be worn and practised upon a future occasion, as the newest and most authentic fashion.

The *genius loci*, the chevalier himself, was not the last to welcome this prime stay and ornament of his establishment. He came shuffling forward with a hundred apish *congés* and *chers milors*, to express his happiness at seeing Lord Dalgarno again.—“I hope you do bring back the sun with you, milor.—You did carry away the sun and moon from your *pauvre chevalier* when you leave him for so long,

Pardieu, I believe you take them away in your pockets.”

“That must have been because you left me nothing else in them, chevalier,” answered Lord Dalgarno; “but, Monsieur le Chevalier, I pray you to know my countryman and friend Lord Glenvarloch.”

“Ah, ha! *très-honoré—Je m'en souviens,—oui. J'ai connu autrefois un Milor Kenfarloque en Écosse.* Yes, I have memory of him—*le père de milor apparemment*—we were vera intimate when I was at Olyroot with Monsieur de La Motte—I did often play at tennis vit Milor Kenfarloque at l'Abbaye de Olyroot—*il étoit même plus fort que moi.—Ah le beaucoup de revers qu'il avoit*—I have memory too that he was among the pretty girls—ah! *un vrai diable déchaîné*—Aha! I have memory”——

“Better have no more memory of the late Lord Glenvarloch,” said Lord Dalgarno, interrupting the chevalier without ceremony; who perceived that the encomium which he was about to pass on the deceased was likely to be as disagreeable to the son, as it was totally undeserved by the father, who, far from being either a gamester or libertine, as the chevalier's reminiscences falsely represented him, was, on the contrary, strict and severe in his course of life, almost to the extent of rigour.

“You have the reason, milord,” answered the chevalier, “you have the right—*Qu'est-ce que nous avons à faire avec le temps passé?*—the time passed did belong to our fathers—our *ancêtres*—very well—the time present is to us—they have their pretty tombs, with their memories and armorials, all in brass and *marbre*—we have the *petits plats exquis*, and the *soupe-à-chevalier*, which I will cause to mount up immediately.”

So saying, he made a pirouette on his heel, and put his attendants in motion to place dinner on the table. Dalgarno laughed, and, observing his young friend looked grave, said to him, in a tone of reproach—“Why, what!—you are not gull enough to be angry with such an ass as that?”

“I keep my anger, I trust, for better purposes,” said Lord Glenvarloch; “but I confess I was moved to hear such a fellow mention my father's name—and you too, who told me this was no gaming-house, talked to him of having left it with emptied pockets.”

“Pshaw, man!” said Lord Dalgarno, “I spoke but according to the trick of the time; besides, a man must set a piece or two sometimes, or he would be held a cullionly niggard. But here comes dinner, and we will see whether you like the chevalier's good cheer better than his conversation.”

Dinner was announced accordingly, and the two friends, being seated in the most honourable station at the board, were ceremoniously attended to by the chevalier, who did the honours of his table to them and to the other guests, and seasoned the whole with his agreeable conversation. The dinner was really excellent, in that piquant style of cookery which the French had already introduced, and which the home-bred young men of England, when they aspired to the rank of connoisseurs and persons of taste, were under the necessity of admiring. The wine was also of the first quality, and circulated in

great variety, and no less abundance. The conversation among so many young men was, of course, light, lively, and amusing, and Nigel, whose mind had been long depressed by anxiety and misfortune, naturally found himself, at ease, and his spirits raised and animated.

Some of the company had real wit, and could use it both politely and to advantage; others were coxcombs, and were laughed at without discovering it; and again, others were originals, who seemed to have no objection that the company should be amused with their folly instead of their wit. And almost all the rest who played any prominent part in the conversation, had either the real tone of good society which belonged to the period, or the jargon which often passes current for it.

In short, the company and conversation were so agreeable, that Nigel's rigour was softened by it, even towards the master of ceremonies, and he listened with patience to various details which the Chevalier de Beaujeu, seeing as he said, that milor's taste lay for the *curieux* and *l'utile*, chose to address to him in particular, on the subject of cookery. To gratify, at the same time, the taste for antiquity, which he somehow supposed that his new guest possessed, he launched out in commendation of the great artists of former days, particularly one whom he had known in his youth, "*Maître de cuisine* to the Maréchal Strozzi—*très-bon gentilhomme pourtant*;" who had maintained his master's table with twelve covers every day during the long and severe blockade of Le petit Leyth, although he had nothing better to place on it than the quarter of a carrion-horse now and then, and the grass and weeds that grew on the ramparts. "*Despardieux c'étoit un homme superbe!*" With one tistle-head, and a nettle or two, he could make a *soupe* for twenty guests—an haunch of a little puppy-dog made a *roti des plus excellents*; but his *coup de maître* was when the *rendition*—what you call the surrender, took place and appened; and then, *dieu me damne*, he made out of the hind quarter of one salted horse, forty-five *couverts*; that the English and Scottish officers and nobility, who had the honour to dine with Monseigneur upon the *rendition*, could not tell what the devil any one of them were made upon at all.

The good wine had by this time gone so merrily round, and had such genial effect on the guests, that those of the lower end of the table, who had hitherto been listeners, began, not greatly to their own credit, or that of the ordinary, to make innovations.

"You speak of the siege of Leith," said a tall, raw-boned man, with thick moustaches turned up with a military twist, a broad buff belt, a long rapier, and other outward symbols of the honoured profession, which lives by killing of other people,— "you talk of the siege of Leith, and I have seen the place—a pretty kind of a hamlet it is, with a plain wall, or rampart, and a pigeon-house or two of a tower at every angle. Udds daggers and scabbards, if a leaguer of our days had been twenty-four hours, not to say so many months, before it, without carrying the place and all its cock-lofts, one after another, by pure storm, they would have deserved no better grace than the provost-marshal gives when his noose is reeved."

"Saar," said the chevalier, "Monsieur le Capitaine, I was not at the *siège* of the Petit Leyth, and I know not what you say about the cock-loft; but I will say for Monseigneur de Strozzi, that he understood the *grande guerre*, and was *grand capitaine—plus grand*—that is more great, it may be, than some of the *capitaines* of *Angleterre*, who do speak very loud—*tenez, Monsieur, car c'est à vous!*"

"O Monsieur," answered the swordsman, "we know the Frenchman will fight well behind his barrier of stone, or when he is armed with back, breast, and pot."

"Pot!" exclaimed the chevalier, "what do you mean by pot—do you mean to insult me among my noble guests? Saar, I have done my duty as a *pauvre gentilhomme* under the Grand Henri Quatre, both at Courtrai and Yvry, and, *ventre saint gris!* we had neither pot nor *marmite*, but did always charge in our shirt."

"Which refutes another base scandal," said Lord Dalgarno, laughing, "alleging that linen was scarce among the French gentlemen-at-arms."

"Gentlemen out at arms and elbows both, you mean, my lord," said the captain, from the bottom of the table. "Craving your lordship's pardon, I do know something of these same *gens-d'armes*."

"We will spare your knowledge at present, captain, and save your modesty at the same time the trouble of telling us how that knowledge was acquired," answered Lord Dalgarno, rather contemptuously.

"I need not speak of it, my lord," said the man of war; "the world knows it—all, perhaps, but the men of mohair—the poor sneaking citizens of London, who would see a man of valour eat his very hilts for hunger, ere they would draw a farthing from their long purses to relieve them. O, if a band of the honest fellows I have seen were once to come near that cuckoo's nest of theirs!"

"A cuckoo's nest!—and that said of the city of London," said a gallant who sat on the opposite side of the table, and who, wearing a splendid and fashionable dress, seemed yet scarce at home in it—"I will not brook to hear that repeated."

"What!" said the soldier, bending a most terrific frown from a pair of broad black eye-brows, handling the hilt of his weapon with one hand, and twirling with the other his huge moustaches; "will you quarrel for your city?"

"Ay, marry will I," replied the other. "I am a citizen, I care not who knows it; and he who shall speak a word in its dispraise, is an ass and a peremptory gull, and I will break his pate, to teach him sense and manners."

The company, who probably had their reasons for not valuing the captain's courage at the high rate which he put upon it, were much entertained at the manner in which the quarrel was taken up by the indignant citizen; and they exclaimed on all sides, "Well rung, Bow-bell!" "Well crowed, the cock of Saint Paul's!" "Sound a charge there, or the soldier will mistake his signals, and retreat when he should advance."

"You mistake me, gentlemen," said the captain, looking round with an air of dignity. "I will but

inquire whether this cavaliero citizen is of rank and degree fitted to measure swords with a man of action (for, conceive me, gentlemen, it is not with every one that I can match myself without loss of reputation); and in that case he shall soon hear from me honourably, by way of chastel."

"You shall feel me most dishonourably in the way of cudgel," said the citizen, starting up, and taking his sword, which he had laid in a corner. "Follow me."

"It is my right to name the place of combat, by all the rules of the sword," said the captain; "and I do nominate the maze, in Tothill-Fields, for place—two gentlemen, who shall be indifferent judges, for witnesses;—and for time—let me say this day fortnight, at day-break."

"And I," said the citizen, "do nominate the bowling-alley behind the house for place, the present good company for witnesses, and for time the present moment."

So saying, he cast on his beaver, struck the soldier across the shoulders with his sheathed sword, and ran down stairs. The captain showed no instant alacrity to follow him; yet, at last, roused by the laugh and sneer around him, he assured the company, that what he did, he would do deliberately, and, assuming his hat, which he put on with the air of Ancient Pistol, he descended the stairs to the place of combat, where his more prompt adversary was already stationed, with his sword unsheathed. Of the company, all of whom seemed highly delighted with the approaching fray, some ran to the windows which overlooked the bowling-alley, and others followed the combatants down stairs. Nigel could not help asking Dalgarno whether he would not interfere to prevent mischief.

"It would be a crime against the public interest," answered his friend; "there can no mischief happen between two such originals, which will not be positive benefit to society, and particularly to the chevalier's establishment, as he calls it. I have been as sick of that captain's buff belt, and red doublet, for this month past, as e'er I was of aught; and now I hope this bold linen-draper will cudgel the ass out of that filthy lion's hide. See, Nigel, see the gallant citizen has ta'en his ground about a bowl's-cast forward, in the midst of the alley—the very model of a hog in armour. Behold how he prances with his manly foot, and brandishes his blade, much as if he were about to measure forth cambric with it.—See, they bring on the reluctant soldado, and plant him opposite to his fiery antagonist, twelve paces still dividing them—Lo, the captain draws his tool, but, like a good general, looks over his shoulder to secure his retreat, in case the worst come on't.—Behold the valiant shop-keeper stoops his head, confident, doubtless, in the civic helmet with which his spouse has fortified his skull—Why, this is the rarest of sport! By Heaven, he will run a tilt with him like a ram."

It was even as Lord Dalgarno had anticipated; for the citizen, who seemed quite serious in his zeal for combat, perceiving that the man of war did not advance towards him, rushed onwards with as much good fortune as courage, beat down the captain's guard, and, pressing on, thrust, as it seemed, his

sword clear through the body of his antagonist, who, with a deep groan, measured his length on the ground. A score of voices cried to the conqueror, as he stood fixed in astonishment at his own feat, "Away, away with you—fly, fly—fly by the back-door—get into the Whitefriars, or cross the water to the Bank-side, while we keep off the mob and the constables." And the conqueror, leaving his vanquished foeman on the ground, fled accordingly with all speed.

"By Heaven," said Lord Dalgarno, "I could never have believed that the fellow would have stood to receive a thrust—he has certainly been arrested by positive terror, and lost the use of his limbs. See, they are raising him."

Stiff and stark seemed the corpse of the swordsman, as one or two of the guests raised him from the ground; but, when they began to open his waistcoat to search for the wound which nowhere existed, the man of war collected his scattered spirits, and, conscious that the ordinary was no longer a stage on which to display his valour, took to his heels as fast as he could run, pursued by the laughter and shouts of the company.

"By my honour," said Lord Dalgarno, "he takes the same course with his conqueror. I trust in Heaven he will overtake him, and then the valiant citizen will suppose himself haunted by the ghost of him he has slain."

"*Despardieux*, milor," said the chevalier, "if he had stayed one moment, he should have had a *torchon*—what you call a dish-clout, pinned to him for a piece of shroud, to show he be de ghost of one *grand fanfaron*."

"In the meanwhile," said Lord Dalgarno, "you will oblige us, Monsieur le Chevalier, as well as maintain your own honoured reputation, by letting your drawers receive the man-at-arms with a cudgel, in case he should venture to come this way again."

"*Ventre saint gris*, milor," said the chevalier, "leave that to me.—Begar, the maid shall throw the wash-sud upon the *grand poltron*."

When they had laughed sufficiently at this ludicrous occurrence, the party began to divide themselves into little knots—some took possession of the alley, late the scene of combat, and put the field to its proper use of a bowling-ground, and it soon resounded with all the terms of the game, as "run, run—rub, rub—hold bias, you infernal trundling timber!" thus making good the saying that three things are thrown away in a bowling-green—namely, time, money, and oaths.

In the house, many of the gentlemen betook themselves to cards or dice, and parties were formed at ombre, at basset, at gleek, at primero, and other games then in fashion; while the dice were used at various games, both with and without the tables, as hazard, in-and-in, passage, and so forth. The play, however, did not appear to be extravagantly deep; it was certainly conducted with great decorum and fairness; nor did there appear anything to lead the younger Scotchman in the least to doubt his companion's assurance, that the place was frequented by men of rank and quality, and that the recreations they adopted were conducted upon honourable principles.

Lord Dalgarno neither proposed play to his friend,

nor joined in the amusement himself, but sauntered from one table to another, remarking the luck of the different players, as well as their capacity to avail themselves of it, and exchanging conversation with the highest and most respectable of the guests. At length, as if tired of what in modern phrase would have been termed lounging, he suddenly remembered that Burbage was to act Shakspeare's King Richard, at the Fortune, that afternoon, and that he could not give a stranger in London, like Lord Glenvarloch, a higher entertainment than to carry him to that exhibition; "unless, indeed," he added, in a whisper, "there is a paternal interdiction of the theatre as well as of the ordinary."

"I never heard my father speak of stage-plays," said Lord Glenvarloch, "for they are shows of a modern date, and unknown in Scotland. Yet, if what I have heard to their prejudice be true, I doubt much whether he would have approved of them."

"Approved of them!" exclaimed Lord Dalgarno—"why, George Buchanan wrote tragedies, and his pupil, learned and wise as himself, goes to see them, so it is next door to treason to abstain; and the cleverest men in England write for the stage, and the prettiest women in London resort to the play-houses, and I have a brace of nags at the door which will carry us along the streets like wild-fire, and the ride will digest our venison and ortolans, and dissipate the fumes of the wine, and so let's to horse—Godd'en to you, gentlemen—Godd'en, Chevalier de la Fortane."

Lord Dalgarno's grooms were in attendance with two horses, and the young men mounted, the proprietor upon a favourite barb, and Nigel upon a high-dressed jennet, scarce less beautiful. As they rode towards the theatre, Lord Dalgarno endeavoured to discover his friend's opinion of the company to which he had introduced him, and to combat the exceptions which he might suppose him to have taken. "And wherefore lookest thou sad," he said, "my pensive neophyte? Sage son of the Alma Mater of Low Dutch learning, what aileth thee? Is the leaf of the living world which we have turned over in company, less fairly written than thou hadst been taught to expect? Be comforted, and pass over one little blot or two; thou wilt be doomed to read through many a page, as black as infamy, with her sooty pinion, can make them. Remember, most immaculate Nigel, that we are in London, not Leyden—that we are studying life, not lore. Stand buff against the reproach of thine over-tender conscience, man, and when thou summost up, like a good arithmetician, the actions of the day, before you balance the account upon your pillow, tell the accusing spirit, to his brimstone beard, that if thine ears have heard the clatter of the devil's bones, thy hand hath not trowled them—that if thine eye hath seen the brawling of two angry boys, thy blade hath not been bared in their fray."

"Now, all this may be wise and witty," replied Nigel; "yet I own I cannot think but that your lordship, and other men of good quality with whom we dined, might have chosen a place of meeting free from the intrusion of bullies, and a better master of your ceremonial than yonder foreign adventurer."

"All shall be amended, Sancte Nigelle, when thou shalt come forth a new Peter the Hermit, to preach a crusade against diceing, drabbing, and company-keeping. We will meet for dinner in St Sepulchre's Church; we will dine in the chancel, drink our flask in the vestry, the parson shall draw every cork, and the clerk say amen to every health. Come, man, cheer up, and get rid of this sour and unsocial humour. Credit me, that the puritans who object to us the follies and the frailties incident to human nature, have themselves the vices of absolute devils, privy malice, and backbiting hypocrisy, and spiritual pride in all its presumption. There is much, too, in life which we must see, were it only to learn to shun it. Will Shakspeare, who lives after death, and who is presently to afford thee such pleasure as none but himself can confer, has described the gallant Faulconbridge as calling that man

——— A bastard to the time,
That doth not smack of observation;
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn.

But here we are at the door of the Fortune, where we shall have matchless Will speaking for himself.—Goblin, and you other lout, leave the horses to the grooms, and make way for us through the press."

They dismounted, and the assiduous efforts of Lutin, elbowing, bullying, and proclaiming his master's name and title, made way through a crowd of murmuring citizens and clamorous apprentices, to the door, where Lord Dalgarno speedily procured a brace of stools upon the stage for his companion and himself, where, seated among other gallants of the same class, they had an opportunity of displaying their fair dresses and fashionable manners, while they criticized the piece during its progress; thus forming, at the same time, a conspicuous part of the spectacle, and an important proportion of the audience.

Nigel Olifaunt was too eagerly and deeply absorbed in the interest of the scene, to be capable of playing his part as became the place where he was seated. He felt all the magic of that sorcerer, who had displayed, within the paltry circle of a wooden booth, the long wars of York and Lancaster, compelling the heroes of either line to stalk across the scene in language and fashion as they lived, as if the grave had given up the dead for the amusement and instruction of the living. Burbage, esteemed the best Richard until Garrick arose, played the tyrant and usurper with such truth and liveliness, that when the Battle of Bosworth seemed concluded by his death, the ideas of reality and deception were strongly contending in Lord Glenvarloch's imagination, and it required him to rouse himself from his reverie, so strange did the proposal at first sound, when his companion declared King Richard should sup with them at the Mermaid.

They were joined, at the same time, by a small party of the gentlemen with whom they had dined, which they recruited by inviting two or three of the most accomplished wits and poets, who seldom failed to attend the Fortune theatre, and were even

but too ready to conclude a day of amusement with a night of pleasure. Thither the whole party adjourned, and, betwixt fertile cups of sack, excited spirits, and the emulous wit of their lively companions, seemed to realize the joyous boast of one of Ben Jonson's contemporaries, when reminding the bard of

Those lyric feasts,
Where men such clusters had,
As made them nobly wild, not mad;
While yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

CHAPTER XIII.

Let the proud salmon gorge the feather'd hook,
Then strike, and then you have him—He will wince;
Spin out your line that it shall whistle from you
Some twenty yards or so, yet you shall have him—
Marry! you must have patience—the stout rock
Which is his trust, hath edges something sharp;
And the deep pool hath ooze and sludge enough
To mar your fishing—less you are more careful.

Albion, or the Double Kings.

It is seldom that a day of pleasure, upon review, seems altogether so exquisite as the partaker of the festivity may have felt it while passing over him. Nigel Olifaunt, at least, did not feel it so, and it required a visit from his new acquaintance, Lord Dalgarno, to reconcile him entirely to himself. But this visit took place early after breakfast, and his friend's discourse was prefaced with a question, How he liked the company of the preceding evening?

"Why, excellently well," said Lord Glenvarloch; "only I should have liked the wit better had it seemed to flow more freely. Every man's invention seemed on the stretch, and each extravagant simile seemed to set one half of your men of wit into a brown study to produce something which should out-herod it."

"And wherefore not?" said Lord Dalgarno; "or what are these fellows fit for, but to play the intellectual gladiators before us? He of them who declares himself recreant, should, damn him, be restricted to muddy ale, and the patronage of the watermen's company. I promise you, that many a pretty fellow has been mortally wounded with a quibble or a carwicket at the Mermaid, and sent from thence, in a pitiable estate, to Wit's Hospital in the Vintry, where they languish to this day amongst fools and aldermen."

"It may be so," said Lord Nigel; "yet I could swear by my honour, that last night I seemed to be in company with more than one man, whose genius and learning ought either to have placed him higher in our company, or to have withdrawn him altogether from a scene, where, sooth to speak, his part seemed unworthily subordinate."

"Now, out upon your tender conscience," said Lord Dalgarno; "and the fico for such outcasts of Parnassus! Why, these are the very leavings of that noble banquet of pickled herrings and Rhenish, which lost London so many of her principal wit-mongers and bards of misrule. What would you

have said had you seen Nash or Green, when you interest yourself about the poor mimes you supped with last night? Suffice it, they had their drench and their doze, and they drank and slept as much as may save them from any necessity of eating till evening, when, if they are industrious, they will find patrons or players to feed them. For the rest of their wants, they can be at no loss for cold water while the New River head holds good; and your doublets of Parnassus are eternal in duration."

"Virgil and Horace had more efficient patronage," said Nigel.

"Ay," replied his countryman, "but these fellows are neither Virgil nor Horace; besides, we have other spirits of another sort, to whom I will introduce you on some early occasion. Our Swan of Avon hath sung his last; but we have stout old Ben, with as much learning and genius as ever prompted the treader of sock and buskin. It is not, however, of him I mean now to speak; but I come to pray you, of dear love, to row up with me as far as Richmond, where two or three of the gallants whom you saw yesterday, mean to give music and syllabubs to a set of beauties, with some curious bright eyes among them—such, I promise you, as might win an astrologer from his worship of the galaxy. My sister leads the bevy, to whom I desire to present you. She hath her admirers at court; and is regarded, though I might dispense with sounding her praise, as one of the beauties of the time."

There was no refusing an engagement, where the presence of the party invited, late so low in his own regard, was demanded by a lady of quality, one of the choice beauties of the time. Lord Glenvarloch accepted, as was inevitable, and spent a lively day among the gay and the fair. He was the gallant in attendance, for the day, upon his friend's sister, the beautiful Countess of Blackchester, who aimed at once at superiority in the realms of fashion, of power, and of wit.

She was, indeed, considerably older than her brother, and had probably completed her six lustres; but the deficiency in extreme youth was more than atoned for, in the most precise and curious accuracy in attire, an early acquaintance with every foreign mode, and a peculiar gift in adapting the knowledge which she acquired to her own particular features and complexion. At court, she knew, as well as any lady in the circle, the precise tone, moral, political, learned, or jocose, in which it was proper to answer the monarch, according to his prevailing humour; and was supposed to have been very active, by her personal interest, in procuring her husband a high situation, which the gouty old viscount could never have deserved by any merit of his own common-place conduct and understanding.

It was far more easy for this lady, than for her brother, to reconcile so young a courtier as Lord Glenvarloch to the customs and habits of a sphere so new to him. In all civilized society, the females of distinguished rank and beauty give the tone to manners, and, through these, even to morals. Lady Blackchester had, besides, interest either in the court, or over the court (for its source could not be well traced), which created friends, and overawed

those who might have been disposed to play the part of enemies.

At one time, she was understood to be closely leagued with the Buckingham family, with whom her brother still maintained a great intimacy; and, although some coldness had taken place betwixt the countess and the duchess of Buckingham, so that they were little seen together, and the former seemed considerably to have withdrawn herself into privacy, it was whispered, that Lady Blackchester's interest with the great favourite was not diminished in consequence of her breach with his lady.

Our accounts of the private court intrigues of that period, and of the persons to whom they were intrusted, are not full enough to enable us to pronounce upon the various reports which arose out of the circumstances we have detailed. It is enough to say, that Lady Blackchester possessed great influence on the circle around her, both from her beauty, her abilities, and her reputed talents for court intrigue; and that Nigel Olifant was not long of experiencing its power, as he became a slave in some degree to that species of habit, which carries so many men into a certain society at a certain hour, without expecting or receiving any particular degree of gratification, or even amusement.

His life for several weeks may be thus described. The ordinary was no bad introduction to the business of the day; and the young lord quickly found, that if the society there was not always irreproachable, still it formed the most convenient and agreeable place of meeting with the fashionable parties, with whom he visited Hyde-park, the theatres, and other places of public resort, or joined the gay and glittering circle which Lady Blackchester had assembled around her. Neither did he entertain the same scrupulous horror which led him originally even to hesitate entering into a place where gaming was permitted; but, on the contrary, began to indulge the idea, that as there could be no harm in beholding such recreation when only indulged in to a moderate degree, so, from a parity of reasoning, there could be no objection to joining in it, always under the same restrictions. But the young lord was a Scotchman, habituated to early reflection, and totally unaccustomed to any habit which inferred a careless risk or profuse waste of money. Profusion was not his natural vice, or one likely to be acquired in the course of his education; and, in all probability, while his father anticipated with noble horror the idea of his son approaching the gaming-table, he was more startled at the idea of his becoming a gaining than a losing adventurer. The second, according to his principles, had a termination, a sad one indeed, in the loss of temporal fortune—the first quality went on increasing the evil which he dreaded, and periled at once both body and soul.

However the old lord might ground his apprehension, it was so far verified by his son's conduct, that, from an observer of the various games of chance which he witnessed, he came, by degrees, by moderate hazards, and small bets or wagers, to take a certain interest in them. Nor could it be denied, that his rank and expectations entitled him to hazard a few pieces (for his game went no deeper), against persons, who, from the readiness with which they

staked their money, might be supposed well able to afford to lose it.

It chanced, or, perhaps, according to the common creed, his evil genius had so decreed, that Nigel's adventures were remarkably successful. He was temperate, cautious, cool-headed, had a strong memory, and a ready power of calculation; was, besides, of a daring and intrepid character, one upon whom no one that had looked even slightly, or spoken to though but hastily, would readily have ventured to practise anything approaching to trick, or which required to be supported by intimidation. While Lord Glenvarloch chose to play, men played with him regularly, or, according to the phrase, upon the square; and, as he found his luck change, or wished to hazard his good fortune no farther, the more professed votaries of fortune, who frequented the house of Monsieur le Chevalier de Saint Priest Beaujeu, did not venture openly to express their displeasure at his rising a winner. But when this happened repeatedly, the gamesters murmured amongst themselves equally at the caution and the success of the young Scotchman; and he became far from being a popular character among their society.

It was no slight inducement to the continuance of this most evil habit, when it was once in some degree acquired, that it seemed to place Lord Glenvarloch, haughty as he naturally was, beyond the necessity of subjecting himself to farther pecuniary obligations, which his prolonged residence in London must otherwise have rendered necessary. He had to solicit from the ministers certain forms of office, which were to render his sign-manual effectually useful; and these, though they could not be denied, were delayed in such a manner, as to lead Nigel to believe there was some secret opposition, which occasioned the demur in his business. His own impulse was, to have appeared at court a second time, with the king's sign-manual in his pocket, and to have appealed to his majesty himself, whether the delay of the public officers ought to render his royal generosity unavailing. But the Lord Huntinglen, that good old peer, who had so frankly interfered in his behalf on a former occasion, and whom he occasionally visited, greatly dissuaded him from a similar adventure, and exhorted him quietly to await the deliverance of the ministers, which should set him free from dancing attendance in London.

Lord Dalgarno joined his father in deterring his young friend from a second attendance at court, at least till he was reconciled with the Duke of Buckingham—"a matter in which," he said, addressing his father, "I have offered my poor assistance, without being able to prevail on Lord Nigel to make any—not even the least submission to the Duke of Buckingham."

"By my faith, and I hold the laddie to be in the right on't, Malcolm!" answered the stout old Scots lord.—"What right hath Buckingham, or, to speak plainly, the son of Sir George Villiers, to expect homage and fealty from one more noble than himself by eight quarters? I heard him myself, on no reason that I could perceive, term Lord Nigel his enemy; and it will never be by my counsel that the lad speaks soft word to him, till he recalls the hard one."

"That is precisely my advice to Lord Glenvarloch," answered Lord Dalgarno; "but then you will admit, my dear father, that it would be the risk of extremity for our friend to return into the presence, the duke being his enemy—better to leave it with me to take off the heat of the distemperature, with which some pick-thanks have persuaded the duke to regard our friend."

"If thou canst persuade Buckingham of his error, Malcolm," said his father, "for once I will say there hath been kindness and honesty in court service. I have oft told your sister and yourself, that in the general I esteem it as lightly as may be."

"You need not doubt my doing my best in Nigel's case," answered Lord Dalgarno; "but you must think, my dear father, I must needs use slower and gentler means than those by which you became a favourite twenty years ago."

"By my faith, I am afraid thou wilt," answered his father.—"I tell thee, Malcolm, I would sooner wish myself in the grave, than doubt thine honesty or honour; yet somehow it hath chanced, that honest, ready service, hath not the same acceptance at court which it had in my younger time—and yet you rise there."

"O, the time permits not your old world service," said Lord Dalgarno; "we have now no daily insurrections, no nightly attempts at assassination, as were the fashion in the Scottish court. Your prompt and uncourteous sword-in-hand attendance on the sovereign is no longer necessary, and would be as unbeseeming as your old-fashioned serving-men, with their badges, broad-swords, and bucklers, would be at a court-masque. Besides, father, loyal haste hath its inconveniences. I have heard, and from royal lips too, that when you struck your dagger into the traitor Ruthven, it was with such little consideration, that the point ran a quarter of an inch into the royal buttock. The king never talks of it but he rubs the injured part, and quoting his '*infandum—renovare dolorem*.' But this comes of old fashions, and of wearing a long Liddesdale whinger instead of a poniard of Parma. Yet this, my dear father, you call prompt and valiant service. The king, I am told, could not sit upright for a fortnight, though all the cushions in Falkland were placed in his chair of state, and the Provost of Dunfermline's borrowed to the boot of all."

"It is a lie," said the old earl, "a false lie, forge it who list!—It is true I wore a dagger of service by my side, and not a bodkin like yours, to pick one's teeth withal—and for prompt service—Odds nuns! it should be prompt to be useful, when kings are crying treason and murder with the screech of a half-throttled hen. But you young courtiers know nought of these matters, and are little better than the green geese they bring over from the Indies, whose only merit to their masters is to repeat their own words after them—a pack of mouthers, and flatterers, and ear-wigs.—Well, I am old and unable to mend, else I would break all off, and hear the Tay once more flinging himself over the Campsie Linn."

"But there is your dinner-bell, father," said Lord Dalgarno, "which, if the venison I sent you proved seasonable, is at least as sweet a sound."

"Follow me, then, youngsters, if you list," said the old earl; and strode on from the alcove in which this conversation was held, towards the house, followed by the two young men.

In their private discourse, Lord Dalgarno had little trouble in dissuading Nigel from going immediately to court; while, on the other hand, the offers he made him of a previous introduction to the Duke of Buckingham, were received by Lord Glenvarloch with a positive and contemptuous refusal. His friend shrugged his shoulders, as one who claims the merit of having given to an obstinate friend the best counsel, and desires to be held free of the consequences of his pertinacity.

As for the father, his table indeed, and his best liquor, of which he was more profuse than necessary, were at the command of his young friend, as well as his best advice and assistance in the prosecution of his affairs. But Lord Huntinglen's interest was more apparent than real; and the credit he had acquired by his gallant defence of the king's person, was so carelessly managed by himself, and so easily eluded by the favourites and ministers of the sovereign, that, except upon one or two occasions, when the king was in some measure taken by surprise, as in the case of Lord Glenvarloch, the royal bounty was never efficiently extended either to himself or to his friends.

"There never was a man," said Lord Dalgarno, whose shrewder knowledge of the English court saw where his father's deficiency lay, "that had it so perfectly in his power to have made his way to the pinnacle of fortune as my poor father. He had acquired a right to build up the staircase, step by step, slowly and surely, letting every boon, which he begged year after year, become in its turn the resting-place for the next annual grant. But your fortunes shall not shipwreck upon the same coast, Nigel," he would conclude. "If I have fewer means of influence than my father has, or rather had, till he threw them away for butts of sack, hawks, hounds, and such carrion, I can, far better than he, improve that which I possess; and that, my dear Nigel, is all engaged in your behalf. Do not be surprised or offended that you now see me less than formerly: The stag-hunting is commenced, and the prince looks that I should attend him more frequently. I must also maintain my attendance on the duke, that I may have an opportunity of pleading your cause when occasion shall permit."

"I have no cause to plead before the duke," said Nigel, gravely; "I have said so repeatedly."

"Why, I meant the phrase no otherwise, thou churlish and suspicious disputant," answered Dalgarno, "than as I am now pleading the duke's cause with thee. Surely I only mean to claim a share in our royal master's favourite benediction, *Beati pacifici*."

Upon several occasions, Lord Glenvarloch's conversations, both with the old earl and his son, took a similar turn, and he drew a like conclusion. He sometimes felt as betwixt the one and the other, not to mention the more unseen and unboasted, but less certain influence of Lady Blackchester, his affair, simple as it had become, might have been somehow accelerated. But it was equally impos-

sible to doubt the rough honesty of the father, and the eager officious friendship of Lord Dalgarno; nor was it easy to suppose that the countenance of the lady, by whom he was received with such distinction, would be wanting, could it be effectual in his service.

Nigel was further sensible of the truth of what Lord Dalgarno often pointed out, that the favourite being supposed to be his enemy, every petty officer, through whose hands his affair must necessarily pass, would desire to make a merit of throwing obstacles in his way, which he could only surmount by steadiness and patience, unless he preferred closing the breach, or, as Lord Dalgarno called it, making his peace with the Duke of Buckingham.

Nigel might, and doubtless would, have had recourse to the advice of his friend George Heriot upon this occasion, having found it so advantageous formerly; but the only time he saw him after their visit to court, he found the worthy citizen engaged in hasty preparation for a journey to Paris, upon business of great importance in the way of his profession, and by an especial commission from the court and the Duke of Buckingham, which was likely to be attended with considerable profit. The good man smiled as he named the Duke of Buckingham. He had been, he said, pretty sure that his disgrace in that quarter would not be of long duration.

Lord Glenvarloch expressed himself rejoiced at their reconciliation, observing that it had been a most painful reflection to him that Master Heriot should, in his behalf, have incurred the dislike, and perhaps exposed himself to the ill offices, of so powerful a favourite.

"My lord," said Heriot, "for your father's son I would do much; and yet truly, if I know myself, I would do as much, and risk as much, for the sake of justice, in the case of a much more insignificant person, as I have ventured for yours. But as we shall not meet for some time, I must commit to your own wisdom the farther prosecution of this matter."

And thus they took a kind and affectionate leave of each other.

There were other changes in Lord Glenvarloch's situation, which require to be noticed. His present occupations, and the habits of amusement which he had acquired, rendered his living so far in the city a considerable inconvenience. He may also have become a little ashamed of his cabin on Paul's Wharf, and desirous of being lodged somewhat more according to his quality. For this purpose he had hired a small apartment near the Temple. He was, nevertheless, almost sorry for what he had done, when he observed that his removal appeared to give some pain to John Christie, and a great deal to his cordial and officious landlady. The former, who was grave and saturnine in everything he did, only hoped that all had been to Lord Glenvarloch's mind, and that he had not left them on account of any unbecoming negligence on their part. But the tear twinkled in Nelly's eye, while she recounted the various improvements she had made in the apartment, of express purpose to render it more convenient to his lordship.

"There was a great sea-chest," she said, "had been taken up stairs to the shopman's garret, though it left the poor lad scarce eighteen inches of opening to creep betwixt it and his bed; and Heaven knew—she did not—whether it could ever be brought down that narrow stair again. Then the turning the closet into an alcove had cost a matter of twenty round shillings; and to be sure, to any other lodger but his lordship, the closet was more convenient. There was all the linen, too, which she had bought on purpose. But Heaven's will be done—she was resigned."

Everybody likes marks of personal attachment; and Nigel—whose heart really smote him, as if in his rising fortunes he were disdaining the lowly accommodations and the civilities of the humble friends which had been but lately actual favours—failed not, by every assurance in his power, and by as liberal payment as they could be prevailed upon to accept, to alleviate the soreness of their feelings at his departure; and a parting kiss from the fair lips of his hostess sealed his forgiveness.

Richie Moniplies lingered behind his master, to ask whether, in case of need, John Christie could help a canny Scotsman to a passage back to his own country; and receiving assurance of John's interest to that effect, he said, at parting, he would remind him of his promise soon—"for," said he, "if my lord is not weary of this London life, I ken one that is—videlicet, mysell; and I am weel determined to see Arthur's-Seat again ere I am many weeks older."

CHAPTER XIV.

Bingo, why, Bingo! hey, boy—here, sir, here—
He's gone and off, but he'll be home before us;—
'Tis the most wayward cur e'er mumbled bone,
Or dogg'd a master's footstep.—Bingo loves me
Better than ever beggar loved his alms;
Yet, when he takes such humour, you may coax
Sweet Mistress Fantasy, your worship's mistress,
Out of her sullen moods, as soon as Bingo.

The Dominie and his Dog.

RICHIE MONIPLIES was as good as his word. Two or three mornings after the young lord had possessed himself of his new lodgings, he appeared before Nigel, as he was preparing to dress, having left his pillow at an hour much later than had formerly been his custom.

As Nigel looked upon his attendant, he observed there was a gathering gloom upon his solemn features, which expressed either additional importance or superadded discontent, or a portion of both.

"How now," he said, "what is the matter this morning, Richie, that you have made your face so like the grotesque masque on one of the spouts yonder?"—pointing to the Temple Church, of which Gothic building they had a view from the window.

Richie swiveled his head a little to the right, with as little alacrity as if he had the crick in his neck, and instantly resuming his posture, replied,—"Creak here, creak there—it were nae such matters that I have to speak anent."

"And what matters have you to speak anent,

then?" said his master, whom circumstances had inured to tolerate a good deal of freedom from his attendant.

"My lord,"—said Richie, and then stopped to cough and hem, as if what he had to say stuck somewhat in his throat.

"I guess the mystery," said Nigel, "you want a little money, Richie; will five pieces serve the present turn?"

"My lord," said Richie, "I may, it is like, want a trifle of money; and I am glad at the same time, and sorry, that it is mair plenty with your lordship than formerly."

"Glad and sorry, man!" said Lord Nigel; "why, you are reading riddles to me, Richie."

"My riddle will be briefly read," said Richie; "I come to crave of your lordship your commands for Scotland."

"For Scotland!—why, art thou mad, man?" said Nigel; "canst thou not tarry to go down with me?"

"I could be of little service," said Richie, "since you purpose to hire another page and groom."

"Why, thou jealous ass," said the young lord, "will not thy load of duty lie the lighter?—Go, take thy breakfast, and drink thy ale double strong, to put such absurdities out of thy head—I could be angry with thee for thy folly, man—but I remember how thou hast stuck to me in adversity."

"Adversity, my lord, should never have parted us," said Richie; "methinks, had the warst come to warst, I could have starved as gallantly as your lordship, or more so, being in some sort used to it; for, though I was bred at a flesher's stall, I have not through my life had a constant intimacy with collops."

"Now, what is the meaning of all this trash?" said Nigel; "or has it no other end than to provoke my patience? You know well enough, that, had I twenty serving-men, I would hold the faithful follower that stood by me in my distress the most valued of them all. But it is totally out of reason to plague me with your solemn capriccios."

"My lord," said Richie, "in declaring your trust in me, you have done what is honourable to yourself, if I may with humility say so much, and in no way undeserved on my side. Nevertheless, we must part."

"Body of me, man, why?" said Lord Nigel; "what reason can there be for it, if we are mutually satisfied?"

"My lord," said Richie Moniplies, "your lordship's occupations are such as I cannot own or countenance by my presence."

"How now, sirrah!" said his master, angrily.

"Under favour, my lord," replied his domestic, "it is unequal dealing to be equally offended by my speech and by my silence. If you can hear with patience the grounds of my departure, it may be, for aught I know, the better for you here and hereafter—if not, let me have my license of departure in silence, and so no more about it."

"Go to, sir!" said Nigel; "speak out your mind—only remember to whom you speak it."

"Weel, weel, my lord—I speak it with humility (never did Richie look with more starched dignity

than when he uttered the word); but do you think this diceing and card-shuffling, and haunting of taverns and playhouses, suits your lordship—for I am sure it does not suit me?"

"Why, you are not turned precisian or puritan, fool?" said Lord Glenvarloch, laughing, though, betwixt resentment and shame, it cost him some trouble to do so.

"My lord," replied the follower, "I ken the purport of your query. I am, it may be, a little of a precisian, and I wish to Heaven I was mair worthy of the name; but let that be a pass-over.—I have stretched the duties of a serving-man as far as my northern conscience will permit. I can give my gude word to my master, or to my native country, when I am in a foreign land, even though I should leave downright truth a wee bit behind me. Ay, and I will take or give a slash with ony man that speaks to the derogation of either. But this chambering, diceing, and play-haunting, is not my element—I cannot draw breath in it—and when I hear of your lordship winning the siller that some poor creature may full sairly miss—by my saul, if it wad serve your necessity, rather than you gained it from him, I wad tak a jump over the hedge with your lordship, and cry 'Stand!' to the first grazier we met that was coming from Smithfield with the price of his Essex calves in his leathern pouch!"

"You are a simpleton," said Nigel, who felt, however, much conscience-struck; "I never play but for small sums."

"Ay, my lord," replied the unyielding domestic, "and—still with reverence—it is even sae much the waur. If you played with your equals, there might be like sin, but there wad be mair warldly honour in it. Your lordship kens, or may ken, by experience of your ain, whilk is not as yet mony weeks auld, that small sums can ill be missed by those that have nane larger; and I maun e'en be plain with you, that men notice it of your lordship, that ye play wi' nane but the misguided creatures that can but afford to lose bare stakes."

"No man dare say so!" replied Nigel, very angrily. "I play with whom I please, but I will only play for what stake I please."

"That is just what they say, my lord," said the unmerciful Richie, whose natural love of lecturing, as well as his bluntness of feeling, prevented him from having any idea of the pain which he was inflicting on his master; "these are even their own very words. It was but yesterday your lordship was pleased, at that same ordinary, to win from yonder young hafflins gentleman, with the crimson velvet doublet, and the cock's feather in his beaver—him, I mean, who fought with the ranting captain—a matter of five pounds, or thereby. I saw him come through the hall; and, if he was not cleaned out of cross and pell, I never saw a ruined man in my life."

"Impossible!" said Lord Glenvarloch—"Why, who is he? he looked like a man of substance."

"All is not gold that glistens, my lord," replied Richie; "'broidery and bullion buttons make bare pouches. And if you ask who he is—maybe I have a guess, and care not to tell."

"At least, if I have done any such fellow an

injury," said the Lord Nigel, "let me know how I can repair it."

"Never fash your beard about that, my lord,—with reverence always," said Richie,—"he shall be suitably cared after. Think on him but as ane wha was running post to the devil, and got a shouldering from your lordship to help him on his journey. But I will stop him, if reason can; and so your lordship needs ask nae mair about it, for there is no use in your knowing it, but much the contrair."

"Hark you, sirrah," said his master, "I have borne with you thus far, for certain reasons; but abuse my good-nature no farther—and since you must needs go, why, go a God's name, and here is to pay your journey." So saying, he put gold into his hand, which Richie told over, piece by piece, with the utmost accuracy.

"Is it all right—or are they wanting in weight—or what the devil keeps you, when your hurry was so great five minutes since?" said the young lord, now thoroughly nettled at the presumptuous precision with which Richie dealt forth his canons of morality.

"The tale of coin is complete," said Richie, with the most imperturbable gravity; "and, for the weight, though they are sae scrupulous in this town, as make mouths at a piece that is a wee bit light, or that has been cracked within the ring, my sooth, they will jump at them in Edinburgh like a cock at a grossart. Gold pieces are not so plenty there, the mair the pity!"

"The more is your folly, then," said Nigel, whose anger was only momentary, "that leave the land where there is enough of them."

"My lord," said Richie, "to be round with you, the grace of God is better than gold pieces. When Goblin, as you call yonder Monsieur Lutin,—and you might as well call him Gibbet, since that is what he is like to end in,—shall recommend a page to you, ye will hear little such doctrine as you have heard from me.—And if they were my last words," he said, raising his voice, "I would say you are misled, and are forsaking the paths which your honourable father trod in; and, what is more, you are going—still under correction—to the devil with a dish-clout, for ye are laughed at by them that lead you into these disordered by-paths."

"Laughed at!" said Nigel; who, like others of his age, was more sensible to ridicule than to reason—"Who dares laugh at me?"

"My lord, as sure as I live by bread—nay, more, as I am a true man—and, I think, your lordship never found Richie's tongue bearing aught but the truth—unless that your lordship's credit, my country's profit, or, it may be, some sma' occasion of my ain, made it unnecessary to promulgate the hail veritie,—I say then, as I am a true man, when I saw that puir creature come through the ha', at that ordinary, whilk is accurst (Heaven forgive me for swearing!) of God and man, with his teeth set, and his hands clenched, and his bonnet drawn over his brows like a desperate man, Goblin said to me, 'There goes a dunghill chicken, that your master has plucked clean enough; it will be long ere his lordship ruffle a feather with a cock of the game.' And so, my lord, to speak it out, the lackeys, and the gallants, and more especially your sworn bro-

ther, Lord Dalgarno, call you the sparrow-hawk.—I had some thought to have cracked Lutin's pate for the speech, but, after a', the controversy was not worth it."

"Do they use such terms of me?" said Lord Nigel. "Death, and the devil!"

"And the devil's dam, my lord," answered Richie; "they are all three busy in London.—And, besides, Lutin and his master laughed at you, my lord, for letting it be thought that—I shame to speak it—that ye were over well with the wife of the decent honest man whose house you but now left, as not sufficient for your new bravery, whereas they said,—the licentious scoffers,—that you pretended to such favour when you had not courage enough for so fair a quarrel, and that the sparrow-hawk was too craven-crested to fly at the wife of a cheesemonger."—He stopped a moment, and looked fixedly in his master's face, which was inflamed with shame and anger, and then proceeded. "My lord, I did you justice in my thought, and myself too; for, thought I, he would have been as deep in that sort of profligacy as in others, if it hadna been Richie's four quarters."

"What new nonsense have you got to plague me with?" said Lord Nigel. "But go on, since it is the last time I am to be tormented with your impertinence—go on, and make the most of your time."

"In troth," said Richie, "and so will I even do. And as Heaven has bestowed on me a tongue to speak and to advise"—

"Which talent you can by no means be accused of suffering to remain idle," said Lord Glenvarloch, interrupting him.

"True, my lord," said Richie, again waving his hand, as if to bespeak his master's silence and attention; "so I trust, you will think some time hereafter. And, as I am about to leave your service, it is proper that ye suld know the truth, that ye may consider the snares to which your youth and innocence may be exposed, when aulder and doucer heads are withdrawn from beside you.—There has been a lusty, good-looking kimmer, of some forty, or bygane, making mony speerings about you, my lord."

"Well, sir, what did she want with me?" said Lord Nigel.

"At first, my lord," replied his sapient follower, "as she seemed to be a well-fashioned woman, and to take pleasure in sensible conversation, I was no way reluctant to admit her to my conversation."

"I dare say not," said Lord Nigel; "nor unwilling to tell her about my private affairs."

"Not I truly, my lord," said the attendant;—"for, though she asked me mony questions about your fame, your fortune, your business here, and such like, I did not think it proper to tell her altogether the truth thereanent."

"I see no call on you whatsoever," said Lord Nigel, "to tell the woman either truth or lies upon what she had nothing to do with."

"I thought so too, my lord," replied Richie, "and so I told her neither."

"And what *did* you tell her then, you eternal babbler?" said his master, impatient of his prate, yet curious to know what it was all to end in.

"I told her," said Richie, "about your worldly

fortune, and sae forth, something whilk is not truth just at this time ; but which had been truth formerly, suld be truth now, and will be truth again,—and that was, that you were in possession of your fair lands, whilk ye are but in right of as yet. Pleasant communing we had on that and other topics, until she showed the cloven foot, beginning to confer with me about some wench that she said had a good will to your lordship, and fain she would have spoken with you in particular anent it ; but when I heard of such inklings, I began to suspect she was little better than—whew !”—Here he concluded his narrative with a low, but very expressive whistle.

“And what did your wisdom do in these circumstances ?” said Lord Nigel, who, notwithstanding his former resentment, could now scarcely forbear laughing.

“I put on a look, my lord,” replied Richie, bending his solemn brows, “that suld give her a heart-scauld of walking on such errands. I laid her enormities clearly before her, and I threatened her, in sae mony words, that I would have her to the ducking-stool ; and she, on the contrair part, miscawed me for a froward northern tyke—and so we parted never to meet again, as I hope and trust. And so I stood between your lordship and that temptation, which might have been worse than the ordinary, or the playhouse either ; since you wot well what Solomon, King of the Jews, sayeth of the strange woman—for, said I to mysell, we have taken to diceing already, and if we take to drabbing next, the Lord kens what we may land in.”

“Your impertinence deserves correction, but it is the last which, for a time at least, I shall have to forgive—and I forgive it,” said Lord Glenvarloch ; “and, since we are to part, Richie, I will say no more respecting your precautions on my account, than that I think you might have left me to act according to my own judgment.”

“Mickle better not,” answered Richie—“mickle better not ; we are a’ frail creatures, and can judge better for ilk ither than in our ain cases. And for me, even myself, saving that case of the sifflication, which might have happened to ony one, I have always observed myself to be much more prudential in what I have done in your lordship’s behalf, than even in what I have been able to transact for my own interest—whilk last, I have, indeed, always postponed, as in duty I ought.”

“I do believe thou hast,” said Lord Nigel, “having ever found thee true and faithful. And since London pleases you so little, I will bid you a short farewell ; and you may go down to Edinburgh until I come thither myself, when I trust you will re-enter into my service.”

“Now Heaven bless you, my lord,” said Richie Moniplies, with uplifted eyes ; “for that word sounds more like grace than ony has come out of your mouth this fortnight.—I give you godd’en, my lord.”

So saying, he thrust forth his immense bony hand, seized on that of Lord Glenvarloch, raised it to his lips, then turned short on his heel, and left the room hastily, as if afraid of showing more emotion than was consistent with his ideas of decorum. Lord Nigel, rather surprised at his sudden exit, called after him, to know whether he was sufficiently pro-

vided with money ; but Richie, shaking his head, without making any other answer, ran hastily down stairs, shut the street-door heavily behind him, and was presently seen striding along the Strand.

His master almost involuntarily watched and distinguished the tall raw-boned figure of his late follower, from the window, for some time, until he was lost among the crowd of passengers. Nigel’s reflections were not altogether those of self-approval. It was no good sign of his course of life (he could not help acknowledging thus much to himself), that so faithful an adherent no longer seemed to feel the same pride in his service, or attachment to his person, which he had formerly manifested. Neither could he avoid experiencing some twinges of conscience, while he felt in some degree the charges which Richie had preferred against him, and experienced a sense of shame and mortification, arising from the colour given by others to that which he himself would have called his caution and moderation in play. He had only the apology, that it had never occurred to himself in this light.

Then his pride and self-love suggested, that, on the other hand, Richie, with all his good intentions, was little better than a conceited, pragmatical domestic, who seemed disposed rather to play the tutor than the lackey, and who, out of sheer love, as he alleged, to his master’s person, assumed the privilege of interfering with, and controlling his actions, besides rendering him ridiculous in the gay world, from the antiquated formality, and intrusive presumption of his manners.

Nigel’s eyes were scarce turned from the window, when his new landlord entering, presented to him a slip of paper, carefully bound round with a string of flox-silk and sealed—it had been given in, he said, by a woman, who did not stop an instant. The contents harped upon the same string which Richie Moniplies had already jarred. The epistle was in the following words :—

“For the Right Honourable hands of Lord Glenvarloch,

“These from a friend unknown :—

“MY LORD,

“You are trusting to an dishonest friend, and diminishing an honest reputation. An unknown friend of your lordship will speak in one word what you would not learn from flatterers in so many days as should suffice for your utter ruin. He whom you think most true—I say your friend Lord Dalgarno—is utterly false to you, and doth but seek, under pretence of friendship, to mar your fortune, and diminish the good name by which you might mend it. The kind countenance which he shows to you, is more dangerous than the prince’s frown ; even as to gain at Beaujeu’s ordinary is more discreditable than to lose. Beware of both.—And this is all from your true but nameless friend,

“IGNOTO.”

Lord Glenvarloch paused for an instant, and crushed the paper together—then again unfolded and read it with attention—bent his brows—mused for a moment, and then tearing it to fragments, ex-

the very silver buttons of his cloak, and sent him to graze with Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.—Muckle honour redounded to your lordship thereby.—We were tauld the loon threw himself into the Thames in a fit of desperation. There's enow of them behind—there was mair tint on Flodden-edge.”

“You have been told a budget of lies, so far as I am concerned, Sir Mungo,” said Nigel, speaking loud and sternly.

“Vera likely—vera likely,” said the unabashed and undismayed Sir Mungo; “naething but lies are current in the circle. So the chield is not drowned, then?—the mair's the pity. But I never believed that part of the story; a London dealer has mair wit in his anger. I dare swear the lad has a bonny broom-shank in his hand by this time, and is scrubbing the kennels in quest after rusty nails, to help him to begin his pack again. He has three bairns, they say; they will help him bravely to grope in the gutters. Your good lordship may have the ruining of him again, my lord, if they have any luck in strand-scouring.”

“This is more than intolerable,” said Nigel, uncertain whether to make an angry vindication of his character, or to fling the old tormentor from his arm. But an instant's recollection convinced him that to do either would only give an air of truth and consistency to the scandals which he began to see were affecting his character, both in the higher and lower circles. Hastily, therefore, he formed the wiser resolution, to endure Sir Mungo's studied impertinence, under the hope of ascertaining, if possible, from what source those reports arose which were so prejudicial to his reputation. Sir Mungo, in the meanwhile, caught up, as usual, Nigel's last words, or, rather, the sound of them, and amplified and interpreted them in his own way. “Tolerable luck!” he repeated—“yes, truly, my lord, I am told that you *have* tolerable luck, and that ye ken weel how to use that jilting quean, Dame Fortune, like a canny dounce lad, willing to warm yourself in her smiles, without exposing yourself to her frowns. And that is what I ca' having luck in a bag.”

“Sir Mungo Malagrowth,” said Lord Glenvarloch, turning towards him seriously, “have the goodness to hear me for a moment.”

“As weel as I can, my lord—as weel as I can,” said Sir Mungo, shaking his head, and pointing the finger of his left hand to his ear.

“I will try to speak very distinctly,” said Nigel, arming himself with patience. “You take me for a noted gamester; I give you my word that you have not been rightly informed—I am none such. You owe me some explanation, at least, respecting the source from which you have derived such false information.”

“I never heard ye were a *great* gamester, and never thought or said you were such, my lord,” said Sir Mungo, who found it impossible to avoid hearing what Nigel said with peculiarly deliberate and distinct pronunciation. “I repeat it—I never heard, said, or thought, that you were a ruffling gamester,—such as they call those of the first head.—Look, you, my lord, I call *him* a gamester, that plays with equal stakes and equal skill, and stands by the for-

tune of the game, good or bad; and I call *him* a ruffling gamester, or ane of the first head, who ventures frankly and deeply upon such a wager. But he, my lord, who has the patience and prudence never to venture beyond small game, such, as at most, might crack the Christmas-box of a grocer's 'prentice, who vies with those that have little to hazard, and who therefore, having the larger stock, can always rook them by waiting for his good fortune, and by rising from the game when luck leaves him—such a one as he, my lord, I do not call a *great* gamester, to whatever other name he may be entitled.”

“And such a mean-spirited sordid wretch you would infer that I am,” replied Lord Glenvarloch; “one who fears the skilful, and preys upon the ignorant—who avoids playing with his equals, that he may make sure of pillaging his inferiors?—Is this what I am to understand has been reported of me?”

“Nay, my lord, you will gain nought by speaking big with me,” said Sir Mungo, who, besides that his sarcastic humour was really supported by a good fund of animal courage, had also full reliance on the immunities which he had derived from the broadsword of Sir Rullion Rattray, and the baton of the satellites employed by the Lady Cockpen. “And for the truth of the matter,” he continued, “your lordship best knows whether you ever lost more than five pieces at a time since you frequented Beaujeu's—whether you have not most commonly risen a winner—and whether the brave young gallants who frequent the ordinary—I mean those of noble rank, and means conforming—are in use to play upon those terms.”

“My father was right,” said Lord Glenvarloch, in the bitterness of his spirit; “and his curse justly followed me when I first entered that place. There is contamination in the air, and he whose fortune avoids ruin, shall be blighted in his honour and reputation.”

Sir Mungo, who watched his victim with the delighted yet wary eye of an experienced angler, became now aware, that if he strained the line on him too tightly, there was every risk of his breaking hold. In order to give him room, therefore, to play, he protested that Lord Glenvarloch “should not take his free speech in *malam partem*. If you were a trifle ower sicker in your amusement, my lord, it canna be denied that it is the safest course to prevent farther endangerment of your somewhat dilapidated fortunes; and if ye play with your inferiors, ye are relieved of the pain of pouching the siller of your friends and equals; forbye, that the plebeian knaves have had the advantage, *tecum certasse*, as Ajax Telamon sayeth, *apud Metamorphoseos*; and for the like of them to have played with ane Scottish nobleman, is an honest and honourable consideration to compensate the loss of their stake, whilk, I dare say, moreover, maist of the churls can weel afford.”

“Be that as it may, Sir Mungo,” said Nigel, “I would fain know”—

“Ay, ay,” interrupted Sir Mungo; “and, as you say, who cares whether the fat bulls of Bashan can spare it or no? gentlemen are not to limit their sport for the like of them.”

"I wish to know, Sir Mungo," said Lord Glenvarloch, "in what company you have learned these offensive particulars respecting me."

"Dootless—dootless, my lord," said Sir Mungo; "I have ever heard, and have ever reported, that your lordship kept the best of company in a private way.—There is the fine Countess of Blackchester—but I think she stirs not much abroad since her affair with his Grace of Buckingham; and there is the gude auld-fashioned Scottish nobleman, Lord Huntinglen, an undeniable man of quality—it is pity but he could keep caup and can frae his head, whilk now and then doth 'minish his reputation. And there is the gay young Lord Dalgarno, that carries the craft of grey hairs under his curled love-locks—a fair race they are, father, daughter, and son, all of the same honourable family. I think we needna speak of George Heriot, honest man, when we have nobility in question. So that is the company I have heard of your keeping, my lord, out-taken those of the ordinary."

"My company has not, indeed, been much more extended than amongst those you mention," said Lord Glenvarloch; "but in short"—

"To court?" said Sir Mungo, "that was just what I was going to say—Lord Dalgarno says he cannot prevail on ye to come to court, and that does ye prejudice, my lord—the king hears of you by others, when he should see you in person—I speak in serious friendship, my lord. His majesty, when you were named in the circle short while since, was heard to say, '*Jacta est alea!*—Glenvarlochides is turned dicer and drinker.'—My Lord Dalgarno took your part, and it was e'en borne down by the popular voice of the courtiers, who spoke of you as one who had betaken yourself to living a town life, and risking your baron's coronet amongst the flat-caps of the city."

"And this was publicly spoken of me," said Nigel, "and in the king's presence?"

"Spoken openly?" repeated Sir Mungo Malagrowth; "ay, by my troth, was it—that is to say, it was whispered privately—whilk is as open promulgation as the thing permitted; for ye may think the court is not like a place where men are as sib as Simmie and his brother, and roar out their minds as if they were at an ordinary."

"A curse on the court and the ordinary both!" cried Nigel, impatiently.

"With all my heart," said the knight; "I have got little by a knight's service in the court; and the last time I was at the ordinary, I lost four angels."

"May I pray of you, Sir Mungo, to let me know," said Nigel, "the names of those who thus make free with the character of one who can be but little known to them, and who never injured any of them?"

"Have I not told you already," answered Sir Mungo, "that the king said something to that effect—so did the prince too;—and such being the case, ye may take it on your corporal oath, that every man in the circle who was not silent, sung the same song as they did."

"You said but now," replied Glenvarloch, "that Lord Dalgarno interfered in my behalf."

"In good troth did he," answered Sir Mungo, with a sneer; "but the young nobleman was soon

borne down—by token, he had something of a catarrh, and spoke as hoarse as a roupit raven. Poor gentleman, if he had had his full extent of voice, he would have been as well listened to, dootless, as in a cause of his ain, whilk no man kens better how to plead to purpose.—And let me ask you, by the way," continued Sir Mungo, "whether Lord Dalgarno has ever introduced your lordship to the prince or the Duke of Buckingham, either of whom might soon carry through your suit?"

"I have no claim on the favour of either the prince or the Duke of Buckingham," said Lord Glenvarloch.—"As you seem to have made my affairs your study, Sir Mungo, although perhaps something unnecessarily, you may have heard that I have petitioned my sovereign for payment of a debt due to my family. I cannot doubt the king's desire to do justice, nor can I in decency employ the solicitation of his highness the prince, or his grace the Duke of Buckingham, to obtain from his majesty what either should be granted me as a right, or refused altogether."

Sir Mungo twisted his whimsical features into one of his most grotesque sneers, as he replied—

"It is a vera clear and parspicuous position of the case, my lord; and in relying thereupon, you show an absolute and unimprovable acquaintance with the king, court, and mankind in general.—But whom have we got here?—Stand up, my lord, and make way—by my word of honour, they are the very men we spoke of—talk of the devil, and—humph!"

It must be here premised, that, during the conversation, Lord Glenvarloch, perhaps in the hope of shaking himself free of Sir Mungo, had directed their walk towards the more frequented part of the park; while the good knight had stuck to him, being totally indifferent which way they went, provided he could keep his talons clutched upon his companion. They were still, however, at some distance from the livelier part of the scene, when Sir Mungo's experienced eye noticed the appearances which occasioned the latter part of his speech to Lord Glenvarloch.

A low respectful murmur arose among the numerous groups of persons which occupied the lower part of the park. They first clustered together, with their faces turned towards Whitehall, then fell back on either hand to give place to a splendid party of gallants, who, advancing from the palace, came onward through the park; all the other company drawing off the pathway, and standing uncovered as they passed.

Most of these courtly gallants were dressed in the garb which the pencil of Vandyke has made familiar even at the distance of nearly two centuries; and which was just at this period beginning to supersede the more fluttering and frivolous dress which had been adopted from the French court of Henri Quatre.

The whole train was uncovered, excepting the Prince of Wales, afterwards the most unfortunate of British monarchs, who came onward, having his long curled auburn tresses, and his countenance, which, even in early youth, bore a shade of anticipated melancholy, shaded by the Spanish hat and the single ostrich feather which drooped from it.

On his right hand was Buckingham, whose commanding, and at the same time graceful deportment, threw almost into shade the personal demeanour and majesty of the prince on whom he attended. The eye, movements, and gestures, of the great courtier, were so composed, so regularly observant of all etiquette belonging to his situation, as to form a marked and strong contrast with the forward gaiety and frivolity by which he recommended himself to the favour of his "dear dad and gossip," King James. A singular fate attended this accomplished courtier, in being at once the reigning favourite of a father and son so very opposite in manners, that, to ingratiate himself with the youthful prince, he was obliged to compress within the strictest limits of respectful observance the frolicsome and free humour which captivated his aged father.

It is true, Buckingham well knew the different dispositions both of James and Charles, and had no difficulty in so conducting himself as to maintain the highest post in the favour of both. It has, indeed, been supposed, that the duke, when he had completely possessed himself of the affections of Charles, retained his hold in those of the father only by the tyranny of custom; and that James, could he have brought himself to form a vigorous resolution, was, in the latter years of his life especially, not unlikely to have discarded Buckingham from his counsels and favour. But if ever he indeed meditated such a change, he was too timid, and too much accustomed to the influence which the duke had long exercised over him, to summon up resolution enough for effecting such a purpose; and at all events, it is certain, Buckingham, though surviving the master by whom he was raised, had the rare chance to experience no wane of the most splendid court favour during two reigns, until it was at once eclipsed in his blood by the dagger of his assassin Felton.

To return from this digression: The prince, with his train, advanced, and were near the place where Lord Glenvarloch and Sir Mungo had stood aside, according to form, in order to give the prince passage, and to pay the usual marks of respect. Nigel could now remark that Lord Dalgarno walked close behind the Duke of Buckingham, and, as he thought, whispered something in his ear as they came onward. At any rate, both the prince's and Duke of Buckingham's attention seemed to be directed by some circumstance towards Nigel, for they turned their heads in that direction and looked at him attentively—the prince with a countenance, the grave, melancholy expression of which was blended with severity; while Buckingham's looks evinced some degree of scornful triumph. Lord Dalgarno did not seem to observe his friend, perhaps because the sun-beams fell from the side of the walk on which Nigel stood, obliging Malcolm to hold up his hat to screen his eyes.

As the prince passed, Lord Glenvarloch and Sir Mungo bowed, as respect required; and the prince returning their obeisance with that grave ceremony which paid to every rank its due, but not a tittle beyond it, signed to Sir Mungo to come forward. Commencing an apology for his lameness as he started, which he had just completed as his hob-

bling gait brought him up to the prince, Sir Mungo lent an attentive, and, as it seemed, an intelligent ear, to questions, asked in a tone so low, that the knight would certainly have been deaf to them had they been put to him by any one under the rank of Prince of Wales. After about a minute's conversation, the prince bestowed on Nigel the embarrassing notice of another fixed look, touched his hat slightly to Sir Mungo, and walked on.

"It is even as I suspected, my lord," said Sir Mungo, with an air which he designed to be melancholy and sympathetic, but which, in fact, resembled the grin of an ape when he has mouthed a scalding chesnut—"Ye have back-friends, my lord, that is, unfriends—or, to be plain, enemies—about the person of the prince."

"I am sorry to hear it," said Nigel; "but I would I knew what they accuse me of."

"Ye shall hear, my lord," said Sir Mungo, "the prince's vera words—'Sir Mungo,' said he, 'I rejoice to see you, and am glad your rheumatic troubles permit you to come hither for exercise.'—I bowed, as in duty bound—ye might remark, my lord, that I did so, whilk formed the first branch of our conversation.—His highness then demanded of me, 'if he with whom I stood, was the young Lord Glenvarloch.' I answered, 'that you were such, for his highness's service;' whilk was the second branch.—Thirdly, his highness, resuming the argument, said, that 'truly he had been told so (meaning that he had been told you were that personage); but that he could not believe, that the heir of that noble and decayed house could be leading an idle, scandalous, and precarious life, in the eating-houses and taverns of London, while the king's drums were beating, and colours flying, in Germany in the cause of the palatine, his son-in-law.'—I could, your lordship is aware, do nothing but make an obeisance; and a gracious 'Give ye good day, Sir Mungo Malagrowth, licensed me to fall back to your lordship. And now, my lord, if your business or pleasure calls you to the ordinary, or anywhere in the direction of the city—why, have with you; for, dootless, ye will think ye have tarried lang enough in the park, as they will likely turn at the head of the walk, and return this way—and you have a broad hint, I think, not to cross the prince's presence in a hurry."

"You may stay or go as you please, Sir Mungo," said Nigel, with an expression of calm, but deep resentment; "but, for my own part, my resolution is taken. I will quit this public walk for pleasure of no man—still less will I quit it like one unworthy to be seen in places of public resort. I trust that the prince and his retinue will return this way, as you expect; for I will abide, Sir Mungo, and beard them."

"Beard them!" exclaimed Sir Mungo, in the extremity of surprise—"Beard the Prince of Wales—the heir-apparent of the kingdoms!—By my saul, you shall beard him yoursell then."

Accordingly, he was about to leave Nigel very hastily, when some unwonted touch of good-natured interest in his youth and inexperience, seemed suddenly to soften his habitual cynicism.

"The devil is in me, for an auld fule!" said Sir

Mungo; "but I must needs concern mysell—I that owe so little either to fortune or my fellow-creatures, must, I say, needs concern mysell—with this sprigald, whom I will warrant to be as obstinate as a pig possessed with a devil, for it's the cast of his family; and yet I maun e'en fling away some sound advice on him.—My dainty young Lord Glenvarloch, understand me distinctly, for this is no bairn's-play. When the prince said sae much to me as I have repeated to you, it was equivalent to a command not to appear again in his presence; wherefore, take an auld man's advice that wishes you weel, and maybe a wee thing better than he has reason to wish onybody. Jouk, and let the jaw gae bye, like a canny bairn—gang hame to your lodgings, keep your foot frae taverns, and your fingers frae the dice-box;—compound your affairs quietly wi' some ane that has better favour than yours about court, and you will get a round spell of money to carry you to Germany, or elsewhere, to push your fortune. It was a fortunate soldier that made your family four or five hundred years syne, and, if you are brave and fortunate, you may find the way to repair it. But take my word for it, that in this court you will never thrive."

When Sir Mungo had completed his exhortation, in which there was more of sincere sympathy with another's situation, than he had been heretofore known to express in behalf of any one, Lord Glenvarloch replied, "I am obliged to you, Sir Mungo—you have spoken, I think, with sincerity, and I thank you. But in return for your good advice, I heartily entreat you to leave me; I observe the prince and his train are returning down the walk, and you may prejudice yourself, but cannot help me, by remaining with me."

"And that is true,"—said Sir Mungo; "yet, were I ten years younger, I would be tempted to stand by you, and gie them the meeting. But at three-score and upward, men's courage turns cauldrie; and they that canna win a living, must not endanger the small sustenance of their age. I wish you weel through, my lord, but it is an unequal fight." So saying, he turned and limped away; often looking back, however, as if his natural spirit, even in its present subdued state, aided by his love of contradiction and of debate, rendered him unwilling to adopt the course necessary for his own security.

Thus abandoned by his companion, whose departure he graced with better thoughts of him than those which he bestowed on his appearance, Nigel remained with his arms folded, and reclining against a solitary tree which overhung the path, making up his mind to encounter a moment which he expected to be critical of his fate. But he was mistaken in supposing that the Prince of Wales would either address him, or admit him to expostulation, in such a public place as the park. He did not remain unnoticed, however; for, when he made a respectful but haughty obeisance, intimating in look and manner that he was possessed of, and undaunted by, the unfavourable opinion which the prince had so lately expressed, Charles returned his reverence with such a frown, as is only given by those whose frown is authority and decision. The train passed on, the Duke of Buckingham not even appearing to see

Lord Glenvarloch; while Lord Dalgarno, though no longer incommoded by the sun-beams, kept his eyes, which had perhaps been dazzled by their former splendour, bent upon the ground.

Lord Glenvarloch had difficulty to restrain an indignation, to which, in the circumstances, it would have been madness to have given vent. He started from his reclining posture, and followed the prince's train so as to keep them distinctly in sight; which was very easy, as they walked slowly. Nigel observed them keep their road towards the palace, where the prince turned at the gate and bowed to the noblemen in attendance, in token of dismissing them, and entered the palace, accompanied only by the Duke of Buckingham, and one or two of his equerries. The rest of the train having returned in all dutiful humility the farewell of the prince, began to disperse themselves through the park.

All this was carefully noticed by Lord Glenvarloch, who, as he adjusted his cloak, and drew his sword-belt round, so as to bring the hilt closer to his hand, muttered—"Dalgarno shall explain all this to me, for it is evident that he is in the secret!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Give way—give way—I must and will have justice.
And tell me not of privilege and place;
Where I am injured, there I'll sue redress.
Look to it, every one who bars my access;
I have a heart to feel the injury,
A hand to right myself, and, by my honour,
That hand shall grasp what grey-beard law denies me.

The Chamberlain.

It was not long ere Nigel discovered Lord Dalgarno advancing towards him in the company of another young man of quality of the prince's train; and as they directed their course towards the south-eastern corner of the park, he concluded they were about to go to Lord Huntinglen's. They stopped, however, and turned up another path leading to the north; and Lord Glenvarloch conceived that this change of direction was owing to their having seen him, and their desire to avoid him.

Nigel followed them without hesitation, by a path which, winding around a thicket of shrubs and trees, once more conducted him to the less frequented part of the park. He observed which side of the thicket was taken by Lord Dalgarno and his companion, and he himself, walking hastily round the other verge, was thus enabled to meet them face to face.

"Good morrow, my Lord Dalgarno," said Lord Glenvarloch, sternly.

"Ha! my friend Nigel," answered Lord Dalgarno, in his usual careless and indifferent tone, "my friend Nigel, with business on his brow!—but you must wait till we meet at Beaujeu's at noon—Sir Ewes Haldimund and I are at present engaged in the prince's service."

"If you were engaged in the king's, my lord," said Lord Glenvarloch, "you must stand and answer me."

"Hey-day!" said Lord Dalgarno, with an air of great astonishment, "what passion is this? Why, Nigel, this is King Cambyzes' vein!—You have fre-

quented the theatres too much lately—Away with this folly, man; go, dine upon soup and sallad, drink succory-water to cool your blood, go to bed at sundown, and defy those foul fiends, wrath and misconstruction.”

“I have had misconstruction enough among you,” said Glenvarloch, in the same tone of determined displeasure, “and from you, my Lord Dalgarno, in particular, and all under the mask of friendship.”

“Here is a proper business!”—said Dalgarno, turning as if to appeal to Sir Ewes Haldimund; “do you see this angry ruffler, Sir Ewes? A month since, he dared not have looked one of yonder sheep in the face, and now he is a prince of roisterers, a plucker of pigeons, a controller of players and poets—and in gratitude for my having shown him the way to the eminent character which he holds upon town, he comes hither to quarrel with his best friend, if not his only one.”

“I renounce such hollow friendship, my lord,” said Lord Glenvarloch; “I disclaim the character which, even to my very face, you labour to fix upon me, and ere we part I will call you to a reckoning for it.”

“My lords both,” interrupted Sir Ewes Haldimund, “let me remind you that the royal park is no place to quarrel in.”

“I will make my quarrel good,” said Nigel, who did not know, or in his passion might not have recollected, the privileges of the place, “wherever I find my enemy.”

“You shall find quarreling enough,” replied Lord Dalgarno, calmly, “so soon as you assign a sufficient cause for it. Sir Ewes Haldimund, who knows the court, will warrant you that I am not backward on such occasions.—But of what is it that you now complain, after having experienced nothing save kindness from me and my family?”

“Of your family I complain not,” replied Lord Glenvarloch; “they have done for me all they could,—more, far more, than I could have expected; but you, my lord, have suffered me, while you called me your friend, to be traduced, where a word of your mouth would have placed my character in its true colours—and hence the injurious message which I just now received from the Prince of Wales. To permit the misrepresentation of a friend, my lord, is to share in the slander.”

“You have been misinformed, my Lord Glenvarloch,” said Sir Ewes Haldimund; “I have myself often heard Lord Dalgarno defend your character, and regret that your exclusive attachment to the pleasures of a London life prevented your paying your duty regularly to the king and prince.”

“While he himself,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “dissuaded me from presenting myself at court.”

“I will cut this matter short,” said Lord Dalgarno, with haughty coldness. “You seem to have conceived, my lord, that you and I were Pylades and Orestes—a second edition of Damon and Pythias—Theseus and Pirithous at the least. You are mistaken, and have given the name of friendship to what, on my part, was mere good-nature and compassion for a raw and ignorant countryman, joined to the cumbersome charge which my father gave me respecting you. Your character, my lord, is of no one’s drawing, but of your own making. I intro-

duced you where, as in all such places, there was good and indifferent company to be met with—your habits, or taste, made you prefer the worse. Your holy horror at the sight of dice and cards degenerated into the cautious resolution to play only at those times, and with such persons, as might insure your rising a winner—no man can long do so, and continue to be held a gentleman. Such is the reputation you have made for yourself, and you have no right to be angry that I do not contradict what yourself know to be true. Let us pass on, my lord; and if you want farther explanation, seek some other time and fitter place.”

“No time can be better than the present,” said Lord Glenvarloch, whose resentment was now excited to the uttermost by the cold-blooded and insulting manner in which Dalgarno vindicated himself,—“no place fitter than the place where we now stand. Those of my house have ever avenged insult, at the moment, and on the spot, where it was offered, were it at the foot of the throne.—Lord Dalgarno, you are a villain! draw and defend yourself.” At the same time he unsheathed his rapier.

“Are you mad?” said Lord Dalgarno, stepping back; “we are in the precincts of the court.”

“The better,” answered Lord Glenvarloch; “I will cleanse them from a calumniator and a coward.” He then pressed on Lord Dalgarno, and struck him with the flat of the sword.

The fray had now attracted attention, and the cry went round, “Keep the peace—keep the peace—swords drawn in the park!—What, ho! guards!—keepers—yeomen rangers!” and a number of people came rushing to the spot from all sides.

Lord Dalgarno, who had half drawn his sword on receiving the blow, returned it to its scabbard when he observed the crowd thicken, and, taking Sir Ewes Haldimund by the arm, walked hastily away, only saying to Lord Glenvarloch as they left him, “You shall dearly abye this insult—we will meet again.”

A decent looking elderly man, who observed that Lord Glenvarloch remained on the spot, taking compassion on his youthful appearance, said to him, “Are you aware this is a Star-chamber business, young gentleman, and that it may cost you your right hand?—Shift for yourself before the keepers or constables come up—Get into Whitefriars or somewhere, for sanctuary and concealment, till you can make friends or quit the city.”

The advice was not to be neglected. Lord Glenvarloch made hastily towards the issue from the park by Saint James’s Palace, then Saint James’s Hospital. The hubbub increased behind him; and several peace-officers of the royal household came up to apprehend the delinquent. Fortunately for Nigel, a popular edition of the cause of the affray had gone abroad. It was said that one of the Duke of Buckingham’s companions had insulted a stranger gentleman from the country, and that the stranger had cudged him soundly. A favourite, or the companion of a favourite, is always odious to John Bull, who has, besides, a partiality to those disputants who proceed, as lawyers term it, *par voie du fait*, and both prejudices were in Nigel’s favour. The officers, therefore, who came to apprehend him, could learn from the spectators no particulars of his

appearance, or information concerning the road he had taken; so that, for the moment, he escaped being arrested.

What Lord Glenvarloch heard among the crowd as he passed along, was sufficient to satisfy him, that in his impatient passion he had placed himself in a predicament of considerable danger. He was no stranger to the severe and arbitrary proceedings of the Court of Star-chamber, especially in cases of breach of privilege, which made it the terror of all men; and it was not longer than the queen's time that the punishment of mutilation had been actually awarded and executed, for some offence of the same kind which he had just committed. He had also the comfortable reflection, that by his violent quarrel with Lord Dalgarno, he must now forfeit the friendship and good offices of that nobleman's father and sister, almost the only persons of consideration in whom he could claim any interest; while all the evil reports which had been put in circulation concerning his character, were certain to weigh heavily against him, in a case where much must necessarily depend on the reputation of the accused. To a youthful imagination, the idea of such a punishment as mutilation, seems more ghastly than death itself; and every word which he overheard among the groups which he met, mingled with, or overtook and passed, announced this as the penalty of his offence. He dreaded to increase his pace for fear of attracting suspicion, and more than once saw the ranger's officers so near him, that his wrist tingled as if it were already under the blade of the dismembering knife. At length he got out of the park, and had a little more leisure to consider what he was next to do.

Whitefriars, adjacent to the Temple, then well known by the cant name of Alsatia, had at this time, and for nearly a century afterwards, the privilege of a sanctuary, unless against the writ of the lord chief justice, or of the lords of the privy-council. Indeed, as the place abounded with desperadoes of every description,—bankrupt citizens, ruined gamblers, irreclaimable prodigals, desperate duellists, bravoos, homicides, and debauched profligates of every description, all leagued together to maintain the immunities of their asylum,—it was both difficult and unsafe for the officers of the law to execute warrants emanating even from the highest authority, amongst men whose safety was inconsistent with warrants or authority of any kind. This Lord Glenvarloch well knew; and, odious as the place of refuge was, it seemed the only one where, for a space at least, he might be concealed and secure from the immediate grasp of the law, until he should have leisure to provide better for his safety, or to get this unpleasant matter in some shape accommodated.

Meanwhile, as Nigel walked hastily forward towards the place of sanctuary, he bitterly accused himself for suffering Lord Dalgarno to lead him into the haunts of dissipation; and no less accused his intemperate heat of passion, which now had driven him for refuge into the purlieus of profane and avowed vice and debauchery.

"Dalgarno spoke but too truly in that," were his bitter reflections; "I have made myself an evil reputation by acting on his insidious counsels, and

neglecting the wholesome admonitions which ought to have claimed implicit obedience from me, and which recommended abstinence even from the slightest approach to evil. But if I escape from the perilous labyrinth in which folly and inexperience, as well as violent passions, have involved me, I will find some noble way of redeeming the lustre of a name which was never sullied until I bore it."

As Lord Glenvarloch formed these prudent resolutions, he entered the Temple walks, whence a gate at that time opened into Whitefriars, by which, as by the more private passage, he proposed to betake himself to the sanctuary. As he approached the entrance to that den of infamy, from which his mind recoiled even while in the act of taking shelter there, his pace slackened, while the steep and broken stairs reminded him of the *facilis descensus Averni*, and rendered him doubtful whether it were not better to brave the worst which could befall him in the public haunts of honourable men, than to evade punishment by secluding himself in those of avowed vice and profligacy.

As Nigel hesitated, a young gentleman of the Temple advanced towards him, whom he had often seen and sometimes conversed with at the ordinary, where he was a frequent and welcome guest, being a wild young gallant, indifferently well provided with money, who spent at the theatres, and other gay places of public resort, the time which his father supposed he was employing in the study of the law. But Reginald Lowestoffe, such was the young Templar's name, was of opinion that little law was necessary to enable him to spend the revenues of the paternal acres which were to devolve upon him at his father's demise, and therefore gave himself no trouble to acquire more of that science than might be imbibed along with the learned air of the region in which he had his chambers. In other respects, he was one of the wits of the place, read Ovid and Martial, aimed at quick repartee and pun (often very far fetched), danced, fenced, played at tennis, and performed sundry tunes on the fiddle and French horn, to the great annoyance of old Counsellor Barratter, who lived in the chambers immediately below him. Such was Reginald Lowestoffe, shrewd, alert, and well acquainted with the town in all its recesses; who now approaching the Lord Glenvarloch, saluted him by name and title, and asked if his lordship designed for the chevalier's this day, observing it was near noon, and the woodcock would be on the board ere they could reach the ordinary.

"I do not go there to-day," answered Lord Glenvarloch.

"Which way, then, my lord?" said the young Templar, who was perhaps not undesirous to parade a part at least of the street in company with a lord, though but a Scotch one.

"I—I"—said Nigel, desiring to avail himself of this young man's local knowledge, yet unwilling and ashamed to acknowledge his intention to take refuge in so disreputable a quarter, or to describe the situation in which he stood—"I have some curiosity to see Whitefriars."

"What! your lordship is for a frolic into Alsatia?" said Lowestoffe—"Have with you, my lord—you cannot have a better guide to the infernal regions

than myself. I promise you there are bona-robas to be found there—good wine too, ay, and good fellows to drink it with, though somewhat suffering under the frowns of fortune. But your lordship will pardon me—you are the last of our acquaintance to whom I would have proposed such a voyage of discovery.”

“I am obliged to you, Master Lowestoffe, for the good opinion you have expressed in the observation,” said Lord Glenvarloch; “but my present circumstances may render even a residence of a day or two in the sanctuary a matter of necessity.”

“Indeed!” said Lowestoffe, in a tone of great surprise; “I thought your lordship had always taken care not to risk any considerable stake—I beg pardon, but if the bones have proved perfidious, I know just so much law as that a peer’s person is sacred from arrest; and for mere impecuniosity, my lord, better shift can be made elsewhere than in Whitefriars, where all are devouring each other for very poverty.”

“My misfortune has no connexion with want of money,” said Nigel.

“Why then, I suppose,” said Lowestoffe, “you have been tilting, my lord, and have pinked your man; in which case, and with a purse reasonably furnished, you may lie perdue in Whitefriars for a twelvemonth—Marry, but you must be entered and received as a member of their worshipful society, my lord, and a frank burgher of Alsatia—so far you must condescend; there will be neither peace nor safety for you else.”

“My fault is not in a degree so deadly, Master Lowestoffe,” answered Lord Glenvarloch, “as you seem to conjecture—I have stricken a gentleman in the park, that is all.”

“By my hand, my lord, and you had better have struck your sword through him at Barnes-elms,” said the Templar. “Strike within the verge of the court! You will find that a weighty dependence upon your hands, especially if your party be of rank and have favour.”

“I will be plain with you, Master Lowestoffe,” said Nigel, “since I have gone thus far. The person whom I struck was Lord Dalgarno, whom you have seen at Beaujeu’s.”

“A follower and favourite of the Duke of Buckingham!—It is a most unhappy chance, my lord; but my heart was formed in England, and cannot bear to see a young nobleman borne down, as you are like to be. We converse here greatly too open for your circumstances. The Templars would suffer no bailiff to execute a writ, and no gentleman to be arrested for a duel, within their precincts; but in such a matter between Lord Dalgarno and your lordship, there might be a party on either side. You must away with me instantly to my poor chambers here, hard by, and undergo some little change of dress, ere you take sanctuary; for else you will have the whole rascal rout of the Friars about you, like crows upon a falcon that strays into their rookery. We must have you arrayed something more like the natives of Alsatia, or there will be no life there for you.”

While Lowestoffe spoke, he pulled Lord Glenvarloch along with him into his chambers, where he

had a handsome library, filled with all the poems and play-books which were then in fashion. The Templar then dispatched a boy, who waited upon him, to procure a dish or two from the next cook’s shop; “and this,” he said, “must be your lordship’s dinner, with a glass of old sack, of which my grandmother (the heavens requite her!) sent me a dozen bottles, with charge to use the liquor only with clarified whey, when I felt my breast ache with over study. Marry, we will drink the good lady’s health in it, if it is your lordship’s pleasure, and you shall see how we poor students eke out our mutton commons in the hall.”

The outward door of the chamber was barred so soon as the boy had re-entered with the food; the page was ordered to keep close watch and admit no one; and Lowestoffe, by example and precept, pressed his noble guest to partake of his hospitality. His frank and forward manners, though much differing from the courtly ease of Lord Dalgarno, were calculated to make a favourable impression; and Lord Glenvarloch, though his experience of Dalgarno’s perfidy had taught him to be cautious of reposing faith in friendly professions, could not avoid testifying his gratitude to the young Templar, who seemed so anxious for his safety and accommodation.

“You may spare your gratitude any great sense of obligation, my lord,” said the Templar. “No doubt I am willing to be of use to any gentleman that has cause to sing *Fortune my foe*, and particularly proud to serve your lordship’s turn; but I have also an old grudge, to speak Heaven’s truth, at your opposite, Lord Dalgarno.”

“May I ask upon what account, Master Lowestoffe?” said Lord Glenvarloch.

“O, my lord,” replied the Templar, “it was for a hap that chanced after you left the ordinary, one evening about three weeks since—at least I think you were not by, as your lordship always left us before deep play began—I mean no offence, but such was your lordship’s custom—when there were words between Lord Dalgarno and me concerning a certain game at gleek, and a certain mournival of aces held by his lordship, which went for eight—Tib, which went for fifteen—twenty-three in all. Now I held king and queen, being three—a natural towser, making fifteen—and tiddy, nineteen. We vied the ruff, and revied, as your lordship may suppose, till the stake was equal to half my yearly exhibition, fifty as fair yellow canary birds as e’er chirped in the bottom of a green silk purse. Well, my lord, I gained the cards, and lo you! it pleases his lordship to say, that we played without tiddy; and as the rest stood by and backed him, and especially the sharking Frenchman, why, I was obliged to lose more than I shall gain all the season.—So judge if I have not a crow to pluck with his lordship. Was it ever heard there was a game at gleek at the ordinary before, without counting tiddy?—marry quep upon his lordship!—every man who comes there with his purse in his hand, is as free to make new laws as he, I hope, since touch pot touch penny, makes every man equal.”

As Master Lowestoffe ran over this jargon of the gaming-table, Lord Glenvarloch was both ashamed

and mortified, and felt a severe pang of aristocratic pride, when he concluded in the sweeping clause, that the dice, like the grave, leveled those distinguishing points of society, to which Nigel's early prejudices clung perhaps but too fondly. It was impossible, however, to object anything to the learned reasoning of the young Templar, and therefore Nigel was contented to turn the conversation, by making some inquiries respecting the present state of Whitefriars. There also his host was at home.

"You know, my lord," said Master Lowestoffe, "that we Templars are a power and a dominion within ourselves, and I am proud to say that I hold some rank in our republic—was treasurer to the Lord of Misrule last year, and am at this present moment in nomination for that dignity myself. In such circumstances, we are under the necessity of maintaining an amicable intercourse with our neighbours of Alsatia, even as the christian states find themselves often, in mere policy, obliged to make alliance with the Grand Turk, or the Barbary States."

"I should have imagined you gentlemen of the Temple more independent of your neighbours," said Lord Glenvarloch.

"You do us something too much honour, my lord," said the Templar; "the Alsatians and we have some common enemies, and we have, under the rose, some common friends. We are in the use of blocking all bailiffs out of our bounds, and we are powerfully aided by our neighbours, who tolerate not a rag belonging to them within theirs. Moreover the Alsatians have—I beg you to understand me—the power of protecting or distressing our friends, male or female, who may be obliged to seek sanctuary within their bounds. In short, the two communities serve each other, though the league is between states of unequal quality, and I may myself say, that I have treated of sundry weighty affairs, and have been a negotiator well approved on both sides.—But hark—hark—what is that?"

The sound by which Master Lowestoffe was interrupted, was that of a distant horn, winded loud and keenly, and followed by a faint and remote huzza.

"There is something doing," said Lowestoffe, "in the Whitefriars at this moment. That is the signal when their privileges are invaded by tipstaff or bailiff; and at the blast of the horn they all swarm out to the rescue, as bees when their hive is disturbed.—Jump, Jim," he continued, calling out to the attendant, "and see what they are doing in Alsatia.—That bastard of a boy," he continued, as the lad, accustomed to the precipitate haste of his master, tumbled rather than ran out of the apartment, and so down stairs, "is worth gold in this quarter—he serves six masters—four of them in distinct numbers, and you would think him present like a fairy at the mere wish of him that for the time most needs his attendance. No scout in Oxford, no gip in Cambridge, ever matched him in speed and intelligence. He knows the step of a dun from that of a client, when it reaches the very bottom of the staircase; can tell the trip of a pretty wench from the step of a bencher, when at the upper end of the court; and is, take him all in all—But I see your lordship is

anxious—May I press another cup of my kind grandmother's cordial, or will you allow me to show you my wardrobe, and act as your valet or groom of the chamber?"

Lord Glenvarloch hesitated not to acknowledge that he was painfully sensible of his present situation, and anxious to do what must needs be done for his extrication.

The good-natured and thoughtless young Templar readily acquiesced, and led the way into his little bed-room, where, from hand-boxes, portmantaus, mail-trunks, not forgetting an old walnut-tree wardrobe, he began to select the articles which he thought most suited effectually to disguise his guest in venturing into the lawless and turbulent society of Alsatia.

CHAPTER XVII.

Come hither, young one—Mark me! Thou art now
'Mongst men o' the sword, that live by reputation
More than by constant income—Single suited
They are, I grant you; yet each single suit
Maintains, on the rough guess, a thousand followers—
And they be men, who, hazarding their all,
Needful apparel, necessary income,
And human body, and immortal soul,
Do in the very deed but hazard nothing—
So strictly is that *all* bound in reversion;
Clothes to the broker, income to the usurer—
And body to disease, and soul to the foul fiend;
Who laughs to see soldadoes and fooladoes
Play better than himself his game on earth.

The Mohocks.

"YOUR lordship," said Reginald Lowestoffe, "must be content to exchange your decent and court-beseeming rapier, which I will retain in safe keeping, for this broad-sword, with an hundred weight of rusty iron about the hilt, and to wear these huge-paned slops, instead of your civil and moderate hose. We allow no cloak, for your ruffian always walks in cuerpo; and the tarnished doublet of bald velvet, with its discoloured embroidery, and—I grieve to speak it—a few stains from the blood of the grape, will best suit the garb of a roaring boy. I will leave you to change your suit for an instant, till I can help to truss you."

Lowestoffe retired, while slowly, and with hesitation, Nigel obeyed his instructions. He felt displeasure and disgust at the scoundrelly disguise which he was under the necessity of assuming; but, when he considered the bloody consequences which law attached to this rash act of violence, the easy and indifferent temper of James, the prejudices of his son, the overbearing influence of the Duke of Buckingham, sure to be thrown into the scale against him; and, above all, when he reflected that he must now look upon the active, assiduous, and insinuating Lord Dalgarno, as a bitter enemy, reason told him he was in a situation of peril which authorized all honest means, even the most unseemly in outward appearance, to extricate himself from so dangerous a predicament.

While he was changing his dress, and musing on these particulars, his friendly host re-entered the sleeping apartment—"Zounds!" he said, "my lord,

it was well you went not straight into that same Alsatia of ours at the time you proposed, for the hawks have stooped upon it. Here is Jim come back with tidings, that he saw a pursuivant there with a privy-council warrant, and half a score of yeomen assistants, armed to the teeth, and the horn which we heard was sounded to call out the posse of the Friars. Indeed, when old Duke Hildebrod saw that the quest was after some one of whom he knew nothing, he permitted, out of courtesy, the man-catcher to search through his dominions; quite certain that they would take little by their motions; for Duke Hildebrod is a most judicious potentate.—Go back, you bastard, and bring us word when all is quiet.”

“And who may Duke Hildebrod be?” said Lord Glenvarloch.

“Nouns! my lord,” said the Templar, “have you lived so long on the town, and never heard of the valiant, and as wise and politic as valiant, Duke Hildebrod, grand protector of the liberties of Alsatia? I thought the man had never whirled a die but was familiar with his fame.”

“Yet I have never heard of him, Master Lowestoffe,” said Lord Glenvarloch; “or what is the same thing, I have paid no attention to aught that may have passed in conversation respecting him.”

“Why, then,” said Lowestoffe—“but, first, let me have the honour of trussing you. Now, observe, I have left several of the points untied, of set purpose; and if it please you to let a small portion of your shirt be seen betwixt your doublet and the band of your upper stock, it will have so much the more rakish effect, and will attract you respect in Alsatia, where linen is something scarce. Now, I tie some of the points carefully asquint, for your ruffianly gallant never appears too accurately trussed—so.”

“Arrange it as you will, sir,” said Nigel; “but let me hear at least something of the conditions of the unhappy district into which, with other wretches, I am compelled to retreat.”

“Why, my lord,” replied the Templar, “our neighbouring state of Alsatia, which the law calls the Sanctuary of Whitefriars, has had its mutations and revolutions like greater kingdoms; and, being in some sort a lawless, arbitrary government, it follows, of course, that these have been more frequent than our own better regulated commonwealth of the Templars, that of Gray’s Inn, and other similar associations, have had the fortune to witness. Our traditions and records speak of twenty revolutions within the last twelve years, in which the aforesaid state has repeatedly changed from absolute despotism to republicanism, not forgetting the intermediate stages of oligarchy, limited monarchy, and even gynæocracy; for I myself remember Alsatia governed for nearly nine months by an old fish-woman. Then it fell under the dominion of a broken attorney; who was dethroned by a reformado captain; who, proving tyrannical, was deposed by a hedge-parson; who was succeeded, upon resignation of his power, by Duke Jacob Hildebrod, of that name the first, whom Heaven long preserve.”

“And is this potentate’s government,” said Lord Glenvarloch, forcing himself to take some interest in the conversation, “of a despotic character?”

VOL. III.

“Pardon me, my lord,” said the Templar; “this said sovereign is too wise to incur, like many of his predecessors, the odium of wielding so important an authority by his own sole will. He has established a council of state, who regularly meet for their morning’s draught at seven o’clock; convene a second time at eleven for their *ante-meridiem*, or whet; and, assembling in solemn conclave at the hour of two afternoon, for the purpose of consulting for the good of the commonwealth, are so prodigal of their labour in the service of the state, that they seldom separate before midnight. Into this worthy senate, composed partly of Duke Hildebrod’s predecessors in his high office, whom he has associated with him to prevent the envy attending sovereign and sole authority, I must presently introduce your lordship, that they may admit you to the immunities of the Friars, and assign you a place of residence.”

“Does their authority extend to such regulation?” said Lord Glenvarloch.

“The council account it a main point of their privileges, my lord,” answered Lowestoffe; “and, in fact, it is one of the most powerful means by which they support their authority. For, when Duke Hildebrod and his senate find a topping householder in the Friars becomes discontented and factious, it is but assigning him, for a lodger, some fat bankrupt, or new residenter, whose circumstances require refuge, and whose purse can pay for it, and the malcontent becomes as tractable as a lamb. As for the poorer refugees, they let them shift as they can; but the registration of their names in the duke’s entry-book, and the payment of garnish conforming to their circumstances, is never dispensed with; and the Friars would be a very unsafe residence for the stranger who should dispute these points of jurisdiction.”

“Well, Master Lowestoffe,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “I must be controled by the circumstances which dictate to me this state of concealment—of course I am desirous not to betray my name and rank.”

“It will be highly advisable, my lord,” said Lowestoffe; “and is a case thus provided for in the statutes of the republic, or monarchy, or whatsoever you call it. He who desires that no questions shall be asked at him concerning his name, cause of refuge, and the like, may escape the usual interrogations upon payment of double the garnish otherwise belonging to his condition. Complying with this essential stipulation, your lordship may register yourself as King of Bantam, if you will, for not a question will be asked at you. But here comes our scout, with news of peace and tranquillity. Now, I will go with your lordship myself, and present you to the council of Alsatia, with all the influence which I have over them as an office-bearer in the Temple, which is not slight; for they have come halting off upon all occasions when we have taken part against them, and that they well know. The time is propitious—for as the council is now met in Alsatia, so the Temple walks are quiet.—Now, my lord, throw your cloak about you, to hide your present exterior. You shall give it to the boy at the foot of the stairs that go down to the sanctuary; and as the ballad says that Queen Eleanor

sunk at Charing Cross and rose at Queen-Hithe, so you shall sink a nobleman in the Temple Gardens and rise an Alsatian at Whitefriars."

They went out accordingly, attended by the little scout, traversed the gardens, descended the stairs, and at the bottom the young Templar exclaimed—"And now let us sing with Ovid—

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas—

Off, off, ye lendings!" he continued, in the same vein. "Via, the curtain that shadowed Borgia!—But how now, my lord?" he continued, when he observed Lord Glenvarloch was really distressed at the degrading change in his situation; "I trust you are not offended at my rattling folly? I would but reconcile you to your present circumstances, and give you the tone of this strange place. Come, cheer up—I trust it will only be your residence for a very few days."

Nigel was only able to press his hand, and reply in a whisper, "I am sensible of your kindness. I know I must drink the cup which my own folly has filled for me. Pardon me that, at the first taste, I feel its bitterness."

Reginald Lowestoffe was bustlingly officious and good-natured; but, used to live a scrambling, rakish course of life himself, he had not the least idea of the extent of Lord Glenvarloch's mental sufferings, and thought of his temporary concealment as if it were merely the trick of a wanton boy, who plays at hide-and-seek with his tutor. With the appearance of the place, too, he was familiar—but on his companion it produced a deep sensation.

The ancient sanctuary at Whitefriars lay considerably lower than the elevated terraces and gardens of the Temple, and was therefore generally involved in the damps and fogs arising from the Thames. The brick buildings by which it was occupied, crowded closely on each other, for, in a place so rarely privileged, every foot of ground was valuable; but, erected in many cases by persons whose funds were inadequate to their speculations, the houses were generally insufficient, and exhibited the lamentable signs of having become ruinous while they were yet new. The wailing of children, the scolding of their mothers, the miserable exhibition of ragged linens hung from the windows to dry, spoke the wants and distresses of the wretched inhabitants; while the sounds of complaint were mocked and overwhelmed in the riotous shouts, oaths, profane songs, and boisterous laughter, that issued from the ale-houses and taverns, which, as the signs indicated, were equal in number to all the other houses; and, that the full character of the place might be evident, several faded, tinsel, and painted females looked boldly at the strangers from their open lattices, or more modestly seemed busied with the cracked flower-pots, filled with mignonette and rosemary, which were disposed in front of the windows, to the great risk of the passengers.

"*Semi-reducta Venus*," said the Templar, pointing to one of these nymphs, who seemed afraid of observation, and partly concealed herself behind the casement, as she chirped to a miserable blackbird, the tenant of a wicker prison, which hung outside on the black brick wall.—"I know the face of

yonder waistcoateer," continued the guide; "and I could wager a rose-noble, from the posture she stands in, that she has clean head-gear, and a soiled night-rail. But here come two of the male inhabitants, smoking like moving volcanoes! These are roaring blades, whom Nicotia and Trinidado serve, I dare swear, in lieu of beef and pudding; for be it known to you, my lord, that the king's counter-blast against the Indian weed will no more pass current in Alsatia, than will his writ of *capias*."

As he spoke, the two smokers approached; shaggy, uncombed ruffians, whose enormous moustaches were turned back over their ears, and mingled with the wild elf-locks of their hair, much of which was seen under the old beavers which they wore aside upon their heads, while some straggling portion escaped through the rents of the hats aforesaid. Their tarnished plush jerkins, large slops, or trunk-breeches, their broad greasy shoulder-belts, and discoloured scarfs, and, above all, the ostentatious manner in which the one wore a broad-sword, and the other an extravagantly long rapier and poniard, marked the true Alsatian bully, then, and for a hundred years afterwards, a well-known character.

"Tour out," said the one ruffian to the other; "tout the bien mort twirling at the gentry cove!"*

"I smell a spy," replied the other, looking at Nigel. "Chalk him across the peepers with your cheery."†

"Bing avast, bing avast!" replied his companion; "yon other is rattling Reginald Lowestoffe of the Temple—I know him; he is a good boy, and free of the province."

So saying, and enveloping themselves in another thick cloud of smoke, they went on without farther greeting.

"*Crasso in aere!*" said the Templar. "You hear what a character the impudent knaves give me; but, so it serves your lordship's turn, I care not.—And now let me ask your lordship what name you will assume, for we are near the ducal palace of Duke Hildebrod."

"I will be called Grahame," said Nigel; "it was my mother's name."

"Grime," repeated the Templar, "will suit Alsatia well enough—both a grim and grimy place of refuge."

"I said Grahame, sir, not Grime," said Nigel, something shortly, and laying an emphasis on the vowel—for few Scotsmen understand raillery upon the subject of their names.

"I beg pardon, my lord," answered the undisconcerted punster; "but *Graam* will suit the circumstance too—it signifies tribulation in the High Dutch, and your lordship must be considered as a man under trouble."

Nigel laughed at the pertinacity of the Templar; who, proceeding to point out a sign representing, or believed to represent, a dog attacking a bull, and running at his head, in the true scientific style of onset,—"There," said he, "doth faithful Duke Hilde-

* Look sharp. See how the girl is coquetting with the strange gallants.

† Slash him over the eyes with your dagger.

brod deal forth laws, as well as ale and strong waters, to his faithful Alsatians. Being a determined champion of Paris Garden, he has chosen a sign corresponding to his habits; and he deals in giving drink to the thirsty, that he himself may drink without paying, and receive pay for what is drunken by others.—Let us enter the ever-open gate of this second Axylus.”

As they spoke they entered the dilapidated tavern, which was, nevertheless, more ample in dimensions, and less ruinous, than many houses in the same evil neighbourhood. Two or three haggard, ragged drawers, ran to and fro, whose looks, like those of owls, seemed only adapted for midnight, when other creatures sleep, and who by day seemed bleared, stupid, and only half awake. Guided by one of these blinking Ganymedes, they entered a room, where the feeble rays of the sun were almost wholly eclipsed by volumes of tobacco-smoke, rolled from the tubes of the company, while out of the cloudy sanctuary arose the old chaunt of—

“ Old Sir Simon the King,
And old Sir Simon the King,
With his malmsey nose,
And his ale-dropped hose,
And sing hey ding-a-ding-ding.”

Duke Hildebrod, who himself condescended to chaunt this ditty to his loving subjects, was a monstrously fat old man, with only one eye; and a nose which bore evidence to the frequency, strength, and depth of his potations. He wore a murrey-coloured plush jerkin, stained with the overflowings of the tankard, and much the worse for wear, and unbuttoned at bottom for the ease of his enormous paunch. Behind him lay a favourite bull-dog, whose round head and single black glancing eye, as well as the creature's great corpulence, gave it a burlesque resemblance to its master.

The well-beloved counsellors who surrounded the ducal throne, incensed it with tobacco, pledged its occupier in thick, clammy ale, and echoed back his choral songs, were satraps worthy of such a soldan. The buff jerkin, broad belt, and long sword of one, showed him to be a Low Country soldier, whose looks of scowling importance, and drunken impudence, were designed to sustain his title to call himself a roving blade. It seemed to Nigel that he had seen this fellow somewhere or other. A hedge-parson, or buckle-beggar, as that order of priesthood has been irreverently termed, sat on the duke's left, and was easily distinguished by his torn band, flapped hat, and the remnants of a rusty cassock. Beside the parson sat a most wretched and meagre-looking old man, with a thread-bare hood of coarse kersey upon his head, and buttoned about his neck, while his pinched features, like those of old Daniel, were illuminated by

— an eye,

Through the last look of dotage still cunning and sly.

On his left was placed a broken attorney, who, for some mal-practices, had been struck from the roll of practitioners, and who had nothing left of his profession, excepting its roguery. One or two persons of less figure, amongst whom there was one

face, which, like that of the soldier, seemed not unknown to Nigel, though he could not recollect where he had seen it, completed the council-board of Jacob Duke Hildebrod.

The strangers had full time to observe all this; for his grace the duke, whether irresistibly carried on by the full tide of harmony, or whether to impress the strangers with a proper idea of his consequence, chose to sing his ditty to an end before addressing them, though, during the whole time, he closely scrutinized them with his single optic.

When Duke Hildebrod had ended his song, he informed his peers that a worthy officer of the Temple attended them, and commanded the captain and parson to abandon their easy-chairs in behalf of the two strangers, whom he placed on his right and left hand. The worthy representatives of the army and the church of Alsatia went to place themselves on a crazy form at the bottom of the table, which, ill calculated to sustain men of such weight, gave way under them, and the man of the sword and man of the gown were rolled over each other on the floor, amidst the exulting shouts of the company. They arose in wrath, contending which should vent his displeasure in the loudest and deepest oaths, a strife in which the parson's superior acquaintance with theology enabled him greatly to excel the captain, and were at length with difficulty tranquillized by the arrival of the alarmed waiters with more stable chairs, and by a long draught of the cooling tankard. When this commotion was appeased and the strangers courteously accommodated with flagons, after the fashion of the others present, the duke drank prosperity to the Temple in the most gracious manner, together with a cup of welcome to Master Reginald Lowestoffe; and, this courtesy having been thankfully accepted, the party honoured prayed permission to call for a gallon of Rhenish, over which he proposed to open his business.

The mention of a liquor so superior to their usual potations had an instant and most favourable effect upon the little senate; and its immediate appearance might be said to secure a favourable reception of Master Lowestoffe's proposition, which, after a round or two had circulated, he explained to be the admission of his friend Master Nigel Grahame to the benefit of the sanctuary and other immunities of Alsatia, in the character of a grand compounder; for so were those termed who paid a double fee at their matriculation, in order to avoid laying before the senate the peculiar circumstances which compelled them to take refuge there.

The worthy duke heard the proposition with glee, which glittered in his single eye; and no wonder, as it was a rare occurrence, and of peculiar advantage to his private revenue. Accordingly, he commanded his ducal register to be brought him, a huge book, secured with brass clasps like a merchant's ledger, and whose leaves, stained with wine and slabbered with tobacco juice, bore the names probably of as many rogues as are to be found in the Calendar of Newgate.

Nigel was then directed to lay down two nobles as his ransom, and to claim privilege by reciting the following doggrel verses, which were dictated to him by the duke:—

"Your suppliant, by name
 Nigel Grahame,
 In fear of mishap
 From a shoulder tap;
 And dreading a claw
 From the talons of law,
 That are sharper than briars;
 His freedom to sue,
 And rescue by you—
 Through weapon and wit,
 From warrant and writ,
 From bailiff's hand,
 From tipstaff's wand,
 Is come hither to Whitefriars."

As Duke Hildebrod with a tremulous hand began to make the entry, and had already, with superfluous generosity, spelled Nigel with two g's instead of one, he was interrupted by the parson.* This reverend gentleman had been whispering for a minute or two, not with the captain, but with that other individual, who dwelt imperfectly, as we have already mentioned, in Nigel's memory, and being, perhaps, still something malcontent on account of the late accident, he now requested to be heard before the registration took place.

"The person," he said, "who hath now had the assurance to propose himself as a candidate for the privileges and immunities of this honourable society, is, in plain terms, a beggarly Scot, and we have enough of these locusts in London already—if we admit such palmer-worms and caterpillars to the sanctuary, we shall soon have the whole nation."

"We are not entitled to inquire," said Duke Hildebrod, "whether he be Scot, or French, or English; seeing he has honourably laid down his garnish, he is entitled to our protection."

"Word of denial, most sovereign duke," replied the parson, "I ask him no questions—his speech bewrayeth him—he is a Galilean—and his garnish is forfeited for his assurance in coming within this our realm; and I call on you, sir duke, to put the laws in force against him!"

The Templar here rose, and was about to interrupt the deliberations of the court, when the duke gravely assured him that he should be heard in behalf of his friend, so soon as the council had finished their deliberations.

The attorney next rose, and, intimating that he was to speak to the point of law, said—"It was easy to be seen that this gentleman did not come here in any civil case, and that he believed it to be the story they had already heard of, concerning a blow given within the verge of the park—that the sanctuary would not bear out the offender in such case—and that the queer old chief would send down a broom which should sweep the streets of Alsatia

* This curious register is still in existence, being in possession of that eminent antiquary Dr Dryasdust, who liberally offered the author permission to have the autograph of Duke Hildebrod engraved as an illustration of this passage. Unhappily, being rigorous as Ritson himself in adhering to the very letter of his copy, the worthy doctor clogged his munificence with the condition that we should adopt the duke's orthography, and entitle the work "The Fortunes of Niggle," with which stipulation we did not think it necessary to comply.

from the Strand to the Stairs; and it was even policy to think what evil might come to their republic, by sheltering an alien in such circumstances."

The captain, who had sat impatiently while these opinions were expressed, now sprung on his feet with the vehemence of a cork bouncing from a bottle of brisk beer, and, turning up his moustaches with a martial air, cast a glance of contempt on the lawyer and churchman, while he thus expressed his opinion.

"Most noble Duke Hildebrod! When I hear such base, skeldering, coysterel propositions come from the counsellors of your grace, and when I remember the Huffs, the Muns, and the Tityre-tu's by whom your grace's ancestors and predecessors were advised on such occasions, I begin to think the spirit of action is as dead in Alsatia as in my old granam; and yet who thinks so thinks a lie, since I will find as many roaring boys in the Friars as shall keep the liberties against all the scavengers of Westminster. And, if we should be overborne for a turn, death and darkness! have we not time to send the gentleman off by water, either to Paris Garden or to the Bankside; and, if he is a gallant of true breed, will he not make us full amends for all the trouble we have? Let other societies exist by the law; I say that we brisk boys of the Fleet live in spite of it, and thrive best when we are in right opposition to sign and seal, writ and warrant, serjeant and tipstaff, catch-poll and bum-bailey."

This speech was followed by a murmur of approbation, and Lowestoffe, striking in before the favourable sound had subsided, reminded the duke and his council how much the security of their state depended upon the amity of the Templars, who, by closing their gates, could at pleasure shut against the Alsatians the communication betwixt the Friars and the Temple, and that as they conducted themselves on this occasion, so would they secure or lose the benefit of his interest with his own body, which they knew not to be inconsiderable. "And, in respect of my friend being a Scotchman and alien, as has been observed by the reverend divine and learned lawyer, you are to consider," said Lowestoffe, "for what he is pursued hither—why, for giving the bastinado, not to an Englishman, but to one of his own countrymen. And for my own simple part," he continued, touching Lord Glenvarloch at the same time, to make him understand he spoke but in jest, "if all the Scotch in London were to fight a Welch main, and kill each other to a man, the survivor would, in my humble opinion, be entitled to our gratitude, as having done a most acceptable service to poor old England."

A shout of laughter and applause followed this ingenious apology for the client's state of alienage; and the Templar followed up his plea with the following pithy proposition:—"I know well," said he, "it is the custom of the fathers of this old and honourable republic, ripely and well to consider all their proceedings over a proper allowance of liquor; and far be it from me to propose the breach of so laudable a custom, or to pretend that such an affair as the present can be well and constitutionally considered during the discussion of a pitiful gallon of sack. But, as it is the same thing to this honourable conclave whether they drink first and determine

afterwards, or whether they determine first and drink afterwards, I propose your grace, with the advice of your wise and potent senators, shall pass your edict, granting to mine honourable friend the immunities of the place, and assigning him a lodging, according to your wise forms, to which he will presently retire, being somewhat spent with this day's action; whereupon I will presently order you a rundlet of Rhenish, with a corresponding quantity of of neats' tongues and pickled herrings, to make you all as glorious as George-a-Green."

This overture was received with a general shout of applause, which altogether drowned the voice of the dissidents, if any there were amongst the Alsatian senate who could have resisted a proposal so popular. The words of, kind heart! noble gentleman! generous gallant! flew from mouth to mouth; the inscription of the petitioner's name in the great book was hastily completed, and the oath administered to him by the worthy doge. Like the laws of the Twelve Tables, of the ancient Cambro-Britons, and other primitive nations, it was couched in poetry, and ran as follows:—

"By spigot and barrel,
By bilbo and buff,
Thou art sworn to the quarrel
Of the blades of the huff.
For Whitefriars and its claims
To be champion or martyr,
And to fight for its dames
Like a Knight of the Garter."

Nigel felt, and indeed exhibited, some disgust at this mummary; but, the Templar reminding him that he was too far advanced to draw back, he repeated the words, or rather assented as they were repeated by Duke Hildebrod, who concluded the ceremony by allowing him the privilege of sanctuary, in the following form of prescriptive doggrel:—

"From the touch of the tip,
From the blight of the warrant,
From the watchmen who skip
On the Harman Beck's errand;
From the bailiff's cramp speech,
That makes man a thrall,
I charm thee from each,
And I charm thee from all.
Thy freedom's complete
As a blade of the huff;
To be cheated and cheat,
To be cuff'd and to cuff;
To stride, swear, and swagger,
To drink till you stagger,
To stare and to stab,
And to brandish your dagger
In the cause of your drab;
To walk wool-ward in winter,
Drink brandy, and smoke,
And go *fresco* in summer
For want of a cloak;
To eke out your living
By the wag of your elbow,
By fulham and gourd,
And by baring of bilbo;
To live by your shifts,
And to swear by your honour,
Are the freedom and gifts
Of which I am the donor."

This homily being performed, a dispute arose concerning the special residence to be assigned the new brother of the sanctuary; for, as the Alsations held it a maxim in their commonwealth, that ass's milk fattens, there was usually a competition amongst the inhabitants which should have the managing, as it was termed, of a new member of the society.

The Hector who had spoken so warmly and critically in Nigel's behalf, stood out now chivalrously in behalf of a certain Blowselinda, or Bonstrops, who had, it seems, a room to hire, once the occasional residence of Slicing Dick of Paddington, who lately suffered at Tyburn, and whose untimely exit had been hitherto mourned by the damsel in solitary widowhood, after the fashion of the turtle-dove.

The captain's interest was, however, over-ruled, in behalf of the old gentleman in the kersey hood, who was believed, even at this extreme age, to understand the plucking of a pigeon as well as, or better than, any man of Alsatia.

This venerable personage was an usurer of some notoriety, called Trapbois, and had very lately done the state considerable service in advancing a subsidy necessary to secure a fresh importation of liquors to the duke's cellars, the wine-merchant at the Vintry being scrupulous to deal with so great a man for anything but ready money.

When, therefore, the old gentleman arose, and with much coughing, reminded the duke that he had a poor apartment to let, the claims of all others were set aside, and Nigel was assigned to Trapbois as his guest.

No sooner was this arrangement made, than Lord Glenvarloch expressed to Lowestoffe his impatience to leave this discreditable assembly, and took his leave with a careless haste, which, but for the rundlet of Rhenish wine that entered just as he left the apartment, might have been taken in bad part. The young Templar accompanied his friend to the house of the old usurer, with the road to which he and some other youngsters about the Temple were even but too well acquainted. On the way, he assured Lord Glenvarloch that he was going to the only clean house in Whitefriars; a property which it owed solely to the exertions of the old man's only daughter, an elderly damsel, ugly enough to frighten sin, yet likely to be wealthy enough to tempt a puritan, so soon as the devil had got her old dad for his due. As Lowestoffe spoke thus, they knocked at the door of the house, and the sour stern countenance of the female by whom it was opened, fully confirmed all which the Templar had said of the hostess. She heard, with an ungracious and discontented air, the young Templar's information, that the gentleman, his companion, was to be her father's lodger, muttered something about the trouble it was likely to occasion, but ended by showing the stranger's apartment, which was better than could have been augured from the general appearance of the place, and much larger in extent than that which he had occupied at Paul's Wharf, though inferior to it in neatness.

Lowestoffe, having thus seen his friend fairly installed in his new apartment, and having obtained for him a note of the rate at which he could be accommodated with victuals from a neighbouring

cook's shop, now took his leave, offering, at the same time, to send the whole, or any part of Lord Glenvarloch's baggage, from his former place of residence to his new lodging. Nigel mentioned so few articles, that the Templar could not help observing, that his lordship, it would seem, did not intend to enjoy his new privileges long.

"They are too little suited to my habits and taste, that I should do so," replied Lord Glenvarloch.

"You may change your opinion to-morrow," said Lowestoffe; "and so I wish you good even. To-morrow I will visit you betimes."

The morning came, but, instead of the Templar, it brought only a letter from him. The epistle stated, that Lowestoffe's visits to Alsatia had drawn down the animadversions of some crabbed old pantaloon among the benchers, and that he judged it wise not to come hither at present, for fear of drawing too much attention to Lord Glenvarloch's place of residence. He stated, that he had taken measures for the safety of his baggage, and would send him, by a safe hand, his money-casket, and what articles he wanted. Then followed some sage advices, dictated by Lowestoffe's acquaintance with Alsatia and its manners. He advised him to keep the usurer in the most absolute uncertainty concerning the state of his funds—never to throw a main with the captain, who was in the habit of playing dry-fisted, and paying his losses with three vowels; and, finally, to beware of Duke Hildebrod, who was as sharp, he said, as a needle, though he had no more eyes than are possessed by that necessary implement of female industry.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mother. What! dazzled by a flash of Cupid's mirror,
With which the boy, as mortal urchins wont,
Flings back the sun-beam in the eye of passengers—
Then laughs to see them stumble!

Daughter. Mother! no—
It was a lightning-flash which dazzled me,
And never shall these eyes see true again.

Beef and Pudding.—An old English Comedy.

It is necessary that we should leave for a time our hero Nigel, although in a situation neither safe, comfortable, nor creditable, in order to detail some particulars which have immediate connexion with his fortunes.

It was but the third day after he had been forced to take refuge in the house of old Trapbois, the noted usurer of Whitefriars, commonly called Golden Trapbois, when the pretty daughter of old Ramsay, the watchmaker, after having piously seen her father eat his breakfast (taking care that he did not, in an abstruse fit of thought, swallow the salt-cellar instead of a crust of the brown loaf), set forth from the house as soon as he was again plunged into the depth of calculation, and, accompanied only by that faithful old drudge, Janet the Scotch laundress, to whom her whims were laws, made her way to Lombard-street, and disturbed, at the unusual hour of eight in the morning, Aunt Judith, the sister of her worthy godfather.

The venerable maiden received her young visitor

with no great complacency; for, naturally enough, she had neither the same admiration of her very pretty countenance, nor complacency for her foolish and girlish impatience of temper, which Master George Heriot entertained. Still Mrs Margaret was a favourite of her brother's, whose will was to Aunt Judith a supreme law; and she contented herself with asking her untimely visitor, "what she made so early, with her pale, chitty face, in the streets of London?"

"I would speak with the Lady Hermione," answered the almost breathless girl, while the blood ran so fast to her face as totally to remove the objection of paleness which Aunt Judith had made to her complexion.

"With the Lady Hermione," said Aunt Judith—"with the Lady Hermione? and at this time in the morning, when she will scarce see any of the family, even at seasonable hours? You are crazy, you silly wench, or you abuse the indulgence which my brother and the lady have shown to you."

"Indeed, indeed I have not," repeated Margaret, struggling to retain the unbidden tear which seemed longing to burst out on the slightest occasion. "Do but say to the lady that your brother's god-daughter desires earnestly to speak with her, and I know she will not refuse to see me."

Aunt Judith bent an earnest, suspicious, and inquisitive glance on her young visitor. "You might make me your secretary, my lassie," she said, "as well as the Lady Hermione. I am older, and better skilled to advise. I live more in the world than one who shuts herself up within four rooms, and I have the better means to assist you."

"O! no—no—no"—said Margaret, eagerly, and with more earnest sincerity than complaisance; "there are some things to which you cannot advise me, Aunt Judith. It is a case—pardon me, my dear aunt—a case beyond your counsel."

"I am glad on't, maiden," said Aunt Judith, somewhat angrily; "for I think the follies of the young people of this generation would drive mad an old brain like mine. Here you come on the viretot through the whole streets of London, to talk some nonsense to a lady, who scarce sees God's sun, but when he shines on a brick wall. But I will tell her you are here."

She went away, and shortly returned with a dry—"Mistress Marget, the lady will be glad to see you; and that's more, my young madam, than you had right to count upon."

Mistress Margaret hung her head in silence, too much perplexed by the train of her own embarrassed thoughts, for attempting either to conciliate Aunt Judith's kindness, or, which on other occasions would have been as congenial to her own humour, to retaliate on her cross-tempered remarks and manner. She followed Aunt Judith, therefore, in silence and dejection, to the strong oaken door which divided the Lady Hermione's apartments from the rest of George Heriot's spacious house.

At the door of this sanctuary it is necessary to pause, in order to correct the reports with which Richie Moniplies had filled his master's ear respecting the singular appearance of that lady's attendance at prayers, whom we now own to be by name the

Lady Hermione. Some part of these exaggerations had been communicated to the worthy Scotsman by Jenkin Vincent, who was well experienced in the species of wit which has been long a favourite in the city, under the various names of cross-biting, giving the dor, bamboozling, cramming, hoaxing, humbugging, and quizzing; for which sport Richie Moniplies, with his solemn gravity, totally unapprehensive of a joke, and his natural propensity to the marvelous, formed an admirable subject. Farther ornaments the tale had received from Richie himself, whose tongue, especially when oiled with good liquor, had a considerable tendency to amplification, and who failed not, while he retailed to his master all the wonderful circumstances narrated by Vincent, to add to them many conjectures of his own, which his imagination had over-hastily converted into facts.

Yet the life which the Lady Hermione had led for two years, during which she had been the inmate of George Heriot's house, was so singular, as almost to sanction many of the wild reports which went abroad. The house which the worthy goldsmith inhabited, had in former times belonged to a powerful and wealthy baronial family, which, during the reign of Henry VIII., terminated in a dowager lady, very wealthy, very devout, and most unalienably attached to the catholic faith. The chosen friend of the Honourable Lady Foljambe was the Abbess of Saint Roque's Nunnery, like herself, a conscientious, rigid, and devoted papist. When the house of Saint Roque was despotically dissolved by the fiat of the impetuous monarch, the Lady Foljambe received her friend into her spacious mansion, together with two vestal sisters, who, like their abbess, were determined to follow the tenor of their vows, instead of embracing the profane liberty which the monarch's will had thrown in their choice. For their residence, the Lady Foljambe contrived, with all secrecy—for Henry might not have relished her interference—to set apart a suite of four rooms, with a little closet fitted up as an oratory, or chapel; the whole apartment fenced by a strong oaken door to exclude strangers, and accommodated with a turning wheel to receive necessities, according to the practice of all nunneries. In this retreat, the Abbess of Saint Roque and her attendants passed many years, communicating only with the Lady Foljambe, who, in virtue of their prayers, and of the support she afforded them, accounted herself little less than a saint on earth. The abbess, fortunately for herself, died before her munificent patroness, who lived deep in Queen Elizabeth's time, ere she was summoned by fate.

The Lady Foljambe was succeeded in this mansion by a sour fanatic knight, a distant and collateral relation, who claimed the same merit for expelling the priestess of Baal, which his predecessor had founded on maintaining the votaresses of Heaven. Of the two unhappy nuns, driven from their ancient refuge, one went beyond sea; the other, unable from old age to undertake such a journey, died under the roof of a faithful catholic widow of low degree. Sir Paul Crambage, having got rid of the nuns, spoiled the chapel of its ornaments, and had thoughts of altogether destroying the apartment, until checked by the reflection that the operation would be unneces-

sary expense, since he only inhabited three rooms of the large mansion, and had not therefore the slightest occasion for any addition to its accommodations. His son proved a waster and a prodigal, and from him the house was bought by our friend George Heriot, who, finding, like Sir Paul, the house more than sufficiently ample for his accommodation, left the Foljambe apartment, or Saint Roque's rooms, as they were called, in the state in which he found them.

About two years and a half before our history opened, when Heriot was absent upon an expedition to the Continent, he sent special orders to his sister and his cash-keeper, directing that the Foljambe apartment should be fitted up handsomely, though plainly, for the reception of a lady, who would make it her residence for some time; and who would live more or less with his own family according to her pleasure. He also directed, that the necessary repairs should be made with secrecy, and that as little should be said as possible upon the subject of his letter.

When the time of his return came nigh, Aunt Judith and the household were on the tenter-hooks of impatience. Master George came, as he had intimated, accompanied by a lady, so eminently beautiful, that, had it not been for her extreme and uniform paleness, she might have been reckoned one of the loveliest creatures on earth. She had with her an attendant, or humble companion, whose business seemed only to wait upon her. This person, a reserved woman, and by her dialect a foreigner, aged about fifty, was called by the lady Monna Paula, and by Master Heriot, and others, Mademoiselle Pauline. She slept in the same room with her patroness at night, eat in her apartment, and was scarce ever separated from her during the day.

These females took possession of the nunnery of the devout abbess, and, without observing the same rigorous seclusion, according to the letter, seemed well nigh to restore the apartment to the use to which it had been originally designed. The new inmates lived and took their meals apart from the rest of the family. With the domestics Lady Hermione, for so she was termed, held no communication, and Mademoiselle Pauline only such as was indispensable, which she dispatched as briefly as possible. Frequent and liberal largesses reconciled the servants to this conduct; and they were in use to observe to each other, that to do a service for Mademoiselle Pauline, was like finding a fairy treasure.

To Aunt Judith the Lady Hermione was kind and civil, but their intercourse was rare; on which account the good lady felt some pangs both of curiosity and injured dignity. But she knew her brother so well, and loved him so dearly, that his will, once expressed, might be truly said to become her own. The worthy citizen was not without a spice of the dogmatism which grows on the best disposition, when a word is a law to all around. Master George did not endure to be questioned by his family, and, when he had generally expressed his will, that the Lady Hermione should live in the way most agreeable to her, and that no inquiries should be made concerning her history, or her motives for observing

such strict seclusion, his sister well knew that he would have been seriously displeased with any attempt to pry into the secret.

But, though Heriot's servants were bribed, and his sister awed into silent acquiescence in these arrangements, they were not of a nature to escape the critical observation of the neighbourhood. Some opined that the wealthy goldsmith was about to turn papist, and reestablish Lady Foljambe's nunnery—others that he was going mad—others that he was either going to marry, or to do worse. Master George's constant appearance at church, and the knowledge that the supposed votaress always attended when the prayers of the English ritual were read in the family, liberated him from the first of these suspicions; those who had to transact business with him upon 'Change, could not doubt the soundness of Master Heriot's mind; and, to confute the other rumours, it was credibly reported by such as made the matter their particular interest, that Master George Heriot never visited his guest save in presence of Mademoiselle Pauline, who sat with her work in a remote part of the same room in which they conversed. It was also ascertained that these visits scarcely ever exceeded an hour in length, and were usually only repeated once a-week, an intercourse too brief and too long interrupted, to render it probable that love was the bond of their union.

The inquirers were, therefore, at fault, and compelled to relinquish the pursuit of Master Heriot's secret, while a thousand ridiculous tales were circulated amongst the ignorant and superstitious, with some specimens of which our friend Richie Monipplies had been *crammed*, as we have seen, by the malicious apprentice of worthy David Ramsay.

There was one person in the world, who, it was thought, could (if she would) have said more of the Lady Hermione than any one in London, except George Heriot himself; and that was the said David Ramsay's only child, Margaret.

This girl was not much past the age of fifteen when the Lady Hermione first came to England, and was a very frequent visitor at her godfather's, who was much amused by her childish sallies, and by the wild and natural beauty with which she sung the airs of her native country. Spoilt she was on all hands; by the indulgence of her godfather, the absent habits and indifference of her father, and the deference of all around her to her caprices, as a beauty and as an heiress. But though, from these circumstances, the city-beauty had become as wilful, as capricious, and as affected, as unlimited indulgence seldom fails to render those to whom it is extended; and although she exhibited upon many occasions that affectation of extreme shyness, silence, and reserve, which misses in their teens are apt to take for an amiable modesty; and, upon others, a considerable portion of that flippancy which youth sometimes confounds with wit, Mistress Margaret had much real shrewdness and judgment, which wanted only opportunities of observation to refine it—a lively, good-humoured, playful disposition, and an excellent heart. Her acquired follies were much increased by her reading plays and romances, to which she devoted a great deal of her time, and from which she adopted ideas as different as possible

from those which she might have acquired from the invaluable and affectionate instructions of an excellent mother; and the freaks of which she was sometimes guilty, rendered her not unjustly liable to the charge of affectation and coquetry. But the little lass had sense and shrewdness enough to keep her failings out of sight of her godfather, to whom she was sincerely attached; and so high she stood in his favour, that, at his recommendation, she obtained permission to visit the recluse Lady Hermione.

The singular mode of life which the lady observed; her extreme beauty, rendered even more interesting by her extreme paleness; the conscious pride of being admitted farther than the rest of the world into the society of a person who was wrapped in so much mystery, made a deep impression on the mind of Margaret Ramsay; and though their conversations were at no time either long or confidential, yet, proud of the trust reposed in her, Margaret was as secret respecting their tenor, as if every word repeated had been to cost her life. No inquiry, however artfully backed by flattery and insinuation, whether on the part of Dame Ursula, or any other person equally inquisitive, could wring from the little maiden one word of what she heard or saw, after she entered these mysterious and secluded apartments. The slightest question concerning Master Heriot's ghost, was sufficient, at her gayest moment, to check the current of her communicative prattle, and render her silent.

We mention this, chiefly to illustrate the early strength of Margaret's character—a strength concealed under a hundred freakish whims and humours, as an ancient and massive buttress is disguised by its fantastic covering of ivy and wild-flowers. In truth, if the damsel had told all she heard or saw within the Foljambe apartments, she would have said but little to gratify the curiosity of inquirers.

At the earlier period of their first acquaintance, the Lady Hermione was wont to reward the attentions of her little friend with small but elegant presents, and entertain her by a display of foreign rarities and curiosities, many of them of considerable value. Sometimes the time was passed in a way much less agreeable to Margaret, by her receiving lessons from Pauline in the use of the needle. But, although her preceptress practised these arts with a dexterity then only known in foreign convents, the pupil proved so incorrigibly idle and awkward, that the task of needle-work was at length given over, and lessons of music substituted in their stead. Here also Pauline was excellently qualified as an instructress, and Margaret, more successful in a science for which nature had gifted her, made proficiency both in vocal and instrumental music. These lessons passed in presence of the Lady Hermione, to whom they seemed to give pleasure. She sometimes added her own voice to the performance, in a pure, clear stream of liquid melody; but this was only when the music was of a devotional cast. As Margaret became older, her communications with the recluse assumed a different character. She was allowed, if not encouraged, to tell whatever she had remarked out of doors, and the Lady Hermione, while she remarked the quick, sharp, and retentive powers of observation possessed by her young friend, often

found sufficient reason to caution her against rashness in forming opinions, and giddy petulance in expressing them.

The habitual awe with which she regarded this singular personage, induced Mistress Margaret, though by no means delighting in contradiction or reproof, to listen with patience to her admonitions, and to make full allowance for the good intentions of the patroness by whom they were bestowed; although in her heart she could hardly conceive how Madame Hermione, who never stirred from the Foljambe apartments, should think of teaching knowledge of the world to one who walked twice a-week between Temple-bar and Lombard-street, besides parading in the park every Sunday that proved to be fair weather. Indeed, pretty Mistress Margaret was so little inclined to endure such remonstrances, that her intercourse with the inhabitants of the Foljambe apartments would have probably slackened as her circle of acquaintance increased in the external world, had she not, on the one hand, entertained an habitual reverence for her mistress, of which she could not divest herself, and been flattered, on the other, by being, to a certain degree, the depositary of a confidence for which others thirsted in vain. Besides, although the conversation of Hermione was uniformly serious, it was not in general either formal or severe; nor was the lady offended by flights of levity which Mistress Margaret sometimes ventured on in her presence, even when they were such as made Monna Paula cast her eyes upwards, and sigh with that compassion which a devotee extends towards the votaries of a trivial and profane world. Thus, upon the whole, the little maiden was disposed to submit, though not without some wincing, to the grave admonitions of the Lady Hermione; and the rather that the mystery annexed to the person of her mistress was in her mind early associated with a vague idea of wealth and importance, which had been rather confirmed than lessened by many accidental circumstances which she had noticed since she was more capable of observation.

It frequently happens, that the counsel which we reckon intrusive when offered to us unasked, becomes precious in our eyes when the pressure of difficulties renders us more diffident of our own judgment than we are apt to find ourselves in the hours of ease and indifference; and this is more especially the case if we suppose that our adviser may also possess power and inclination to back his counsel with effectual assistance. Mistress Margaret was now in that situation. She was, or believed herself to be, in a condition where both advice and assistance might be necessary; and it was therefore, after an anxious and sleepless night, that she resolved to have recourse to the Lady Hermione, who she knew would readily afford her the one, and, as she hoped, might also possess means of giving her the other. The conversation between them will best explain the purport of the visit.

CHAPTER XIX.

By this good light, a wench of matchless mettle!
This were a leaguer-lass to love a soldier,
To bind his wounds, and kiss his bloody brow,
And sing a roundel as she help'd to arm him,
Though the rough foeman's drums were beat so nigh
They seem'd to bear the burden.

Old Play.

WHEN Mistress Margaret entered the Foljambe apartment, she found the inmates employed in their usual manner; the lady in reading, and her attendant in embroidering a large piece of tapestry, which had occupied her ever since Margaret had been first admitted within these secluded chambers.

Hermione nodded kindly to her visitor, but did not speak; and Margaret, accustomed to this reception, and in the present case not sorry for it, as it gave her an interval to collect her thoughts, stooped over Monna Paula's frame, and observed, in a half whisper, "You were just so far as that rose, Monna, when I first saw you—see, there is the mark where I had the bad luck to spoil the flower in trying to catch the stitch—I was little above fifteen then. These flowers make me an old woman, Monna Paula."

"I wish they could make you a wise one, my child," answered Monna Paula, in whose esteem pretty Mistress Margaret did not stand quite so high as in that of her patroness; partly owing to her natural austerity, which was something intolerant of youth and gaiety, and partly to the jealousy with which a favourite domestic regards any one whom she considers as a sort of rival in the affections of her mistress.

"What is it you say to Monna, little one?" asked the lady.

"Nothing, madam," replied Mistress Margaret, "but that I have seen the real flowers blossom three times over since I first saw Monna Paula working in her canvas garden, and her violets have not budded yet."

"True, lady-bird," replied Hermione; "but the buds that are longest in blossoming will last the longest in flower. You have seen them in the garden bloom thrice, but you have seen them fade thrice also; now, Monna Paula's will remain in blow for ever—they will fear neither frost nor tempest."

"True, madam," answered Mistress Margaret; "but neither have they life or odour."

"That, little one," replied the recluse, "is to compare a life agitated by hope and fear, and chequered with success and disappointment, and fevered by the effects of love and hatred, a life of passion and of feeling, saddened and shortened by its exhausting alternations, to a calm and tranquil existence, animated but by a sense of duties, and only employed, during its smooth and quiet course, in the unwearied discharge of them. Is that the moral of your answer?"

"I do not know, madam," answered Mistress Margaret; "but, of all birds in the air, I would rather be the lark, that sings while he is drifting down the summer breeze, than the weather-cock that sticks fast yonder upon his iron perch, and just moves so

much as to discharge his duty, and tell us which way the wind blows."

"Metaphors are no arguments, my pretty maiden," said the Lady Hermione, smiling.

"I am sorry for that, madam," answered Margaret; "for they are such a pretty indirect way of telling one's mind when it differs from one's betters—besides, on this subject, there is no end of them, and they are so civil and becoming withal."

"Indeed!" replied the lady; "let me hear some of them, I pray you."

"It would be, for example, very bold in me," said Margaret, "to say to your ladyship, that, rather than live a quiet life, I would like a little variety of hope and fear, and liking and disliking—and—and—and the other sort of feelings which your ladyship is pleased to speak of; but I may say freely, and without blame, that I like a butterfly better than a beetle, or a trembling aspen better than a grim Scotch fir, that never wags a leaf—or that, of all the wood, brass, and wire, that ever my father's fingers put together, I do hate and detest a certain huge old clock of the German fashion, that rings hours, and half hours, and quarters and half quarters, as if it was of such consequence that the world should know it was wound up and going. Now, dearest lady, I wish you would only compare that clumsy, clanging, Dutch-looking piece of lumber, with the beautiful time-piece that Master Heriot caused my father make for your ladyship, which uses to play a hundred merry tunes, and turns out, when it strikes the hour, a whole band of morris dancers, to trip the hays to the measure."

"And which of these time-pieces goes the truest, Margaret?" said the lady.

"I must confess, the old Dutchman has the advantage in that"—said Margaret. "I fancy you are right, madam, and that comparisons are no arguments; at least mine has not brought me through."

"Upon my word, maiden Margaret," said the lady, smiling, "you have been of late thinking very much of these matters."

"Perhaps too much, madam," said Margaret, so low as only to be heard by the lady, behind the back of whose chair she had now placed herself. The words were spoken very gravely, and accompanied by a half sigh, which did not escape the attention of her to whom they were addressed. The Lady Hermione turned immediately round, and looked earnestly at Margaret, then paused for a moment, and, finally, commanded Monna Paula to carry her frame and embroidery into the ante-chamber. When they were left alone, she desired her young friend to come from behind the chair, on the back of which she still rested, and sit down beside her upon a stool.

"I will remain thus, madam, under your favour," answered the girl, without changing her posture; "I would rather you heard me without seeing me."

"In God's name, maiden," returned her patroness, "what is it you can have to say, that may not be uttered face to face, to so true a friend as I am?"

Without making any direct answer, Margaret only replied, "You were right, dearest lady, when you said, I had suffered my feelings too much to

engross me of late. I have done very wrong, and you will be angry with me—so will my godfather, but I cannot help it—he must be rescued."

"He?" repeated the lady, with emphasis; "that brief little word does, indeed, so far explain your mystery;—but come from behind the chair, you silly popinjay! I will wager you have suffered yonder gay young apprentice to sit too near your heart. I have not heard you mention young Vincent for many a day—perhaps he has not been out of mouth and out of mind both. Have you been so foolish as to let him speak to you seriously?—I am told he is a bold youth."

"Not bold enough to say anything that could displease me, madam," said Margaret.

"Perhaps, then, you were *not* displeased," said the lady; "or perhaps he has not *spoken*, which would be wiser and better. Be open-hearted, my love—your godfather will soon return, and we will take him into our consultations. If the young man is industrious, and come of honest parentage, his poverty may be no such insurmountable obstacle. But you are both of you very young, Margaret—I know your godfather will expect that the youth shall first serve out his apprenticeship."

Margaret had hitherto suffered the lady to proceed, under the mistaken impression which she had adopted, simply because she could not tell how to interrupt her; but pure despite at hearing her last words, gave her boldness at length to say, "I crave your pardon, madam; but neither the youth you mention, nor any apprentice or master within the city of London"—

"Margaret," said the lady, in reply, "the contemptuous tone with which you mention those of your own class (many hundreds, if not thousands, of whom, are in all respects better than yourself, and would greatly honour you by thinking of you), is, methinks, no warrant for the wisdom of your choice—for a choice, it seems, there is. Who is it, maiden, to whom you have thus rashly attached yourself?—rashly, I fear, it must be."

"It is the young Scottish Lord Glenvarloch, madam," answered Margaret, in a low and modest tone, but sufficiently firm, considering the subject.

"The young Lord of Glenvarloch!" repeated the lady, in great surprise—"Maiden, you are distracted in your wits."

"I knew you would say so, madam," answered Margaret. "It is what another person has already told me—it is, perhaps, what all the world would tell me—it is what I am sometimes disposed to tell myself. But look at me, madam,—for I will now come before you,—and tell me if there is madness or distraction in my look and word, when I repeat to you again, that I have fixed my affections on this young nobleman."

"If there is not madness in your look or word, maiden, there is infinite folly in what you say," answered the Lady Hermione, sharply. "When did you ever hear that misplaced love brought anything but misery? Seek a match among your equals, Margaret, and escape the countless kinds of risk and misery that must attend an affection beyond your degree.—Why do you smile, maiden? Is there aught to cause scorn in what I say?"

"Surely no, madam," answered Margaret. "I only smiled to think how it should happen, that, while rank made such a wide difference between creatures formed from the same clay, the wit of the vulgar should, nevertheless, jump so exactly the same length with that of the accomplished and the exalted. It is but the variation of the phrase which divides them. Dame Ursley told me the very same thing which your ladyship has but now uttered; only you, madam, talk of countless misery, and Dame Ursley spoke of the gallows, and Mistress Turner, who was hanged upon it."

"Indeed!" answered the Lady Hermione; "and who may Dame Ursley be, that your wise choice has associated with me in the difficult task of advising a fool?"

"The barber's wife at next door, madam," answered Margaret, with feigned simplicity, but far from being sorry at heart that she had found an indirect mode of mortifying her mistress. "She is the wisest woman that I know, next to your ladyship."

"A proper confidante," said the lady, "and chosen with the same delicate sense of what is due to yourself and others!—But what ails you, maiden—where are you going?"

"Only to ask Dame Ursley's advice," said Margaret, as if about to depart; "for I see your ladyship is too angry to give me any, and the emergency is pressing."

"What emergency, thou simple one?" said the lady, in a kinder tone.—"Sit down, maiden, and tell me your tale. It is true you are a fool, and a petted fool to boot; but then you are a child—an amiable child, with all your self-willed folly, and we must help you, if we can.—Sit down, I say, as you are desired, and you will find me a safer and wiser counsellor than the barber-woman. And tell me how you come to suppose that you have fixed your heart unalterably upon a man whom you have seen, as I think, but once."

"I have seen him oftener," said the damsel, looking down; "but I have only spoken with him once. I should have been able to get that *once* out of my head, though the impression was so deep, that I could even now repeat every trifling word he said; but other things have since riveted it in my bosom for ever."

"Maiden," replied the lady, "*for ever* is the word which comes most lightly on the lips in such circumstances, but which, not the less, is almost the last that we should use. The fashion of this world, its passions, its joys, and its sorrows, pass away like the winged breeze—there is nought for ever, but that which belongs to the world beyond the grave."

"You have corrected me justly, madam," said Margaret, calmly; "I ought only to have spoken of my present state of mind, as what will last me for my lifetime, which unquestionably may be but short."

"And what is there in this Scottish lord that can rivet what concerns him so closely in your fancy?" said the lady. "I admit him a personable man, for I have seen him; and I will suppose him courteous and agreeable. But what are his accomplishments

besides, for these surely are not uncommon attributes?"

"He is unfortunate, madam, most unfortunate—and surrounded by snares of different kinds, ingeniously contrived to ruin his character, destroy his estate, and, perhaps, to reach even his life. These schemes have been devised by avarice originally, but they are now followed close by vindictive ambition, animated, I think, by the absolute and concentrated spirit of malice; for the Lord Dalgarno"—

"Here, Monna Paula—Monna Paula!" exclaimed the Lady Hermione, interrupting her young friend's narrative. "She hears me not," she answered, rising and going out, "I must seek her—I will return instantly." She returned accordingly very soon after. "You mentioned a name which I thought was familiar to me," she said; "but Monna Paula has put me right. I know nothing of your lord—how was it you named him?"

"Lord Dalgarno," said Margaret,—"*the wickedest man who lives.* Under pretence of friendship, he introduced the Lord Glenvarloch to a gambling-house, with the purpose of engaging him in deep play; but he with whom the perfidious traitor had to deal, was too virtuous, moderate, and cautious, to be caught in a snare so open. What did they next, but turn his own moderation against him, and persuade others, that, because he would not become the prey of wolves, he herded with them for a share of their booty! And, while this base Lord Dalgarno was thus undermining his unsuspecting countryman, he took every measure to keep him surrounded by creatures of his own, to prevent him from attending court, and mixing with those of his proper rank. Since the Gunpowder Treason, there never was a conspiracy more deeply laid, more basely and more deliberately pursued."

The lady smiled sadly at Margaret's vehemence, but sighed the next moment, while she told her young friend how little she knew the world she was about to live in, since she testified so much surprise at finding it full of villany.

"But by what means," she added, "could you, maiden, become possessed of the secret views of a man so cautious as Lord Dalgarno—as villains in general are?"

"Permit me to be secret on that subject," said the maiden; "I could not tell you without betraying others—let it suffice that my tidings are as certain as the means by which I acquired them are secret and sure. But I must not tell them even to you."

"You are too bold, Margaret," said the lady, "to traffic in such matters at your early age. It is not only dangerous, but even unbecoming and unmaidenly."

"I knew you would say that also," said Margaret, with more meekness and patience than she usually showed on receiving reproof; "but, God knows, my heart acquits me of every other feeling save that of the wish to assist this most innocent and betrayed man.—I contrived to send him warning of his friend's falsehood;—alas! my care has only hastened his utter ruin, unless speedy aid be found. He charged his false friend with treachery, and drew on him in the park, and is now liable to the

fatal penalty due for breach of privilege of the king's palace."

"This is indeed an extraordinary tale," said Hermione; "is Lord Glenvarloch then in prison?"

"No, madam, thank God, but in the sanctuary at Whitefriars—it is matter of doubt whether it will protect him in such a case—they speak of a warrant from the lord chief justice.—A gentleman of the Temple has been arrested, and is in trouble, for having assisted him in his flight.—Even his taking temporary refuge in that base place, though from extreme necessity, will be used to the further defaming him. All this I know, and yet I cannot rescue him—cannot rescue him save by your means."

"By my means, maiden?" said the lady—"you are beside yourself!—What means can I possess in this secluded situation, of assisting this unfortunate nobleman?"

"You *have* means," said Margaret, eagerly; "you have those means, unless I mistake greatly, which can do anything—can do everything in this city, in this world—you have wealth, and the command of a small portion of it will enable me to extricate him from his present danger. He will be enabled and directed how to make his escape—and I——" she paused.

"Will accompany him doubtless, and reap the fruits of your sage exertions in his behalf," said the Lady Hermione, ironically.

"May Heaven forgive you the unjust thought, lady," answered Margaret. "I will never see him more—but I shall have saved him, and the thought shall make me happy."

"A cold conclusion to so bold and warm a flame," said the lady, with a smile which seemed to intimate incredulity.

"It is, however, the only one which I expect, madam—I could almost say the only one which I wish—I am sure I will use no efforts to bring about any other; if I am bold in his cause, I am timorous enough in my own. During our only interview I was unable to speak a word with him. He knows not the sound of my voice—and all that I have risked, and must yet risk, I am doing for one, who, were he asked the question, would say he has long since forgotten that he ever saw, spoke with, or sat beside, a creature of so little signification as I am."

"This is a strange and unreasonable indulgence of a passion equally fanciful and dangerous," said the Lady Hermione.

"You will *not* assist me, then?" said Margaret; "have good day then, madam—my secret, I trust, is safe in such honourable keeping."

"Tarry yet a little," said the lady, "and tell me what resource you have to assist this youth, if you were supplied with money to put it in motion."

"It is superfluous to ask me the question, madam," answered Margaret, "unless you purpose to assist me; and, if you do so purpose, it is still superfluous. You could not understand the means I must use, and time is too brief to explain."

"But have you in reality such means?" said the lady.

"I have, with the command of a moderate sum," answered Margaret Ramsay, "the power of baffling all his enemies—of eluding the passion of the irri-

tated king—the colder but more determined displeasure of the prince—the vindictive spirit of Buckingham, so hastily directed against whosoever crosses the path of his ambition—the cold, concentrated malice of Lord Dalgarno—all, I can baffle them all!"

"But is this to be done without your own personal risk, Margaret?" replied the lady; "for, be your purpose what it will, you are not to peril your own reputation or person, in the romantic attempt of serving another; and I, maiden, am answerable to your godfather,—to your benefactor, and my own,—not to aid you in any dangerous or unworthy enterprise."

"Depend upon my word,—my oath,—dearest lady," replied the supplicant, "that I will act by the agency of others, and do not myself design to mingle in any enterprise in which my appearance might be either perilous or unwomanly."

"I know not what to do," said the Lady Hermione; "it is perhaps incautious and inconsiderate in me to aid so wild a project; yet the end seems honourable, if the means be sure—what is the penalty if he fall into their hands?"

"Alas, alas! the loss of his right hand," replied Margaret, her voice almost stifled with sobs.

"Are the laws of England so cruel? Then there is mercy in Heaven alone," said the lady, "since, even in this free land, men are wolves to each other.—Compose yourself, Margaret, and tell me what money is necessary to secure Lord Glenvarloch's escape."

"Two hundred pieces," replied Margaret; "I would speak to you of restoring them—and I must one day have the power—only that I know—that is, I think—your ladyship is indifferent on that score."

"Not a word more of it," said the lady; "call Monna Paula hither."

CHAPTER XX.

Credit me, friend, it hath been ever thus,
Since the Ark rested on Mount Ararat,
False man hath sworn, and woman hath believed—
Repented and reproach'd, and then believed once more.
The New World.

By the time that Margaret returned with Monna Paula, the Lady Hermione was rising from the table at which she had been engaged in writing something on a small slip of paper, which she gave to her attendant.

"Monna Paula," she said, "carry this paper to Roberts the cash-keeper; let him give you the money mentioned in the note, and bring it hither presently."

Monna Paula left the room, and her mistress proceeded.

"I do not know," she said, "Margaret, if I have done, and am doing, well in this affair. My life has been one of strange seclusion, and I am totally unacquainted with the practical ways of this world—an ignorance which I know cannot be remedied by mere reading.—I fear I am doing wrong to you, and perhaps to the laws of the country which affords me refuge, by thus indulging you, and yet

there is something in my heart which cannot resist your entreaties."

"O, listen to it—listen to it, dear, generous lady!" said Margaret, throwing herself on her knees and grasping those of her benefactress, and looking in that attitude like a beautiful mortal in the act of supplicating her tutelary angel; "the laws of men are but the injunctions of mortality, but what the heart prompts is the echo of the voice from Heaven within us."

"Rise, rise, maiden," said Hermione; "you affect me more than I thought I could have been moved by aught that should approach me. Rise, and tell me whence it comes that, in so short a time, your thoughts, your looks, your speech, and even your slightest actions, are changed from those of a capricious and fanciful girl to all this energy and impassioned eloquence of word and action?"

"I am sure I know not, dearest lady," said Margaret, looking down; "but I suppose that when I was a trifle, I was only thinking of trifles. What I now reflect is deep and serious, and I am thankful if my speech and manner bear reasonable proportion to my thoughts."

"It must be so," said the lady; "yet the change seems a rapid and strange one. It seems to be as if a childish girl had at once shot up into a deep-thinking and impassioned woman, ready to make exertions alike, and sacrifices, with all that vain devotion to a favourite object of affection, which is often so basely rewarded."

The Lady Hermione sighed bitterly, and Monna Paula entered ere the conversation proceeded farther. She spoke to her mistress in the foreign language in which they frequently conversed, but which was unknown to Margaret.

"We must have patience for a time," said the lady to her visitor, "the cash-keeper is abroad on some business, but he is expected home in the course of half an hour."

Margaret wrung her hands in vexation and impatience.

"Minutes are precious," continued the lady—"that I am well aware of; and we will at least suffer none of them to escape us. Monna Paula shall remain below, and transact our business the very instant that Roberts returns home."

She spoke to her attendant accordingly, who again left the room.

"You are very kind, madam—very good," said the poor little Margaret, while the anxious trembling of her lip and of her hand showed all that sickening agitation of the heart which arises from hope deferred.

"Be patient, Margaret, and collect yourself," said the lady; "you may, you must have much to do to carry through this your bold purpose. Reserve your spirits which you may need so much. Be patient—it is the only remedy against the evils of life."

"Yes, madam," said Margaret, wiping her eyes, and endeavouring in vain to suppress the natural impatience of her temper—"I have heard so—very often indeed; and I dare say I have myself—Heaven forgive me—said so to people in perplexity and affliction; but it was before I had suffered perplexity and vexation myself, and I am sure I will never

preach patience to any human being again, now that I know how much the medicine goes against the stomach."

"You will think better of it, maiden," said the Lady Hermione; "I also, when I first felt distress, thought they did me wrong who spoke to me of patience; but my sorrows have been repeated and continued till I have been taught to cling to it as the best and—religious duties excepted, of which, indeed, patience forms a part—the only alleviation which life can afford them."

Margaret, who neither wanted sense nor feeling, wiped her tears hastily, and asked her patroness's forgiveness for her petulance.

"I might have thought—" she said, "I ought to have reflected, that even from the manner of your life, madam, it is plain you must have suffered sorrow; and yet, God knows, the patience which I have ever seen you display, well entitles you to recommend your own example to others."

The lady was silent for a moment, and then replied—

"Margaret, I am about to repose a high confidence in you. You are no longer a child, but a thinking and a feeling woman. You have told me as much of your secret as you dared—I will let you know as much of mine as I may venture to tell. You will ask me, perhaps, why, at a moment when your own mind is agitated, I should force upon you the consideration of my sorrows? and I answer, that I cannot withstand the impulse which now induces me to do so. Perhaps from having witnessed, for the first time these three years, the natural effects of human passion, my own sorrows have been awakened, and are for the moment too big for my own bosom—perhaps I may hope that you, who seem driving full sail on the very rock on which I was wrecked for ever, will take warning by the tale I have to tell. Enough, if you are willing to listen, I am willing to tell you who the melancholy inhabitant of the Foljambe apartment really is, and why she resides here. It will serve, at least, to while away the time until Monna Paula shall bring us the reply from Roberts."

At any other moment of her life, Margaret Ramsay would have heard with undivided interest a communication so flattering in itself, and referring to a subject upon which the general curiosity had been so strongly excited. And even at this agitating moment, although she ceased not to listen with an anxious ear and throbbing heart for the sound of Monna Paula's returning footsteps, she nevertheless, as gratitude and policy, as well as a portion of curiosity, dictated, composed herself, in appearance at least, to the strictest attention to the Lady Hermione, and thanked her with humility for the high confidence she was pleased to repose in her. The Lady Hermione, with the same calmness which always attended her speech and actions, thus recounted her story to her young friend:—

"My father," she said, "was a merchant, but he was of a city whose merchants are princes. I am the daughter of a noble house in Genoa, whose name stood as high in honour and in antiquity, as any inscribed in the golden register of that famous aristocracy."

"My mother was a noble Scotchwoman. She was descended—do not start—and not remotely descended, of the house of Glenvarloch—no wonder that I was easily led to take concern in the misfortunes of this young lord. He is my near relation, and my mother, who was more than sufficiently proud of her descent, early taught me to take an interest in the name. My maternal grandfather, a cadet of that house of Glenvarloch, had followed the fortunes of an unhappy fugitive, Francis Earl of Bothwell, who, after showing his miseries in many a foreign court, at length settled in Spain upon a miserable pension, which he earned by conforming to the catholic faith. Ralph Olifaunt, my grandfather, separated from him in disgust, and settled at Barcelona, where, by the friendship of the governor, his heresy, as it was termed, was connived at. My father, in the course of his commerce, resided more at Barcelona than in his native country, though at times he visited Genoa.

"It was at Barcelona that he became acquainted with my mother, loved her, and married her; they differed in faith, but they agreed in affection. I was their only child. In public I conformed to the doctrines and ceremonial of the church of Rome; but my mother, by whom these were regarded with horror, privately trained me up in those of the reformed religion; and my father, either indifferent in the matter, or unwilling to distress the woman whom he loved, overlooked or connived at my secretly joining in her devotions.

"But when, unhappily, my father was attacked, while yet in the prime of life, by a slow wasting disease, which he felt to be incurable, he foresaw the hazard to which his widow and orphan might be exposed, after he was no more, in a country so bigoted to catholicism as Spain. He made it his business, during the two last years of his life, to realize and to remit to England a large part of his fortune, which, by the faith and honour of his correspondent, the excellent man under whose roof I now reside, was employed to great advantage. Had my father lived to complete his purpose by withdrawing his whole fortune from commerce, he himself would have accompanied us to England, and would have beheld us settled in peace and honour before his death. But Heaven had ordained it otherwise. He died, leaving several sums engaged in the hands of his Spanish debtors; and, in particular, he had made a large and extensive consignment to a certain wealthy society of merchants at Madrid, who showed no willingness after his death to account for the proceeds. Would to God we had left these covetous and wicked men in possession of their booty, for such they seemed to hold the property of their deceased correspondent and friend. We had enough for comfort, and even splendour, already secured in England; but friends exclaimed upon the folly of permitting these unprincipled men to plunder us of our rightful property. The sum itself was large, and the claim having been made, my mother thought that my father's memory was interested in its being enforced, especially as the defences set up for the mercantile society went, in some degree, to impeach the fairness of his transactions.

"We went therefore to Madrid. I was then, my

Margaret, about your age, young and thoughtless, as you have hitherto been.—We went, I say, to Madrid, to solicit the protection of the court and of the king, without which we were told it would be in vain to expect justice against an opulent and powerful association.

"Our residence at the Spanish metropolis drew on from weeks to months. For my part, my natural sorrow for a kind, though not a fond father, having abated, I cared not if the law-suit had detained us at Madrid for ever. My mother permitted herself and me rather more liberty than we had been accustomed to. She found relations among the Scottish and Irish officers, many of whom held a high rank in the Spanish armies; their wives and daughters became our friends and companions, and I had perpetual occasion to exercise my mother's native language, which I learned from my infancy. By degrees, as my mother's spirits were low, and her health indifferent, she was induced, by her partial fondness for me, to suffer me to mingle occasionally in society which she herself did not frequent, under the guardianship of such ladies as she imagined she could trust, and particularly under the care of the lady of a general officer, whose weakness or falsehood was the original cause of my misfortunes. I was as gay, Margaret, and thoughtless—I again repeat it—as you were but lately, and my attention, like yours, became suddenly riveted to one object, and to one set of feelings.

"The person by whom they were excited was young, noble, handsome, accomplished, a soldier, and a Briton. So far our cases are nearly parallel; but, may Heaven forbid that the parallel should become complete! This man, so noble, so fairly formed, so gifted, and so brave—this *villain*, for that, Margaret, was his fittest name, spoke of love to me, and I listened—Could I suspect his sincerity? If he was wealthy, noble, and long-descended, I also was a noble and an opulent heiress. It is true that he neither knew the extent of my father's wealth, nor did I communicate to him (I do not even remember if I myself knew it at the time) the important circumstance, that the greater part of that wealth was beyond the grasp of arbitrary power, and not subject to the precarious award of arbitrary judges. My lover might think, perhaps, as my mother was desirous the world at large should believe, that almost our whole fortune depended on the precarious suit which we had come to Madrid to prosecute—a belief which she had countenanced out of policy, being well aware that a knowledge of my father's having remitted such a large part of his fortune to England, would in no shape aid the recovery of further sums in the Spanish courts. Yet, with no more extensive views of my fortune than were possessed by the public, I believe that he, of whom I am speaking, was at first sincere in his pretensions. He had himself interest sufficient to have obtained a decision in our favour in the courts, and my fortune, reckoning only what was in Spain, would then have been no inconsiderable sum. To be brief, whatever might be his motives or temptation for so far committing himself, he applied to my mother for my hand, with my consent and approval. My mother's judgment had become weaker, but her pas-

sions had become more irritable, during her increasing illness.

"You have heard of the bitterness of the ancient Scottish feuds, of which it may be said, in the language of Scripture, that the fathers eat sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge. Unhappily, I should say *happily*, considering what this man has now shown himself,—some such strain of bitterness had divided his house from my mother's, and she had succeeded to the inheritance of hatred. When he asked her for my hand, she was no longer able to command her passions—she raked up every injury which the rival families had inflicted upon each other during a bloody feud of two centuries—heaped him with epithets of scorn, and rejected his proposal of alliance as if it had come from the basest of mankind.

"My lover retired in passion; and I remained to weep and murmur against fortune, and—I will confess my fault—against my affectionate parent. I had been educated with different feelings, and the traditions of the feuds and quarrels of my mother's family in Scotland, which were to her monuments and chronicles, seemed to me as insignificant and unmeaning as the actions and fantasies of Don Quixote; and I blamed my mother bitterly for sacrificing my happiness to an empty dream of family dignity.

"While I was in this humour, my lover sought a renewal of our intercourse. We met repeatedly in the house of the lady whom I have mentioned, and who, in levity, or in the spirit of intrigue, countenanced our secret correspondence. At length we were secretly married—so far did my blinded passion hurry me. My lover had secured the assistance of a clergyman of this English church. Monna Paula, who had been my attendant from infancy, was one witness of our union. Let me do this faithful creature justice—She conjured me to suspend my purpose till my mother's death should permit us to celebrate our marriage openly; but the entreaties of my lover, and my own wayward passion, prevailed over her remonstrances. The lady I have spoken of was another witness, but whether she was in full possession of my bridegroom's secret, I had never the means to learn. But the shelter of her name and roof afforded us the means of frequently meeting, and the love of my husband seemed as sincere and unbounded as my own.

"He was eager, he said, to gratify his pride, by introducing me to one or two of his noble English friends. This could not be done at Lady D—'s; but by his command, which I was now entitled to consider as my law, I contrived twice to visit him at his own hotel, accompanied only by Monna Paula. There was a very small party, of two ladies and two gentlemen. There was music, mirth, and dancing. I had heard of the frankness of the English nation, but I could not help thinking it bordered on license during these entertainments, and in the course of the collation which followed; but I imputed my scruples to my inexperience, and would not doubt the propriety of what was approved by my husband.

"I was soon summoned to other scenes: My poor mother's disease drew to a conclusion—Happy I am that it took place before she discovered what would have cut her to the soul.

"In Spain you may have heard how the catholic priests, and particularly the monks, besiege the beds of the dying, to obtain bequests for the good of the church. I have said that my mother's temper was irritated by disease, and her judgment impaired in proportion. She gathered spirits and force from the resentment which the priests around her bed excited by their importunity, and the spirit of the stern sect of reformers, to which she had secretly adhered, seemed to animate her dying tongue. She avowed the religion she had so long concealed; renounced all hope and aid which did not come by and through its dictates; rejected with contempt the ceremonial of the Romish church; loaded the astonished priests with reproaches for their greediness and hypocrisy, and commanded them to leave her house. They went in bitterness and rage, but it was to return with the inquisitorial power, its warrant, and its officers; and they found only the cold corpse left of her, on whom they had hoped to work their vengeance. As I was soon discovered to have shared my mother's heresy, I was dragged from her dead body, imprisoned in a solitary cloister, and treated with severity, which the abbess assured me was due to the looseness of my life, as well as my spiritual errors. I avowed my marriage, to justify the situation in which I found myself—I implored the assistance of the superior to communicate my situation to my husband. She smiled coldly at the proposal, and told me the church had provided a better spouse for me; advised me to secure myself of divine grace hereafter, and deserve milder treatment here, by presently taking the veil. In order to convince me that I had no other resource, she showed me a royal decree, by which all my estate was hypothecated to the Convent of Saint Magdalen, and became their complete property upon my death, or my taking the vows. As I was, both from religious principle, and affectionate attachment to my husband, absolutely immovable in my rejection of the veil, I believe—may Heaven forgive me if I wrong her!—that the abbess was desirous to make sure of my spoils, by hastening the former event.

"It was a small and a poor convent, and situated among the mountains of Guadarama. Some of the sisters were the daughters of neighbouring hidalgos, as poor as they were proud and ignorant; others were women immured there on account of their vicious conduct. The superior herself was of a high family, to which she owed her situation; but she was said to have disgraced her connexions by her conduct during youth, and now, in advanced age, covetousness and the love of power, a spirit too of severity and cruelty, had succeeded to the thirst after licentious pleasure. I suffered much under this woman—and still her dark, glassy eye, her tall, shrouded form, and her rigid features, haunt my slumbers.

"I was not destined to be a mother. I was very ill, and my recovery was long and doubtful. The most violent remedies were applied, if remedies they indeed were. My health was restored at length, against my own expectation and that of all around me. But, when I first again beheld the reflection of my own face, I thought it was the visage of a ghost. I was wont to be flattered by all, but particularly by my husband, for the fineness of my com-

plexion—it was now totally gone, and, what is more extraordinary, it has never returned. I have observed that the few who now see me, look upon me as a bloodless phantom—Such has been the abiding effect of the treatment to which I was subjected. May God forgive those who were the agents of it!—I thank Heaven I can say so with as sincere a wish, as that with which I pray for forgiveness of my own sins. They now relented somewhat towards me—moved perhaps to compassion by my singular appearance, which bore witness to my sufferings; or afraid that the matter might attract attention during a visitation of the bishop, which was approaching. One day, as I was walking in the convent garden, to which I had been lately admitted, a miserable old Moorish slave, who was kept to cultivate the little spot, muttered as I passed him, but still keeping his wrinkled face and decrepit form in the same angle with the earth—‘There is heart’s ease near the postern.’

“I knew something of the symbolical language of flowers, once carried to such perfection among the Moriscoes of Spain; but, if I had been ignorant of it, the captive would soon have caught at any hint that seemed to promise liberty. With all the haste consistent with the utmost circumspection, for I might be observed by the abbess or some of the sisters from the window, I hastened to the postern. It was closely barred as usual, but when I coughed slightly, I was answered from the other side—and, O Heaven! it was my husband’s voice which said, ‘Lose not a minute here at present, but be on this spot when the vesper bell has tolled.’

“I retired in an ecstasy of joy. I was not entitled or permitted to assist at vespers, but was accustomed to be confined to my cell while the nuns were in the choir. Since my recovery, they had discontinued locking the door; though the utmost severity was denounced against me if I left these precincts. But, let the penalty be what it would, I hastened to dare it.—No sooner had the last toll of the vesper bell ceased to sound, than I stole from my chamber, reached the garden unobserved, hurried to the postern, beheld it open with rapture, and in the next moment was in my husband’s arms. He had with him another cavalier of noble mien—both were masqued and armed. Their horses, with one saddled for my use, stood in a thicket hard by, with two other masqued horsemen, who seemed to be servants. In less than two minutes we were mounted, and rode off as fast as we could, through rough and devious roads, in which one of the domestics appeared to act as guide.

“The hurried pace at which we rode, and the anxiety of the moment, kept me silent, and prevented my expressing my surprise or my joy save in a few broken words. It also served as an apology for my husband’s silence. At length we stopped at a solitary hut—the cavaliers dismounted, and I was assisted from my saddle, not by—by—my husband, I would say, who seemed busied about his horse, but by the stranger.

“‘Go into the hut,’ said my husband, ‘change your dress with the speed of lightning—you will find one to assist you—we must forward instantly when you have shifted your apparel.’

“I entered the hut, and was received in the arms of the faithful Monna Paula, who had waited my arrival for many hours, half distracted with fear and anxiety. With her assistance I speedily tore off the detested garments of the convent, and exchanged them for a travelling-suit, made after the English fashion. I observed that Monna Paula was in a similar dress. I had but just huddled on my change of attire, when we were hastily summoned to mount. A horse, I found, was provided for Monna Paula, and we resumed our route. On the way, my convent garb, which had been wrapped hastily together around a stone, was thrown into a lake, along the verge of which we were then passing. The two cavaliers rode together in front, my attendant and I followed, and the servants brought up the rear. Monna Paula, as we rode on, repeatedly entreated me to be silent on the road, as our lives depended on it. I was easily reconciled to be passive, for, the first fever of spirits which attended the sense of liberation and of gratified affection having passed away, I felt as it were dizzy with the rapid motion; and my utmost exertion was necessary to keep my place on the saddle, until we suddenly (it was now very dark) saw a strong light before us.

“My husband reined up his horse, and gave a signal, by a low whistle twice repeated, which was answered from a distance. The whole party then halted under the boughs of a large cork-tree, and my husband, drawing himself close to my side, said, in a voice which I then thought was only embarrassed by fear for my safety,—‘We must now part. Those to whom I commit you are *contrabandistes*, who only know you as Englishwomen, but who, for a high bribe, have undertaken to escort you through the passes of the Pyrenees as far as Saint Jean de Luz.’

“‘And do *you* not go with us?’ I exclaimed with emphasis, though in a whisper.

“‘It is impossible,’ he said, ‘and would ruin all—See that you speak in English in these people’s hearing, and give not the least sign of understanding what they say in Spanish—your life depends on it; for, though they live in opposition to, and evasion of, the laws of Spain, they would tremble at the idea of violating those of the church—I see them coming—farewell—farewell.’

“The last words were hastily uttered—I endeavoured to detain him yet a moment by my feeble grasp on his cloak.

“‘You will meet me, then, I trust, at Saint Jean de Luz?’

“‘Yes, yes,’ he answered hastily, ‘at Saint Jean de Luz you will meet your protector.’

“He then extricated his cloak from my grasp, and was lost in the darkness. His companion approached—kissed my hand, which in the agony of the moment I was scarce sensible of, and followed my husband, attended by one of the domestics.”

The tears of Hermione here flowed so fast as to threaten the interruption of her narrative.—When she resumed it, it was with a kind of apology to Margaret.

“Every circumstance,” she said, “occurring in these moments, when I still enjoyed a delusive idea of happiness, are deeply imprinted in my remem-

brance, which, respecting all that has since happened, is waste and unvaried as an Arabian desert. But I have no right to inflict on you, Margaret, agitated as you are with your own anxieties, the unavailing details of my useless recollections."

Margaret's eyes were full of tears—it was impossible it could be otherwise, considering that the tale was told by her suffering benefactress, and resembled, in some respects, her own situation; and yet she must not be severely blamed, if, while eagerly pressing her patroness to continue her narrative, her eye involuntarily sought the door, as if to chide the delay of Monna Paula.

The Lady Hermione saw and forgave these conflicting emotions; and she, too, must be pardoned, if, in her turn, the minute detail of her narrative showed, that, in the discharge of feelings so long locked in her own bosom, she rather forgot those which were personal to her auditor, and by which it must be supposed Margaret's mind was principally occupied, if not entirely engrossed.

"I told you, I think, that one domestic followed the gentlemen," thus the lady continued her story, "the other remained with us for the purpose, as it seemed, of introducing us to two persons whom M—I say, whom my husband's signal had brought to the spot. A word or two of explanation passed between them and the servant, in a sort of *patois*, which I did not understand; and one of the strangers taking hold of my bridle, the other of Monna Paula's, they led us towards the light, which I have already said was the signal of our halting. I touched Monna Paula, and was sensible that she trembled very much, which surprised me, because I knew her character to be so strong and bold as to border upon the masculine.

"When we reached the fire, the gipsy figures of those who surrounded it, with their swarthy features, large Sombrero hats, girdles stuck full of pistols and poniards, and all the other apparatus of a roving and perilous life, would have terrified me at another moment. But then I only felt the agony of having parted from my husband almost in the very moment of my rescue. The females of the gang, for there were four or five women amongst these contraband traders, received us with a sort of rude courtesy. They were, in dress and manners, not extremely different from the men with whom they associated—were almost as hardy and adventurous, carried arms like them, and were, as we learned from passing circumstances, scarce less experienced in the use of them.

"It was impossible not to fear these wild people, yet they gave us no reason to complain of them; but used us on all occasions with a kind of clumsy courtesy, accommodating themselves to our wants and our weakness during the journey, even while we heard them grumbling to each other against our effeminacy,—like some rude carrier, who, in charge of a package of valuable and fragile ware, takes every precaution for its preservation, while he curses the unwonted trouble which it occasions to him. Once or twice, when they were disappointed in their contraband traffic, lost some goods in a rencontre with the Spanish officers of the revenue, and were finally pursued by a military force, their mur-

murs assumed a more alarming tone, in the terrified ears of my attendant and myself, when, without daring to seem to understand them, we heard them curse the insular heretics, on whose account God, Saint James, and Our Lady of the Pillar, had blighted their hopes of profit. These are dreadful recollections, Margaret."

"Why, then, dearest lady," answered Margaret, "will you thus dwell on them?"

"It is only," said the Lady Hermione, "because I linger like a criminal on the scaffold, and would fain protract the time that must inevitably bring on the final catastrophe. Yes, dearest Margaret, I rest and dwell on the events of that journey, marked as it was by fatigue and danger, though the road lay through the wildest and most desolate deserts and mountains, and though our companions, both men and women, were fierce and lawless themselves, and exposed to the most merciless retaliation from those with whom they were constantly engaged—yet would I rather dwell on these hazardous events than tell that which awaited me at Saint Jean de Luz."

"But you arrived there in safety?" said Margaret.

"Yes, maiden," replied the Lady Hermione; "and were guided by the chief of our outlawed band to the house which had been assigned for our reception, with the same punctilious accuracy with which he would have delivered a bale of uncustomed goods to a correspondent. I was told a gentleman had expected me for two days—I rushed into the apartment, and, when I expected to embrace my husband—I found myself in the arms of his friend."

"The villain!" exclaimed Margaret, whose anxiety had, in spite of herself, been a moment suspended by the narrative of the lady.

"Yes," replied Hermione, calmly, though her voice somewhat faltered, "it is the name that best—that well befits him. He, Margaret, for whom I had sacrificed all—whose love and whose memory were dearer to me than my freedom, when I was in the convent—than my life, when I was on my perilous journey—had taken his measures to shake me off, and transfer me, as a privileged wanton, to the protection of his libertine friend. At first the stranger laughed at my tears and my agony, as the hysterical passion of a deluded and overreached wanton, or the wily affectation of a courtesan. My claim of marriage he laughed at, assuring me he knew it was a mere farce required by me, and submitted to by his friend, to save some reserve of delicacy; and expressed his surprise that I should consider in any other light a ceremony which could be valid neither in Spain nor England, and insultingly offered to remove my scruples, by renewing such a union with me himself. My exclamations brought Monna Paula to my aid—she was not, indeed, far distant, for she had expected some such scene."

"Good Heaven!" said Margaret, "was she a confidante of your base husband?"

"No," answered Hermione, "do her not that injustice. It was her persevering inquiries that discovered the place of my confinement—it was she who gave the information to my husband, and who

remarked even then that the news was so much more interesting to his friend than to him, that she suspected, from an early period, it was the purpose of the villain to shake me off. On the journey, her suspicions were confirmed. She had heard him remark to his companion, with a cold sarcastic sneer, the total change which my prison and my illness had made on my complexion; and she had heard the other reply, that the defect might be cured by a touch of Spanish red. This and other circumstances having prepared her for such treachery, Monna Paula now entered, completely possessed of herself, and prepared to support me. Her calm representations went farther with the stranger than the expressions of my despair. If he did not entirely believe our tale, he at least acted the part of a man of honour, who would not intrude himself on defenceless females, whatever was their character; desisted from persecuting us with his presence; and not only directed Monna Paula how we should journey to Paris, but furnished her with money for the purpose of our journey. From the capital I wrote to Master Heriot, my father's most trusted correspondent; he came instantly to Paris on receiving the letter; and——But here comes Monna Paula, with more than the sum you desired. Take it, my dearest maiden—serve this youth if you will. But, O Margaret, look for no gratitude in return!"

The Lady Hermione took the bag of gold from her attendant, and gave it to her young friend, who threw herself into her arms, kissed her on both the pale cheeks, over which the sorrows so newly awakened by her narrative had drawn many tears, then sprung up, wiped her own overflowing eyes, and left the Foljambe apartment with a hasty and resolved step.

CHAPTER XXI.

*Rove not from pole to pole—the man lives here
Whose razor 's only equall'd by his beer;
And where, in either sense, the cockney-put
May, if he pleases, get confounded cut.*

On the sign of an Alehouse kept by a Barber.

WE are under the necessity of transporting our readers to the habitation of Benjamin Suddlechops, the husband of the active and efficient Dame Ursula, and who also, in his own person, discharged more offices than one. For, besides trimming locks and beards, and turning whiskers upwards into the martial and swaggering curl, or downwards into the drooping form which became moustaches of civil policy; besides also occasionally letting blood, either by cupping or by the lancet, extracting a stump, and performing other actions of petty pharmacy, very nearly as well as his neighbour Rare-drench the apothecary; he could, on occasion, draw a cup of beer as well as a tooth, tap a hogshead as well as a vein, and wash, with a draught of good ale, the moustaches which his art had just trimmed. But he carried on these trades apart from each other.

His barber's shop projected its long and mysterious pole into Fleet-street, painted party-coloured wise, to represent the ribbons with which, in elder times, that ensign was garnished. In the

window were seen rows of teeth displayed upon strings like rosaries—cups with a red rag at the bottom, to resemble blood, an intimation that patients might be bled, cupped, or blistered, with the assistance of "sufficient advice;" while the more profitable, but less honourable operations upon the hair of the head and beard, were briefly and gravely announced. Within was the well-worn leathern chair of customers, the guitar, then called a ghittern or cittern, with which a customer might amuse himself till his predecessor was dismissed from under Benjamin's hands, and which, therefore, often flayed the ears of the patient metaphorically, while his chin sustained from the razor literal scarification. All, therefore, in this department, spoke the chirurgeon-barber, or the barber-chirurgeon.

But there was a little back-room, used as a private tap-room, which had a separate entrance by a dark and crooked alley, which communicated with Fleet-street, after a circuitous passage through several by-lanes and courts. This retired temple of Bacchus had also a connexion with Benjamin's more public shop by a long and narrow entrance, conducting to the secret premises, in which a few old toppers used to take their morning draught, and a few gill-sippers their modicum of strong waters, in a bashful way, after having entered the barber's shop under pretence of desiring to be shaved. Besides, this obscure tap-room gave a separate admission to the apartments of Dame Ursula, which she was believed to make use of in the course of her multifarious practice, both to let herself secretly out, and to admit clients and employers who cared not to be seen to visit her in public. Accordingly, after the hour of noon, by which time the modest and timid whetters, who were Benjamin's best customers, had each had his draught, or his thimble-full, the business of the tap was in a manner ended, and the charge of attending the back-door passed from one of the barber's apprentices to the little mulatto girl, the dingy Iris of Dame Suddlechops. Then came mystery thick upon mystery; muffled gallants, and masqued females, in disguises of different fashions, were seen to glide through the intricate mazes of the alley; and even the low tap on the door, which frequently demanded the attention of the little Creole, had in it something that expressed secrecy and fear of discovery.

It was the evening of the same day when Margaret had held the long conference with the Lady Hermione, that Dame Suddlechops had directed her little portress to "keep the door fast as a miser's purse-strings; and, as she valued her saffron skin, to let in none but——" the name she added in a whisper, and accompanied it with a nod. The little animal blinked intelligence, went to her post, and in brief time thereafter admitted and ushered into the presence of the dame, that very city-gallant whose clothes sat awkwardly upon him, and who had behaved so doughtily in the fray which befel at Nigel's first visit to Beaujeu's ordinary. The mulatto introduced him—"Missis, fine young gentleman, all over gold and velvet,"—then muttered to herself as she shut the door, "fine young gentleman, he!—apprentice to him who makes the tick-tick."

It was indeed—we are sorry to say it, and trust

our readers will sympathize with the interest we take in the matter—it was indeed honest Jin Vin, who had been so far left to his own devices, and abandoned by his better angel, as occasionally to travesty himself in this fashion, and to visit, in the dress of a gallant of the day, those places of pleasure and dissipation, in which it would have been everlasting discredit to him to have been seen in his real character and condition; that is, had it been possible for him in his proper shape to have gained admission. There was now a deep gloom on his brow; his rich habit was hastily put on, and buttoned awry; his belt buckled in a most disorderly fashion, so that his sword stuck outwards from his side, instead of hanging by it with graceful negligence; while his poniard, though fairly hatched and gilded, stuck in his girdle like a butcher's steel in the fold of his blue apron. Persons of fashion had, by the way, the advantage formerly of being better distinguished from the vulgar than at present; for, what the ancient farthingale and more modern hoop were to court ladies, the sword was to the gentleman; an article of dress, which only rendered those ridiculous who assumed it for the nonce, without being in the habit of wearing it. Vincent's rapier got between his legs, and, as he stumbled over it, he exclaimed—"Zounds! 'tis the second time it has served me thus—I believe the damned trinket knows I am no true gentleman, and does it of set purpose."

"Come, come, mine honest Jin Vin—come, my good boy," said the dame in a soothing tone, "never mind these trankums—a frank and hearty London 'prentice is worth all the gallants of the inns of court."

"I *was* a frank and hearty London 'prentice before I knew you, Dame Suddlechops," said Vincent; "what your advice has made me you may find a name for; since, 'fore George! I am ashamed to think about it myself."

"A-well-a-day!" quoth the dame, "and is it even so with thee?—nay, then, I know but one cure;" and with that, going to a little corner-cupboard of carved wainscot, she opened it by the assistance of a key, which, with half-a-dozen besides, hung in a silver chain at her girdle, and produced a long flask of thin glass cased with wicker, bringing forth at the same time two Flemish rummer glasses, with long stocks and capacious wombs. She filled the one brimful for her guest, and the other more modestly to about two-thirds of its capacity for her own use, repeating, as the rich cordial trickled forth in a smooth, oily stream—"Right rosa solis as ever washed mulligrubs out of a moody brain."

But, though Jin Vin tossed off his glass without scruple, while the lady sipped hers more moderately, it did not appear to produce the expected amendment upon his humour. On the contrary, as he threw himself into the great leathern chair in which Dame Ursley was wont to solace herself of an evening, he declared himself "the most miserable dog within the sound of Bow-bell."

"And why should you be so idle as to think yourself so, silly boys?" said Dame Suddlechops; "but 'tis always thus—fools and children never know when they are well. Why, there is not a one that walks

in St Paul's, whether in flat cap or hat and feather, that has so many kind glances from the wenches, as ye swagger along Fleet-street, with your bat under your arm and your cap set aside upon your head.—Thou knowest well that, from Mrs Deputy's self down to the waistcoateers in the alley, all of them are twiring and peeping betwixt their fingers when you pass; and yet you call yourself a miserable dog! and I must tell you all this over and over again, as if I were whistling the chimes of London to a petted child, in order to bring the pretty baby into good humour!"

The flattery of Dame Ursula seemed to have the fate of her cordial—it was swallowed, indeed, by the party to whom she presented it, and that with some degree of relish; but it did not operate as a sedative on the disturbed state of the youth's mind. He laughed for an instant, half in scorn and half in gratified vanity—but cast a sullen look on Dame Ursley as he replied to her last words.

"You do treat me like a child, indeed, when you sing over and over to me a cuckoo song that I care not a copper-filing for."

"Aha!" said Dame Ursley; "that is to say, you care not if you please all, unless you please one—You are a true lover, I warrant, and care not for all the city, from here to Whitechapel, so you could write yourself first in your pretty Peg-a-Ramsay's good will. Well, well, take patience, man, and be guided by me, for I will be the hoop will bind you together at last."

"It is time you were so," said Jenkins, "for hitherto you have rather been the wedge to separate us."

Dame Suddlechops had by this time finished her cordial—it was not the first she had taken that day; and, though a woman of strong brain, and cautious at least, if not abstemious, in her potations, it may nevertheless be supposed that her patience was not improved by the regimen which she observed.

"Why, thou ungracious and ingrate knave," said Dame Ursley, "have not I done everything to put thee in thy mistress's good graces? She loves gentry, the proud Scotch minx, as a Welchman loves cheese, and has her father's descent from that Duke of Daldevil, or whatsoever she calls him, as close in her heart as gold in a miser's chest, though she as seldom shows it—and none she will think of, or have, but a gentleman—and a gentleman I have made of thee, Jin Vin, the devil cannot deny that."

"You have made a fool of me," said poor Jenkin, looking at the sleeve of his jacket.

"Never the worse gentleman for that," said Dame Ursley, laughing.

"And what is worse," said he, turning his back to her suddenly, and writhing in his chair, "you have made a rogue of me."

"Never the worse gentleman for that neither," said Dame Ursley, in the same tone; "let a man bear his folly gaily and his knavery stoutly, and let me see if gravity or honesty will look him in the face now-a-days. Tut, man, it was only in the days of King Arthur or King Lud, that a gentleman was held to blemish his scutcheon by a leap over the line of reason or honesty—It is the bold look,

the ready hand, the fine clothes, the brisk oath, and the wild brain, that makes the gallant now-a-days."

"I know what you have made me," said Jin Vin; "since I have given up skittle and trap-ball for tennis and bowls, good English ale for thin Bourdeaux and sour Rhenish, roast-beef and pudding for woodcocks and kick-shaws—my bat for a sword, my cap for a beaver, my forseoth for a modish oath, my Christmas-box for a dice-box, my religion for the devil's matins, and mine honest name for—Woman, I could brain thee, when I think whose advice has guided me in all this!"

"Whose advice, then? whose advice, then?—Speak out, thou poor, petty cloak-brusher, and say who advised thee!" retorted Dame Ursley, flushed and indignant—"Marry come up, my paltry companion—say by whose advice you have made a gamester of yourself, and a thief beside, as your words would bear—The Lord deliver us from evil!" And here Dame Ursley devoutly crossed herself.

"Hark ye, Dame Ursley Saddlechops," said Jenkin, starting up, his dark eyes flashing with anger; "remember I am none of your husband—and, if I were, you would do well not to forget whose threshold was swept when they last rode the Skimmington* upon such another scolding jade as yourself."

"I hope to see you ride up Holborn next," said Dame Ursley, provoked out of all her holiday and sugar-plum expressions, "with a nosegay at your breast, and a priest at your elbow."

"That may well be," answered Jin Vin, bitterly, "if I walk by your counsels as I have begun by them; but, before that day comes, you shall know that Jin Vin has the brisk boys of Fleet street still at his wink—Yes, you jade, you shall be carted for bawd and conjuror, double-dyed in grain, and bing off to Bridewell, with every brass basin betwixt the Bar and Paul's beating before you, as if the devil were banging them with his beef-hook."

Dame Ursley coloured like scarlet, seized upon the half-emptied flask of cordial, and seemed, by her first gesture, about to hurl it at the head of her adversary; but suddenly, and as if by a strong internal effort, she checked her outrageous resentment, and, putting the bottle to its more legitimate use, filled, with wonderful composure, the two glasses, and, taking up one of them, said, with a smile, which better became her comely and jovial countenance than the fury by which it was animated the moment before—

"Here is to thee, Jin Vin, my lad, in all loving

* A species of triumphal procession in honour of female supremacy, when it rose to such a height as to attract the attention of the neighbourhood. It is described at full length in *Hudibras* (*Part II. Canto II*). As the procession passed on, those who attended it in an official capacity were wont to sweep the threshold of the houses in which Fame affirmed the mistresses to exercise paramount authority, which was given and received as a hint that their inmates might, in their turn, be made the subject of a similar ovation. The Skimmington, which in some degree resembled the proceeding of Mumbo Jumbo in an African village, has been long discontinued in England, apparently because female rule has become either milder or less frequent than among our ancestors.

kindness, whatever spite thou hearest to me, that have always been a mother to thee."

Jenkin's English good nature could not resist this forcible appeal; he took up the other glass, and lovingly pledged the dame in her cup of reconciliation, and proceeded to make a kind of grumbling apology for his own violence—

"For you know," he said, "it was you persuaded me to get these fine things, and go to that godless ordinary, and ruffle it with the best, and bring you home all the news; and you said, I, that was the cock of the ward, would soon be the cock of the ordinary, and would win ten times as much at gleek and primero, as I used to do at put and beggar-my-neighbour—and turn up doublets with the dice, as busily as I was wont to trowl down the nine-pins in the skittle-ground—and then you said I should bring you such news out of the ordinary as should make us all, when used as you knew how to use it—and now you see what is to come of it all."

"'Tis all true thou sayest, lad," said the dame; "but thou must have patience. Rome was not built in a day—you cannot become used to your court-suit in a month's time, any more than when you changed your long coat for a doublet and hose; and in gaming you must expect to lose as well as gain—'tis the sitting gamester sweeps the board."

"The board has swept me, I know," replied Jin Vin, "and that pretty clean out.—I would that were the worst; but I owe for all this finery, and settling-day is coming on, and my master will find my account worse than it should be, by a score of pieces. My old father will be called in to make them good; and I—may save the hangman a labour and do the job myself, or go the Virginia voyage."

"Do not speak so loud, my dear boy," said Dame Ursley; "but tell me why you borrow not from a friend to make up your arrear. You could lend him as much when his settling-day came around."

"No, no—I have had enough of that work," said Vincent. "Tunstall would lend me the money, poor fellow, an he had it; but his gentle, beggarly kindred plunder him of all, and keep him as bare as a birch at Christmas. No—my fortune may be spelt in four letters, and these read, RUIN."

"Now hush, you simple craven," said the dame; "did you never hear, that when the need is highest the help is nighest? We may find aid for you yet, and sooner than you are aware of. I am sure I would never have advised you to such a course, but only you had set heart and eye on pretty Mistress Marget, and less would not serve you—and what could I do but advise you to cast your city-slough, and try your luck where folks find fortune?"

"Ay, ay—I remember your counsel well," said Jenkin; "I was to be introduced to her by you when I was perfect in my gallantries, and as rich as the king; and then she was to be surprised to find I was poor Jin Vin, that used to watch, from matin to curfew, for one glance of her eye; and now, instead of that, she has set her soul on this Scotch sparrowhawk of a lord that won my last tester, and be cursed to him; and so I am bankrupt in love, fortune, and character, before I am out of my time, and all along of you, Mother Midnight."

"Do not call me out of my own name, my dear

boy, Jin Vin," answered Ursula, in a tone betwixt rage and coaxing,—“do not ; because I am no saint, but a poor sinful woman, with no more patience than she needs, to carry her through a thousand crosses. And if I have done you wrong by evil counsel, I must mend it, and put you right by good advice. And for the score of pieces that must be made up at settling-day, why, here is, in a good green purse, as much as will make that matter good ; and we will get old Crosspatch, the tailor, to take a long day for your clothes ; and”——

“Mother, are you serious ?” said Jin Vin, unable to trust either his eyes or his ears.

“In troth am I,” said the dame ; “and will you call me Mother Midnight now, Jin Vin ?”

“Mother Midnight !” exclaimed Jenkin, hugging the dame in his transport, and bestowing on her still comely cheek a hearty and not unacceptable smack, that sounded like the report of a pistol,—“Mother Mid-day rather, that has risen to light me out of my troubles—a mother more dear than she who bore me ; for she, poor soul, only brought me into a world of sin and sorrow, and your timely aid has helped me out of the one and the other.” And the good-natured fellow threw himself back in his chair, and fairly drew his hand across his eyes.

“You would not have me be made to ride the Skimmington, then,” said the dame ; “or parade me in a cart, with all the brass basins of the ward beating the march to Bridewell before me ?”

“I would sooner be carried to Tyburn myself,” replied the penitent.

“Why, then, sit up like a man, and wipe thine eyes ; and if thou art pleased with what I have done, I will show thee how thou mayest requite me in the highest degree.”

“How ?” said Jenkin Vincent, sitting straight up in his chair.—“You would have me, then, do you some service for this friendship of yours ?”

“Ay, marry would I,” said dame Ursely ; “for you are to know, that though I am right glad to stead you with it, this gold is not mine, but was placed in my hands in order to find a trusty agent, for a certain purpose ; and so——But what’s the matter with you ?—are you fool enough to be angry, because you cannot get a purse of gold for nothing ? I would I knew where such were to come by. I never could find them lying in my road, I promise you.”

“No, no, dame,” said poor Jenkin, “it is not for that ; for, look you, I would rather work these ten bones to the knuckles, and live by my labour ; but——” and here he paused.

“But what, man ?” said Dame Ursley. “You are willing to work for what you want ; and yet, when I offer you gold for the winning, you look on me as the devil looks over Lincoln.”

“It is ill talking of the devil, mother,” said Jenkin. “I had him even now in my head—for, look you, I am at that pass, when they say he will appear to wretched ruined creatures, and proffer them gold for the fee-simple of their salvation. But I have been trying these two days to bring my mind strongly up to the thought, that I will rather sit down in shame, and sin, and sorrow, as I am like to do, than hold on in ill courses to get rid of my present

straits ; and so take care, Dame Ursula, how you tempt me to break such a good resolution.”

“I tempt you to nothing, young man,” answered Ursula ; “and, as I perceive you are too wilful to be wise, I will e’en put my purse in my pocket, and look out for some one that will work my turn with better will, and more thankfulness. And you may go your own course,—break your indenture, ruin your father, lose your character, and bid pretty Mistress Marget farewell, for ever and a day.”

“Stay, stay,” said Jenkin ; “the woman is in as great a hurry as a brown baker when his oven is over-heated. First, let me hear that which you have to propose to me.”

“Why, after all, it is but to get a gentleman of rank and fortune, who is in trouble, carried in secret down the river, as far as the Isle of Dogs, or somewhere thereabout, where he may lie concealed until he can escape abroad. I know thou knowest every place by the river’s side as well as the devil knows an usurer, or the beggar knows his dish.”

“A plague of your similies, dame,” replied the apprentice ; “for the devil gave me that knowledge, and beggary may be the end on’t.—But what has this gentleman done, that he should need to be under hiding ? No papist, I hope—no Catesby and Piercy business—no Gunpowder Plot ?”

“Fie, fie !—what do you take me for ?” said Dame Ursula. “I am as good a churchwoman as the parson’s wife, save that necessary business will not allow me to go there oftener than on Christmas-day, Heaven help me !—No, no—this is no popish matter. The gentleman hath but struck another in the park”——

“Ha ! what ?” said Vincent, interrupting her with a start.

“Ay, ay, I see you guess whom I mean. It is even he we have spoken of so often—just Lord Glenvarloch, and no one else.”

Vincent sprung from his seat, and traversed the room with rapid and disorderly steps.

“There, there it is now—you are always ice or gunpowder. You sit in the great leathern arm-chair, as quiet as a rocket hangs upon the frame in a rejoicing-night till the match be fired, and then, whizz ! you are in the third heaven, beyond the reach of the human voice, eye, or brain.—When you have wearied yourself with padding to and fro across the room, will you tell me your determination, for time presses ? Will you aid me in this matter, or not ?”

“No—no—no—a thousand times no,” replied Jenkin. “Have you not confessed to me, that Margaret loves him ?”

“Ay,” answered the dame, “that she thinks she does ; but that will not last long.”

“And have I not told you but this instant,” replied Jenkin, “that it was this same Glenvarloch that rooked me, at the ordinary, of every penny I had, and made a knave of me to boot, by gaining more than was my own ?—O that cursed gold, which Shortyard, the mercer, paid me that morning on accompt, for mending the clock of Saint Stephen’s ! If I had not, by ill chance, had that about me, I could but have beggared my purse without blemishing my honesty ; and, after I had been rooked of all

the rest amongst them, I must needs risk the last five pieces with that shark among the minnows!"

"Granted," said Dame Ursula. "All this I know; and I own, that as Lord Glenvarloch was the last you played with, you have a right to charge your ruin on his head. Moreover, I admit, as already said, that Margaret has made him your rival. Yet surely, now he is in danger to lose his hand, it is not a time to remember all this."

"By my faith, but it is though," said the young citizen. "Lose his hand, indeed? They may take his head, for what I care. Head and hand have made me a miserable wretch!"

"Now, were it not better, my prince of flat-caps," said Dame Ursula, "that matters were squared between you; and that, through means of the same Scotch lord, who has, as you say, deprived you of your money and your mistress, you should in a short time recover both?"

"And how can your wisdom come to that conclusion, dame?" said the apprentice. "My money, indeed, I can conceive—that is, if I comply with your proposal; but—my pretty Margaret!—how serving this lord, whom she has set her nonsensical head upon, can do me good with her, is far beyond my conception."

"That is because, in simple phrase," said Dame Ursula, "thou knowest no more of a woman's heart than doth a Norfolk gosling. Look you, man. Were I to report to Mistress Marget that the young lord has miscarried through thy lack of courtesy in refusing to help him, why, then, thou wert odious to her for ever. She will loathe thee as she will loathe the very cook who is to strike off Glenvarloch's hand with his cleaver—and then she will be yet more fixed in her affections towards this lord. London will hear of nothing but him—speak of nothing but him—think of nothing but him, for three weeks at least, and all that outcry will serve to keep him uppermost in her mind; for nothing pleases a girl so much as to bear relation to any one who is the talk of the whole world around her. Then, if he suffer this sentence of the law, it is a chance if she ever forgets him. I saw that handsome, proper young gentleman, Babington, suffer in the queen's time myself, and though I was then but a girl, he was in my head for a year after he was hanged. But, above all, pardoned or punished, Glenvarloch will probably remain in London, and his presence will keep up the silly girl's nonsensical fancy about him. Whereas, if he escapes"—

"Ay, show me how that is to avail me?" said Jenkin.

"If he escapes," said the dame, resuming her argument, "he must resign the court for years, if not for life; and you know the old saying, 'out of sight, and out of mind.'"

"True—most true," said Jenkin; "spoken like an oracle, most wise Ursula."

"Ay, ay, I knew you would hear reason at last," said the wily dame; "and then, when this same lord is off and away for once and for ever, who, I pray you, is to be pretty pet's confidential person, and who is to fill up the void in her affections?—why, who but thou, thou pearl of 'prentices! And then you will have overcome your own inclinations to

comply with hers, and every woman is sensible of that—and you will have run some risk, too, in carrying her desires into effect—and what is it that woman likes better than bravery, and devotion to her will? Then you have her secret, and she must treat you with favour and observance, and repose confidence in you, and hold private intercourse with you, till she weeps with one eye for the absent lover whom she is never to see again, and blinks with the other blithely upon him who is in presence; and then if you know not how to improve the relation in which you stand with her, you are not the brisk lively lad that all the world takes you for—Said I well?"

"You have spoken like an empress, most mighty Ursula," said Jenkin Vincent; "and your will shall be obeyed."

"You know Alsatia well?" continued his tutor.

"Well enough, well enough," replied he, with a nod; "I have heard the dice rattle there in my day, before I must set up for gentleman, and go among the gallants at the Shavaleer Bojo's, as they call him,—the worse rookery of the two, though the feathers are the gayest."

"And they will have a respect for thee yonder, I warrant?"

"Ay, ay," replied Vin, "when I am got into my fustian doublet again, with my bit of a truncheon under my arm, I can walk Alsatia at midnight as I could do that there Fleet-street in mid-day—they will not one of them swagger with the prince of 'prentices, and the king of clubs—they know I could bring every tall boy in the ward down upon them."

"And you know all the watermen, and so forth?"

"Can converse with every sculler in his own language, from Richmond to Gravesend, and know all the water-cocks, from John Taylor the Poet to little Grigg the Grinner, who never pulls but he shows all his teeth from ear to ear, as if he were grimacing through a horse-collar."

"And you can take any dress or character upon you well, such as a waterman's, a butcher's, a foot-soldier's," continued Ursula, "or the like?"

"Not such a mummer as I am within the walls, and thou knowest that well enough, dame," replied the apprentice. "I can touch the players themselves, at the Ball and at the Fortune, for presenting anything except a gentleman. Take but this d—d skin of frippery off me, which I think the devil stuck me into, and you shall put me into nothing else that I will not become as if I were born to it."

"Well, we will talk of your transmutation by and by," said the dame, "and find you clothes withal, and money besides, for it will take a good deal to carry the thing handsomely through."

"But where is that money to come from, dame?" said Jenkin; "there is a question I would fain have answered before I touch it."

"Why, what a fool art thou to ask such a question! Suppose I am content to advance it to please young madam, what is the harm then?"

"I will suppose no such thing," said Jenkin, hastily; "I know that you, dame, have no gold to spare, and maybe would not spare it if you had—

so that cock will not crow. It must be from Margaret herself."

"Well, thou suspicious animal, and what if it were?" said Ursula.

"Only this," replied Jenkin, "that I will presently to her, and learn if she has come fairly by so much ready money; for sooner than I connive at her getting it by any indirection, I would sooner hang myself at once. It is enough what I have done myself, no need to engage poor Margaret in such villany—I'll to her and tell her of the danger—I will, by Heaven!"

"You are mad to think of it," said Dame Suddlechops, considerably alarmed—"hear me but a moment. I know not precisely from whom she got the money; but sure I am that she obtained it at her godfather's."

"Why, Master George Heriot is not returned from France," said Jenkin.

"No," replied Ursula, "but Dame Judith is at home—and the strange lady, whom they call Master Heriot's ghost—she never goes abroad."

"It is very true, Dame Suddlechops," said Jenkin; "and I believe you have guessed right—they say that lady has coin at will; and if Marget can get a handful of fairy-gold, why, she is free to throw it away at will."

"Ah, Jin Vin," said the dame, reducing her voice almost to a whisper, "we should not want gold at will neither, could we but read the riddle of that lady!"

"They may read it that list," said Jenkin, "I'll never pry into what concerns me not—Master George Heriot is a worthy and brave citizen, and an honour to London, and has a right to manage his own household as he likes best.—There was once a talk of rabbling him the fifth of November before the last, because they said he kept a nunnery in his house, like old Lady Foljambe; but Master George is well loved among the 'prentices, and we got so many brisk boys of us together as should have rabbled the rabble, had they had but the heart to rise."

"Well, let that pass," said Ursula; "and now, tell me how you will manage to be absent from shop a day or two, for you must think that this matter will not be ended sooner."

"Why, as to that, I can say nothing," said Jenkin, "I have always served duly and truly; I have no heart to play truant, and cheat my master of his time as well as his money."

"Nay, but the point is to get back his money for him," said Ursula, "which he is not likely to see on other conditions. Could you not ask leave to go down to your uncle in Essex for two or three days? He may be ill, you know."

"Why, if I must, I must," said Jenkin, with a heavy sigh; "but I will not be lightly caught treading these dark and crooked paths again."

"Hush thee then," said the dame, "and get leave for this very evening; and come back hither, and I will introduce you to another implement, who must be employed in the matter.—Stay, stay!—the lad is mazed—you would not go into your master's shop in that guise, surely? Your trunk is in the matted chamber with your 'prentice things—go and put them on as fast as you can."

"I think I am bewitched," said Jenkin, giving a glance towards his dress, "or that these fool's trappings have made as great an ass of me as of many I have seen wear them; but let me once be rid of the harness, and if you catch me putting it on again, I will give you leave to sell me to a gipsy, to carry pots, pans, and beggars' bantlings, all the rest of my life."

So saying, he retired to change his apparel.

CHAPTER XXII.

Chance will not do the work—Chance sends the breeze;
But if the pilot slumber at the helm,
The very wind that wafts us towards the port
May dash us on the shelves.—The steersman's part is
vigilance,
Blow it or rough or smooth.

Old Play.

WE left Nigel, whose fortunes we are bound to trace by the engagement contracted in our title-page, sad and solitary in the mansion of Trapbois the usurer, having just received a letter instead of a visit from his friend the Templar, stating reasons why he could not at that time come to see him in Alsatia. So that it appeared his intercourse with the better and more respectable class of society was, for the present, entirely cut off. This was a melancholy, and, to a proud mind like that of Nigel, a degrading reflection.

He went to the window of his apartment, and found the street enveloped in one of those thick, dingy, yellow-coloured fogs, which often invest the lower part of London and Westminster. Amid the darkness, dense and palpable, were seen to wander like phantoms a reveler or two, whom the morning had surprised where the evening had left them; and who now, with tottering steps, and by an instinct which intoxication could not wholly overcome, were groping their way to their own homes, to convert day into night, for the purpose of sleeping off the debauch which had turned night into day. Although it was broad day in the other parts of the city, it was scarce dawn yet in Alsatia; and none of the sounds of industry or occupation were there heard, which had long before aroused the slumberers in every other quarter. The prospect was too tiresome and disagreeable to detain Lord Glenvarloch at his station, so, turning from the window, he examined with more interest the furniture and appearance of the apartment which he tenanted.

Much of it had been in its time rich and curious—there was a huge four-posted bed, with as much carved oak about it as would have made the head of a man-of-war, and tapestry hangings ample enough to have been her sails. There was a huge mirror with a massy frame of gilt brass-work, which was of Venetian manufacture, and must have been worth a considerable sum before it received the tremendous crack, which, traversing it from one corner to the other, bore the same proportion to the surface that the Nile bears to the map of Egypt. The chairs were of different forms and shapes, some had been carved, some gilded, some covered with damasked leather, some with embroidered work, but all were

damaged and worm-eaten. There was a picture of Susanna and the elders over the chimney-piece, which might have been accounted a choice piece, had not the rats made free with the chaste fair one's nose, and with the beard of one of her reverend admirers.

In a word, all that Lord Glenvarloch saw, seemed to have been articles carried off by appraisement or distress, or bought as pennyworths at some obscure broker's, and huddled together in the apartment as in a sale-room, without regard to taste or congruity.

The place appeared to Nigel to resemble the houses near the sea-coast, which are too often furnished with the spoils of wrecked vessels, as this was probably fitted up with the relics of ruined profligates.—“My own skiff is among the breakers,” thought Lord Glenvarloch, “though my wreck will add little to the profits of the spoiler.”

He was chiefly interested in the state of the grate, a huge assemblage of rusted iron bars which stood in the chimney, unequally supported by three brazen feet, moulded into the form of lion's claws, while the fourth, which had been bent by an accident, seemed proudly uplifted as if to paw the ground; or as if the whole article had nourished the ambitious purpose of pacing forth into the middle of the apartment, and had one foot ready raised for the journey. A smile passed over Nigel's face as this fantastic idea presented itself to his fancy.—“I must stop its march, however,” thought he; “for this morning is chill and raw enough to demand some fire.”

He called accordingly from the top of a large staircase, with a heavy oaken balustrade, which gave access to his own and other apartments, for the house was old and of considerable size; but, receiving no answer to his repeated summons, he was compelled to go in search of some one who might accommodate him with what he wanted.

Nigel had, according to the fashion of the old world in Scotland, received an education which might, in most particulars, be termed simple, hardy, and unostentatious; but he had, nevertheless, been accustomed to much personal deference, and to the constant attendance and ministry of one or more domestics. This was the universal custom in Scotland, where wages were next to nothing, and where, indeed, a man of title or influence might have as many attendants as he pleased, for the mere expense of food, clothes, and countenance. Nigel was therefore mortified and displeased when he found himself without notice or attendance; and the more dissatisfied, because he was at the same time angry with himself for suffering such a trifle to trouble him at all, amongst matters of more deep concernment. “There must surely be some servants in so large a house as this,” said he, as he wandered over the place, through which he was conducted by a passage which branched off from the gallery. As he went on, he tried the entrance to several apartments, some of which he found were locked and others unfurnished, all apparently unoccupied; so that at length he returned to the staircase, and resolved to make his way down to the lower part of the house, where he supposed he must at least find the old gentleman and his ill-favoured daughter. With this purpose he first made his entrance into a little

low, dark parlour, containing a well-worn leathern easy-chair, before which stood a pair of slippers, while on the left side rested a crutch-handled staff; an oaken table stood before it, and supported a huge desk clamped with iron, and a massive pewter ink-stand. Around the apartment were shelves, cabinets, and other places convenient for depositing papers. A sword, musketoon, and a pair of pistols, hung over the chimney in ostentatious display, as if to intimate that the proprietor would be prompt in the defence of his premises.

“This must be the usurer's den,” thought Nigel; and he was about to call aloud, when the old man, awakened even by the slightest noise, for avarice seldom sleeps sound, soon was heard from the inner room, speaking in a voice of irritability, rendered more tremulous by his morning cough.

“Ugh, ugh, ugh—who is there? I say—ugh, ugh—who is there? Why, Martha!—ugh, ugh—Martha Trapbois—here be thieves in the house, and they will not speak to me—why Martha!—thieves, thieves!—ugh, ugh, ugh!”

Nigel endeavoured to explain, but the idea of thieves had taken possession of the old man's pineal gland, and he kept coughing and screaming, and screaming and coughing, until the gracious Martha entered the apartment; and, having first out-screamed her father, in order to convince him that there was no danger, and to assure him that the intruder was their new lodger, and having as often heard her sire ejaculate—“Hold him fast!—ugh, ugh—hold him fast till I come!” she at length succeeded in silencing his fears and his clamour, and then coldly and drily asked Lord Glenvarloch what he wanted in her father's apartment.

Her lodger had in the meantime leisure to contemplate her appearance, which did not by any means improve the idea he had formed of it by candle-light on the preceding evening. She was dressed in what was called a Queen Mary's ruff and farthingale—not the falling ruff with which the unfortunate Mary of Scotland is usually painted, but that which, with more than Spanish stiffness, surrounded the throat and set off the morose head of her fierce namesake of Smithfield memory. This antiquated dress assorted well with the faded complexion, grey eyes, thin lips, and austere visage, of the antiquated maiden—which was, moreover, enhanced by a black hood, worn as her head-gear, carefully disposed so as to prevent any of her hair from escaping to view, probably because the simplicity of the period knew no art of disguising the colour with which time had begun to grizzle her tresses. Her figure was tall, thin, and flat, with skinny arms and hands, and feet of the larger size, cased in huge high-heeled shoes, which added height to a stature already ungainly. Apparently, some art had been used by the tailor to conceal a slight defect of shape, occasioned by the accidental elevation of one shoulder above the other; but the praiseworthy efforts of the ingenious mechanic had only succeeded in calling the attention of the observer to his benevolent purpose, without demonstrating that he had been able to achieve it.

Such was Mrs Martha Trapbois, whose dry “What were you lacking here, sir?” fell again, and

with reiterated sharpness, on the ear of Nigel, as he gazed upon her presence, and compared it internally to one of the faded and grim figures in the old tapestry which adorned his bedstead. It was, however, necessary to reply, and he answered, that he came in search of the servants, as he desired to have a fire kindled in his apartment on account of the rawness of the morning.

"The woman who does our chare-work," answered Mrs Martha, "comes at eight o'clock; if you want fire sooner, there are fagots and a bucket of sea-coal in the stone-closet at the head of the stair, and there is a flint and steel on the upper shelf; you can lit fire for yourself if you will."

"No—no—no, Martha," ejaculated her father, who, having donned his rusty tunic, with his hose all ungirt and his feet slip-shod, hastily came out of the inner apartment, with his mind probably full of robbers—for he had a naked rapier in his hand, which still looked formidable, though rust had somewhat marred its shine. What he had heard at entrance, about lighting a fire, had changed, however, the current of his ideas. "No—no—no," he cried, and each negative was more emphatic than its predecessor—"The gentleman shall not have the trouble to put on a fire—ugh—ugh. I'll put it on myself, for a con-si-de-ra-ti-on."

This last word was a favourite expression with the old gentleman, which he pronounced in a peculiar manner, gasping it out syllable by syllable, and laying a strong emphasis upon the last. It was, indeed, a sort of protecting clause, by which he guarded himself against all inconveniences attendant on the rash habit of offering service or civility of any kind, the which, when hastily snapped at by those to whom they are uttered, give the profferer sometimes room to repent his promptitude.

"For shame, father," said Martha; "that must not be. Master Grahame will kindle his own fire, or wait till the chare-woman comes to do it for him, just as likes him best."

"No, child—no, child. Child Martha, no," reiterated the old miser—"no chare-woman shall ever touch a grate in my house; they put—ugh, ugh—the fagot uppermost, and so the coal kindles not, and the flame goes up the chimney, and wood and heat are both thrown away. Now, I will lay it properly for the gentleman, for a consideration, so that it shall last—ugh, ugh—last the whole day." Here his vehemence increased his cough so violently, that Nigel could only, from a scattered word here and there, comprehend that it was a recommendation to his daughter to remove the poker and tongs from the stranger's fire-side, with an assurance, that, when necessary, his landlord would be in attendance to adjust it himself, "for a consideration."

Martha paid as little attention to the old man's injunctions as a predominant dame gives to those of a hen-pecked husband. She only repeated, in a deeper and more emphatic tone of censure,—*"For shame, father—for shame!"* then, turning to her guest, said, with her usual ungraciousness of manner,—*"Master Grahame—it is best to be plain with you at first. My father is an old, a very old man, and his wits, as you may see, are somewhat weakened—though I would not advise you to make a bargain*

with him, else you may find them too sharp for your own. For myself, I am a lone woman, and, to say truth, care little to see or converse with any one. If you can be satisfied with house-room, shelter, and safety, it will be your own fault if you have them not, and they are not always to be found in this unhappy quarter. But, if you seek deferential observance and attendance, I tell you at once you will not find them here."

"I am not wont either to thrust myself upon acquaintance, madam, or to give trouble," said the guest; "nevertheless, I will need the assistance of a domestic to assist me to dress—perhaps you can recommend me to such."

"Yes, to twenty," answered Mistress Martha, "who will pick your purse while they tie your points, and cut your throat while they smooth your pillow."

"I will be his servant myself," said the old man, whose intellect, for a moment distanced, had again, in some measure, got up with the conversation. "I will brush his cloak—ugh, ugh—and tie his points—ugh, ugh—and clean his shoes—ugh—and run on his errands with speed and safety—ugh, ugh, ugh, ugh—for a consideration."

"Good morrow to you, sir," said Martha to Nigel, in a tone of direct and positive dismissal. "It cannot be agreeable to a daughter that a stranger should hear her father speak thus. If you be really a gentleman, you will retire to your own apartment."

"I will not delay a moment," said Nigel, respectfully, for he was sensible that circumstances palliated the woman's rudeness. "I would but ask you, if seriously there can be danger in procuring the assistance of a serving-man in this place?"

"Young gentleman," said Martha, "you must know little of Whitefriars to ask the question. We live alone in this house, and seldom has a stranger entered it; nor should you, to be plain, had my will been consulted. Look at the door—see if that of a castle can be better secured; the windows of the first floor are grated on the outside, and within, look to these shutters."

She pulled one of them aside, and showed a ponderous apparatus of bolts and chains for securing the window-shutters, while her father, pressing to her side, seized her gown with a trembling hand, and said, in a low whisper, "Show not the trick of locking and undoing them. Show him not the trick on't, Martha—ugh, ugh—on no consideration." Martha went on, without paying him any attention.

"And yet, young gentleman, we have been more than once like to find all these defences too weak to protect our lives; such an evil effect on the wicked generation around us hath been made by the unhappy report of my poor father's wealth."

"Say nothing of that, housewife," said the miser, his irritability increased by the very supposition of his being wealthy—"Say nothing of that, or I will beat thee, housewife—beat thee with my staff, for fetching and carrying lies that will procure our throats to be cut at last—ugh, ugh.—I am but a poor man," he continued, turning to Nigel—"a very poor man, that am willing to do any honest turn upon earth, for a modest consideration."

"I therefore warn you of the life you must lead,

young gentleman," said Martha; "the poor woman who does the chare-work will assist you so far as is in her power, but the wise man is his own best servant and assistant."

"It is a lesson you have taught me, madam, and I thank you for it—I will assuredly study it at leisure."

"You will do well," said Martha; "and, as you seem thankful for advice, I, though I am no professed counsellor of others, will give you more. Make no intimacy with any one in Whitefriars—borrow no money, on any score, especially from my father, for, dotard as he seems, he will make an ass of you. Last, and best of all, stay here not an instant longer than you can help it. Farewell, sir."

"A gnarled tree may bear good fruit, and a harsh nature may give good counsel," thought the Lord of Glenvarloch, as he retreated to his own apartment, where the same reflection occurred to him again and again, while, unable as yet to reconcile himself to the thoughts of becoming his own fire-maker, he walked up and down his bed-room, to warm himself by exercise.

At length his meditations arranged themselves in the following soliloquy—by which expression I beg leave to observe, once for all, that I do not mean that Nigel literally said aloud, with his bodily organs, the words which follow in inverted commas, (while pacing the room by himself,) but that I myself chuse to present to my dearest reader the picture of my hero's mind, his reflections and resolutions, in the form of a speech, rather than in that of a narrative. In other words, I have put his thoughts into language; and this I conceive to be the purpose of the soliloquy upon the stage as well as in the closet, being at once the most natural, and perhaps the only way of communicating to the spectator what is supposed to be passing in the bosom of the scenic personage. There are no such soliloquies in nature, it is true; but, unless they were received as a conventional medium of communication betwixt the poet and the audience, we should reduce dramatic authors to the recipe of Master Puff, who makes Lord Burleigh intimate a long train of political reasoning to the audience, by one comprehensive shake of his noddle. In narrative, no doubt, the writer has the alternative of telling that his personages thought so and so, inferred thus and thus, and arrived at such and such conclusion; but the soliloquy is a more concise and spirited mode of communicating the same information; and therefore thus communed, or thus might have communed, the Lord of Glenvarloch with his own mind.

"She is right, and has taught me a lesson I will profit by. I have been, through my whole life, one who leant upon others for that assistance, which it is more truly noble to derive from my own exertions. I am ashamed of feeling the paltry inconvenience which long habit has led me to annex to the want of a servant's assistance—I am ashamed of that; but far, far more am I ashamed to have suffered the same habit of throwing my own burthen on others, to render me, since I came to this city, a mere victim of those events, which I have never even attempted to influence—a thing never acting, but perpetually acted upon—protected by one friend,

deceived by another; but in the advantage which I received from the one, and the evil I have sustained from the other, as passive and helpless as a boat that drifts without oar or rudder at the mercy of the winds and waves. I became a courtier, because Heriot so advised it—a gamester, because Dalgarno so contrived it—an Alsatian, because Lowestoffe so willed it. Whatever of good or bad has befallen me, hath arisen out of the agency of others, not from my own. My father's son must no longer hold this facile and puerile course. Live or die, sink or swim, Nigel Olifaunt, from this moment, shall owe his safety, success, and honour, to his own exertions, or shall fall with the credit of having at least exerted his own free agency. I will write it down in my tablets, in her very words,—'The wise man is his own best assistant.'"

He had just put his tablets in his pocket when the old chare-woman, who, to add to her efficiency, was sorely handled by the rheumatism, hobbled into the room, to try if she could gain a small gratification by waiting on the stranger. She readily undertook to get Lord Glenvarloch's breakfast, and, as there was an eating-house at the next door, she succeeded in a shorter time than Nigel had augured.

As his solitary meal was finished, one of the Temple porters, or inferior officers, was announced, as seeking Master Grahame, on the part of his friend, Master Lowestoffe; and, being admitted by the old woman to his apartment, he delivered to Nigel a small mail-trunk, with the clothes he had desired should be sent to him, and then, with more mystery, put into his hand a casket, or strong-box, which he had carefully concealed beneath his cloak. "I am glad to be rid on't," said the fellow, as he placed it on the table.

"Why, it is surely not so very heavy," answered Nigel, "and you are a stout young man."

"Ay, sir," replied the fellow; "but Samson himself would not have carried such a matter safely through Alsatia, had the lads of the Huff known what it was. Please to look into it, sir, and see all is right—I am an honest fellow, and it comes safe out of my hands. How long it may remain so afterwards, will depend on your own care. I would not my good name were to suffer by any afterclap."

To satisfy the scruples of the messenger, Lord Glenvarloch opened the casket in his presence, and saw that his small stock of money, with two or three valuable papers which it contained, and particularly the original sign-manual which the king had granted in his favour, were in the same order in which he had left them. At the man's further instance, he availed himself of the writing materials which the casket contained, in order to send a line to Master Lowestoffe, declaring that his property had reached him in safety. He added some grateful acknowledgments for Lowestoffe's services, and, just as he was sealing and delivering his billet to the messenger, his aged landlord entered the apartment. His thread-bare suit of black clothes was now somewhat better arranged than they had been in the dishabille of his first appearance, and his nerves and intellects seemed to be less fluttered; for, without much coughing or hesitation, he invited

Nigel to partake of a morning draught of wholesome single ale, which he brought in a large leathern tankard, or black-jack, carried in the one hand, while the other stirred it round with a sprig of rosemary, to give it, as the old man said, a flavour.

Nigel declined the courteous proffer, and intimated by his manner, while he did so, that he desired no intrusion on the privacy of his own apartment; which, indeed, he was the more entitled to maintain, considering the cold reception he had that morning met with when straying from its precincts into those of his landlord. But the open casket contained matter, or rather metal, so attractive to old Trapbois, that he remained fixed, like a setting-dog at a dead point, his nose advanced, and one hand expanded like the lifted fore-paw, by which that sagacious quadruped sometimes indicates that it is a hare which he has in the wind. Nigel was about to break the charm which had thus arrested old Trapbois, by shutting the lid of the casket, when his attention was withdrawn from him by the question of the messenger, who, holding out the letter, asked whether he was to leave it at Mr Lowestoffe's chambers in the Temple, or carry it to the Marshalsea?

"The Marshalsea?" repeated Lord Glenvarloch; "what of the Marshalsea?"

"Why, sir," said the man, "the poor gentleman is laid up there in lavender, because, they say, his own kind heart led him to scald his fingers with another man's broth."

Nigel hastily snatched back the letter, broke the seal, joined to the contents his earnest entreaty that he might be instantly acquainted with the cause of his confinement, and added, that, if it arose out of his own unhappy affair, it would be of brief duration, since he had, even before hearing of a reason which so peremptorily demanded that he should surrender himself, adopted the resolution to do so, as the manliest and most proper course which his ill fortune and imprudence had left in his own power. He therefore conjured Mr Lowestoffe to have no delicacy upon this score, but, since his surrender was what he had determined upon as a sacrifice due to his own character, that he would have the frankness to mention in what manner it could be best arranged, so as to extricate him, Lowestoffe, from the restraint to which the writer could not but fear his friend had been subjected, on account of the generous interest which he had taken in his concerns. The letter concluded, that the writer would suffer twenty-four hours to elapse, in expectation of hearing from him, and, at the end of that period, was determined to put his purpose in execution. He delivered the billet to the messenger, and, enforcing his request with a piece of money, requested him, without a moment's delay, to convey it to the hand of Master Lowestoffe.

"I—I—I—will carry it to him myself," said the old usurer, "for half the consideration."

The man, who heard this attempt to take his duty and perquisites over his head, lost no time in pocketing the money, and departed on his errand as fast as he could.

"Master Trapbois," said Nigel, addressing the old man somewhat impatiently, "had you any particular commands for me?"

"I—I—came to see if you rested well," answered the old man; "and—if I could do anything to serve you, on any consideration."

"Sir, I thank you," said Lord Glenvarloch—"I thank you;" and, ere he could say more, a heavy footstep was heard on the stair.

"My God!" said the old man, starting up—"Why, Dorothy—chare-woman—why, daughter—draw bolt I say, housewives—the door hath been left a-latch."

The door of the chamber opened wide, and in strutted the portly bulk of the military hero, whom Nigel had on the preceding evening in vain endeavoured to recognize.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Swash-Buckler. Bilboa's the word.—

Pierrot. It hath been spoke too often,

The spell hath lost its charm—I tell thee, friend,
The meanest cur that trots the street, will turn
And snarl against your proffer'd bastinado.

Swash-Buckler. 'Tis art shall do it then—I will dose the mongrels—

Or, in plain terms, I'll use the private knife,
'Stead of the brandish'd falchion.

Old Play.

THE noble Captain Colepepper, or Peppercull, for he was known by both these names, and some others besides, had a martial and a swashing exterior, which, on the present occasion, was rendered yet more peculiar, by a patch covering his left eye and a part of the cheek. The sleeves of his thickset velvet jerkin were polished and shone with grease—his buff gloves had huge tops, which reached almost to the elbow; his sword-belt, of the same materials, extended its breadth from his haunch-bone to his small ribs, and supported on the one side his large black-hilted back-sword; on the other, a dagger of like proportions. He paid his compliments to Nigel with that air of predetermined effrontery, which announces that it will not be repelled by any coldness of reception, asked Trapbois how he did, by the familiar title of old Peter Pillory, and then, seizing upon the black-jack, emptied it off at a draught, to the health of the last and youngest freeman of Alsatia, the noble and loving Master Nigel Grahame.

When he had set down the empty pitcher and drawn his breath, he began to criticize the liquor which it had lately contained.—"Sufficient single beer, old Pillory—and, as I take it, brewed at the rate of a nutshell of malt to a butt of Thames—as dead as a corpse too,—and yet it went hissing down my throat—bubbling, by Jove, like water upon hot iron.—You left us early, noble Master Grahame, but, good faith, we had a carouse to your honour—we heard butt ring hollow ere we parted; we were as loving as inkle-weavers—we fought too, to finish off the gawdy. I bear some marks of the parson about me, you see—a note of the sermon or so, which should have been addressed to my ear, but missed its mark and reached my left eye. The man of God bears my sign-manual too, but the duke made us friends again, and it cost me more sack than I could carry, and all the Rhenish to boot, to pledge the seer in the way of love and reconciliation—But,

caracco! 'tis a vile old canting slave for all that, whom I will one day beat out of his devil's livery into all the colours of the rainbow.—Basta!—Said I well, old Trapbois? Where is thy daughter, man?—what says she to my suit?—'tis an honest one—wilt have a soldier for thy son-in-law, old Pillory, to mingle the soul of martial honour with thy thieving, miching, petty-larceny blood, as men put bold brandy into muddy ale?"

"My daughter receives not company so early, noble captain," said the usurer, and concluded his speech with a dry, emphatical "ugh, ugh."

"What, upon no con-si-de-ra-ti-on?" said the captain; "and wherefore not, old Truepenny? she has not much time to lose in driving her bargain, methinks."

"Captain," said Trapbois, "I was upon some little business with our noble friend here, Master Nigel Green—ugh, ugh, ugh"—

"And you would have me gone, I warrant you," answered the bully; "but patience, old Pillory, thine hour is not yet come, man—You see," he said, pointing to the casket, "that noble Master Grahame, whom you call Green, has got the *decuses* and the *smelts*."

"Which you would willingly rid him of, ha! ha! ugh, ugh," answered the usurer, "if you knew how—but, lack-a-day! thou art one of those that come out for wool, and art sure to go home shorn. Why now, but that I am sworn against laying of wagers, I would risk some consideration that this honest guest of mine sends thee home pennyless, if thou dardest venture with him—ugh, ugh—at any game which gentlemen play at."

"Marry thou hast me on the hip there, thou old miserly coney-catcher!" answered the captain, taking a bale of dice from the sleeve of his coat; "I must always keep company with these damnable doctors, and they have made me every baby's cully, and purged my purse into an atrophy; but never mind, it passes the time as well as aught else—How say you, Master Grahame?"

The fellow paused; but even the extremity of his impudence could hardly withstand the cold look of utter contempt with which Nigel received his proposal, returning it with a simple, "I only play where I know my company, and never in the morning."

"Cards may be more agreeable," said Captain Colepepper; "and, for knowing your company, here is honest old Pillory will tell you Jack Colepepper plays as truly on the square as e'er a man that trowled a die.—Men talk of high and low dice, Fulhams and bristles, topping, knapping, slurring, stabbing, and a hundred ways of rooking besides; but boil me like a rasher of bacon, if I could ever learn the trick on 'em."

"You have got the vocabulary perfect, sir, at the least," said Nigel, in the same cold tone.

"Yes, by mine honour have I," returned the Hector; "they are phrases that a gentleman learns about town.—But perhaps you would like a set at tennis, or a game at balloon—we have an indifferent good court hard by here, and a set of as gentleman-like blades as ever banged leather against brick and mortar."

"I beg to be excused at present," said Lord

Glenvarloch; "and, to be plain, among the valuable privileges your society has conferred on me, I hope I may reckon that of being private in my own apartment when I have a mind."

"Your humble servant, sir," said the captain; "and I thank you for your civility—Jack Colepepper can have enough of company, and thrusts himself on no one.—But perhaps you will like to make a match at skittles?"

"I am by no means that way disposed," replied the young nobleman.

"Or to leap a flea—run a snail—match a wherry?"

"No—I will do none of these," answered Nigel.

Here the old man, who had been watching with his little peery eyes, pulled the bulky Hector by the skirt, and whispered, "Do not vapour him the huff, it will not pass—let the trout play, he will rise to the hook presently."

But the bully, confiding in his own strength, and probably mistaking for timidity the patient scorn with which Nigel received his proposals, incited also by the open casket, began to assume a louder and more threatening tone. He drew himself up, bent his brows, assumed a look of professional ferocity, and continued, "In Alsatia, look ye, a man must be neighbourly, and companionable. Zouns! sir, we would slit any nose that was turned up at us honest fellows.—Ay, sir, we would slit it up to the gristle, though it had smelt nothing all its life but musk, ambergrease, and court-scented water.—Rabbit me, I am a soldier, and care no more for a lord than a lamplighter."

"Are you seeking a quarrel, sir?" said Nigel, calmly, having in truth no desire to engage himself in a discreditable broil in such a place, and with such a character.

"Quarrel, sir?" said the captain; "I am not seeking a quarrel, though I care not how soon I find one. Only I wish you to understand you must be neighbourly, that's all. What if we should go over the water to the garden, and see a bull hanked this fine morning—'sdeath, will you do nothing?"

"Something I am strangely tempted to do at this moment," said Nigel.

"Videlicet," said Colepepper, with a swaggering air; "let us hear the temptation."

"I am tempted to throw you headlong from the window, unless you presently make the best of your way down stairs."

"Throw me from the window!—hell and furies!" exclaimed the captain; "I have confronted twenty crooked sabres at Buda with my single rapier, and shall a chitty-faced, beggarly Scotch lordling, speak of me and a window in the same breath?—Stand off, old Pillory, let me make Scotch collops of him—he dies the death."

"For the love of Heaven, gentlemen," exclaimed the old miser, throwing himself between them, "do not break the peace on any consideration. Noble guest, forbear the captain—he is a very Hector of Troy—Trusty Hector, forbear my guest, he is like to prove a very Achilles"—

Here he was interrupted by his asthma, but, nevertheless, continued to interpose his person between Colepepper (who had unsheathed his whinyard, and

was making vain passes at his antagonist), and Nigel who had stepped back to take his sword, and now held it undrawn in his left hand.

"Make an end of this foolery, you scoundrel!" said Nigel—"Do you come hither to vent your noisy oaths and your bottled-up valour on me? You seem to know me, and I am half ashamed to say I have at length been able to recollect you—remember the garden behind the ordinary, you dastardly ruffian, and the speed with which fifty men saw you run from a drawn sword.—Get you gone, sir, and do not put me to the vile labour of cudgeling such a cowardly rascal down stairs."

The bully's countenance grew as dark as night at this unexpected recognition; for he had undoubtedly thought himself secure in his change of dress, and his black patch, from being discovered by a person who had seen him but once. He set his teeth, clenched his hands, and it seemed as if he was seeking for a moment's courage to fly upon his antagonist. But his heart failed, he sheathed his sword, turned his back in gloomy silence, and spoke not until he reached the door, when, turning round, he said with a deep oath, "If I be not avenged of you for this insolence ere many days go by, I would the gallows had my body and the devil my spirit!"

So saying, and with a look where determined spite and malice made his features savagely fierce, though they could not overcome his fear, he turned and left the house. Nigel followed him as far as the gallery at the head of the staircase, with the purpose of seeing him depart, and ere he returned was met by Mistress Martha Trapbois, whom the noise of the quarrel had summoned from her own apartment. He could not resist saying to her in his natural displeasure,—“I would, madam, you could teach your father and his friends the lesson which you had the goodness to bestow on me this morning, and prevail on them to leave me the unmolested privacy of my own apartment.”

"If you came hither for quiet or retirement, young man," answered she, "you have been advised to an evil retreat. You might seek mercy in the Star-chamber, or holiness in hell, with better success than quiet in Alsatia. But my father shall trouble you no longer."

So saying, she entered the apartment, and, fixing her eyes on the casket, she said with emphasis—"If you display such a loadstone, it will draw many a steel knife to your throat."

While Nigel hastily shut the casket, she addressed her father, upbraiding him with small reverence for keeping company with the cowardly, hectoring, murdering villain John Colepepper.

"Ay, ay, child," said the old man, with the cunning leer which intimated perfect satisfaction with his own superior address.—“I know—I know—ugh—but I'll cross-bite him—I know them all, and I can manage them—ay, ay—I have the trick on't.”

"You manage, father!" said the austere damsel; "you will manage to have your throat cut, and that ere long. You cannot hide from them your gains and your gold as formerly."

"My gains, wench? my gold?" said the usurer; "alack-a-day, few of these and hard got—few and hard got."

"This will not serve you, father, any longer," said she, "and had not served you thus long, but that Bully Colepepper had contrived a cheaper way of plundering your house, even by means of my miserable self.—But why do I speak to him of all this," she said, checking herself, and shrugging her shoulders with an expression of pity which did not fall much short of scorn. "He hears me not—he thinks not of me.—Is it not strange that the love of gathering gold should survive the care to preserve both property and life?"

"Your father," said Lord Glenvarloch, who could not help respecting the strong sense and feeling shown by this poor woman, even amidst all her rudeness and severity, "your father seems to have his faculties sufficiently alert when he is in the exercise of his ordinary pursuits and functions. I wonder he is not sensible of the weight of your arguments."

"Nature made him a man senseless of danger, and that insensibility is the best thing I have derived from him," said she; "age has left him shrewdness enough to tread his old beaten paths, but not to seek new courses. The old blind horse will long continue to go its rounds in the mill, when it would stumble in the open meadow."

"Daughter!—why, wench—why, housewife," said the old man, awakening out of some dream, in which he had been sneering and chuckling in imagination, probably over a successful piece of roguery,—“go to chamber, wench—go to chamber—draw bolts and chain—look sharp to door—let none in or out but worshipful Master Grahame—I must take my cloak, and go to Duke Hildebrod—ay, ay, time has been, my own warrant was enough; but the lower we lie, the more are we under the wind."

And, with his wonted chorus of muttering and coughing, the old man left the apartment. His daughter stood for a moment looking after him, with her usual expression of discontent and sorrow.

"You ought to persuade your father," said Nigel, "to leave this evil neighbourhood, if you are in reality apprehensive for his safety."

"He would be safe in no other quarter," said the daughter: "I would rather the old man were dead than publicly dishonoured. In other quarters he would be pelted and pursued like an owl which ventures into sunshine. Here he was safe, while his comrades could avail themselves of his talents; he is now squeezed and fleeced by them on every pretence. They consider him as a vessel on the strand, from which each may snatch a prey; and the very jealousy which they entertain respecting him as a common property, may perhaps induce them to guard him from more private and daring assaults."

"Still, methinks, you ought to leave this place," answered Nigel, "since you might find a safe retreat in some distant country."

"In Scotland, doubtless," said she, looking at him with a sharp and suspicious eye, "and enrich strangers with our rescued wealth—Ha! young man!"

"Madam, if you knew me," said Lord Glenvarloch, "you would spare the suspicion implied in your words."

"Who shall assure me of that?" said Martha, sharply. "They say you are a brawler and a game-

ster, and I know how far these are to be trusted by the unhappy."

"They do me wrong, by Heaven!" said Lord Glenvarloch.

"It may be so," said Martha; "I am little interested in the degree of your vice or your folly; but it is plain, that the one or the other has conducted you hither, and that your best hope of peace, safety, and happiness, is to be gone with the least possible delay, from a place which is always a sty for swine, and often a shambles." So saying, she left the apartment.

There was something in the ungracious manner of this female, amounting almost to contempt of him she spoke to—an indignity to which Glenvarloch, notwithstanding his poverty, had not as yet been personally exposed, and which, therefore, gave him a transitory feeling of painful surprise. Neither did the dark hints which Martha threw out concerning the danger of his place of refuge, sound by any means agreeably to his ears. The bravest man, placed in a situation in which he is surrounded by suspicious persons, and removed from all counsel and assistance, except those afforded by a valiant heart and a strong arm, experiences a sinking of the heart, a consciousness of abandonment, which for a moment chills his blood, and depresses his natural gallantry of disposition.

But, if sad reflections arose in Nigel's mind, he had not time to indulge them; and, if he saw little prospect of finding friends in Alsatia, he found that he was not likely to be solitary for lack of visitors.

He had scarcely paced his apartment for ten minutes, endeavouring to arrange his ideas on the course which he was to pursue on quitting Alsatia, when he was interrupted by the sovereign of the quarter, the great Duke Hildebrod himself, before whose approach the bolts and chains of the miser's dwelling fell, or withdrew, as of their own accord; and both the folding leaves of the door were opened, that he might roll himself into the house like a huge butt of liquor, a vessel to which he bore a considerable outward resemblance, both in size, shape, complexion, and contents.

"Good morrow to your lordship," said the greasy puncheon, cocking his single eye, and rolling it upon Nigel with a singular expression of familiar impudence; whilst his grim bull-dog, which was close at his heels, made a kind of gurgling in his throat, as if saluting, in similar fashion, a starved cat, the only living thing in Trapbois's house which we have not yet enumerated, and which had flown up to the top of the tester, where she stood clutching and grinning at the mastiff, whose greeting she accepted with as much good will as Nigel bestowed on that of the dog's master.

"Peace, Belzie!—D—n thee, peace!" said Duke Hildebrod. "Beasts and fools will be meddling, my lord."

"I thought, sir," answered Nigel, with as much haughtiness as was consistent with the cool distance which he desired to preserve, "I had told you, my name at present was Nigel Grahame."

His eminence of Whitefriars on this burst out into a loud, chuckling, impudent laugh, repeating the word till his voice was almost inarticulate,—*"Niggle*

Green—Niggle Green—Niggle Green!—why, my lord, you would be queered in the drinking of a penny pot of Malmsey, if you cry before you are touched. Why, you have told me the secret even now, had I not had a shrewd guess of it before. Why, Master Nigel, since that is the word, I only called you my lord, because we made you a peer of Alsatia last night, when the sack was predominant. —How you look now!—Ha! ha! ha!"

Nigel, indeed, conscious that he had unnecessarily betrayed himself, replied hastily,—*"he was much obliged to him for the honours conferred, but did not propose to remain in the sanctuary long enough to enjoy them."*

"Why, that may be as you will, an you will walk by wise counsel," answered the ducal porpoise; and, although Nigel remained standing, in hopes to accelerate his guest's departure, he threw himself into one of the old tapestry-backed easy-chairs, which cracked under his weight, and began to call for old Trapbois.

The crone of all work appearing instead of her master, the duke cursed her for a careless jade, to let a strange gentleman, and a brave guest, go without his morning's draught.

"I never take one, sir," said Glenvarloch.

"Time to begin—time to begin," answered the duke.—*"Here, you old refuse of Sathan, go to our palace, and fetch Lord Green's morning draught. Let us see—what shall it be, my lord?—a humming double pot of ale, with a roasted crab dancing in it like a wherry above bridge?—or, hum—ay, young men are sweet-toothed—a quart of burnt sack, with sugar and spice?—good against the fogs. Or, what say you to sipping a gill of right distilled waters? Come, we will have them all, and you shall take your choice.—Here, you Jezabel, let Tim send the ale, and the sack, and the nipperkin of double-distilled, with a bit of diet-loaf, or some such trinket, and score it to the new comer."*

Glenvarloch, bethinking himself that it might be as well to endure this fellow's insolence for a brief season, as to get into farther discreditable quarrels, suffered him to take his own way, without interruption, only observing, "You make yourself at home, sir, in my apartment; but, for the time, you may use your pleasure. Meantime, I would fain know what has procured me the honour of this unexpected visit?"

"You shall know that when old Deb has brought the liquor—I never speak of business dry-lipped. Why, how she drumbles—I warrant she stops to take a sip on the road, and then you will think you have had unchristian measure.—In the meanwhile, look at that dog there—look Beelzebub in the face, and tell me if you ever saw a sweeter beast—never flew but at head in his life."

And, after this congenial panegyric, he was proceeding with a tale of a dog and a bull, which threatened to be somewhat of the longest, when he was interrupted by the return of the old crone, and two of his own tapsters, bearing the various kinds of drinkables which he had demanded, and which probably was the only species of interruption which he would have endured with equanimity.

When the cups and cans were duly arranged upon

the table, and when Deborah, whom the ducal generosity honoured with a penny farthing in the way of gratuity, had withdrawn with her satellites, the worthy potentate, having first slightly invited Lord Glenvarloch to partake of the liquor which he was to pay for, and after having observed, that, excepting three poached eggs, a pint of bastard, and a cup of clary, he was fasting from everything but sin, set himself seriously to reinforce the radical moisture. Glenvarloch had seen Scottish lairds and Dutch burgomasters at their potations; but their exploits (though each might be termed a thirsty generation) were nothing to those of Duke Hildebrod, who seemed an absolute sand-bed, capable of absorbing any given quantity of liquid, without being either vivified or overflowed. He drank off the ale to quench a thirst which, as he said, kept him in a fever from morning to night, and night to morning; tipped off the sack to correct the crudity of the ale; sent the spirits after the sack to keep all quiet, and then declared that, probably, he should not taste liquor till *post meridiem*, unless it was in compliment to some especial friend. Finally, he intimated that he was ready to proceed on the business which brought him from home so early,—a proposition which Nigel readily received, though he could not help suspecting that the most important purpose of Duke Hildebrod's visit was already transacted.

In this, however, Lord Glenvarloch proved to be mistaken. Hildebrod, before opening what he had to say, made an accurate survey of the apartment, laying, from time to time, his finger on his nose, and winking on Nigel with his single eye, while he opened and shut the doors, lifted the tapestry, which concealed, in one or two places, the dilapidation of time upon the wainscoted walls, peeped into closets, and, finally, looked under the bed, to assure himself, that the coast was clear of listeners and interlopers. He then resumed his seat, and beckoned confidentially to Nigel to draw his chair close to him.

"I am well as I am, Master Hildebrod," replied the young lord, little disposed to encourage the familiarity which the man endeavoured to fix on him; but the undismayed duke proceeded as follows:—

"You shall pardon me, my lord—and I now give you the title right seriously—if I remind you that our waters may be watched; for though old Trapbois be as deaf as Saint Paul's, yet his daughter has sharp ears, and sharp eyes enough, and it is of them that it is my business to speak."

"Say away, then, sir," said Nigel, edging his chair somewhat closer to the quicksand, "although I cannot conceive what business I have either with mine host or his daughter."

"We will see that in the twinkling of a quart-pot," answered the gracious duke; "and first, my lord, you must not think to dance in a net before old Jack Hildebrod, that has thrice your years o'er his head, and was born, like King Richard, with all his eye-teeth ready cut."

"Well, sir, go on," said Nigel.

"Why, then, my lord, I presume to say, that, if you are, as I believe you are, that Lord Glenvarloch whom all the world talk of—the Scotch gallant that has spent all, to a thin cloak and a light purse—be

not moved, my lord, it is so noised of you—men call you the sparrow-hawk, who will fly at all—ay, were it in the very park—Be not moved, my lord."

"I am ashamed, sirrah," replied Glenvarloch, "that you should have power to move me by your insolence—but beware—and, if you indeed guess who I am, consider how long I may be able to endure your tone of insolent familiarity."

"I crave pardon, my lord," said Hildebrod, with a sullen, yet apologetic look; "I meant no harm in speaking my poor mind. I know not what honour there may be in being familiar with your lordship, but I judge there is little safety, for Lowestoffe is laid up in lavender only for having shown you the way into Alsatia; and so, what is to come of those who maintain you when you are here, or whether they will get most honour or most trouble by doing so, I leave with your lordship's better judgment."

"I will bring no one into trouble on my account," said Lord Glenvarloch. "I will leave Whitefriars to-morrow. Nay, by Heaven, I will leave it this day!"

"You will have more wit in your anger, I trust," said Duke Hildebrod; "listen first to what I have to say to you, and, if honest Jack Hildebrod puts you not in way of nicking them all, may he never cast doublets, or gull a greenhorn again. And so, my lord, in plain words, you must wap and win."

"Your words must be still plainer before I can understand them," said Nigel.

"What the devil—a gamester, one who deals with the devil's bones and the doctors, and not understand pedlars' French! Nay, then, I must speak plain English, and that's the simpleton's tongue."

"Speak, then, sir," said Nigel; "and I pray you be brief, for I have little more time to bestow on you."

"Well then, my lord, to be brief, as you and the lawyers call it—I understand you have an estate in the north, which changes masters for want of the redeeming ready.—Ay, you start, but you cannot dance in a net before me, as I said before; and so the king runs the frowning humour on you, and the court vapours you the go-by; and the prince scowls at you from under his cap; and the favourite serves you out the puckered brow and the cold shoulder; and the favourite's favourite"—

"To go no further, sir," interrupted Nigel, "suppose all this true—and what follows?"

"What follows?" returned Duke Hildebrod. "Marry, this follows, that you will owe good deed, as well as good will, to him who shall put you in the way to walk with your beaver cocked in the presence, as an ye were Earl of Kildare; bully the courtiers; meet the prince's blighting look with a bold brow; confront the favourite; baffle his deputy, and"—

"This is all well," said Nigel; "but how is it to be accomplished?"

"By making thee a Prince of Peru, my lord of the northern latitudes; propping thine old castle with ingots,—fertilizing thy failing fortunes with gold dust—it shall but cost thee to put thy baron's coronet for a day or so on the brows of an old Caduca here, the man's daughter of the house, and

thou art master of a mass of treasure that shall do all I have said for thee, and"—

"What, you would have me marry this old gentlewoman here, the daughter of mine host?" said Nigel, surprised and angry, yet unable to suppress some desire to laugh.

"Nay, my lord, I would have you marry fifty thousand good sterling pounds; for that, and better, hath old Trapbois hoarded; and thou shalt do a deed of mercy in it to the old man, who will lose his golden smelts in some worse way—for now that he is well nigh past his day of work, his day of payment is like to follow."

"Truly, this is a most courteous offer," said Lord Glenvarloch; "but may I pray of your candour, most noble duke, to tell me why you dispose of a ward of so much wealth on a stranger like me, who may leave you to-morrow?"

"In sooth, my lord," said the duke, "that question smacks more of the wit of Beaujeu's ordinary, than any word I have yet heard your lordship speak, and reason it is you should be answered. Touching my peers, it is but necessary to say, that Mistress Martha Trapbois will none of them, whether clerical or laic. The captain hath asked her, so hath the parson, but she will none of them—she looks higher than either, and is, to say truth, a woman of sense, and so forth, too profound, and of spirit something too high, to put up with greasy buff or rusty prunella. For ourselves, we need but hint that we have a consort in the land of the living, and, what is more to purpose, Mrs Martha knows it. So, as she will not lace her kersey hood save with a quality binding, you, my lord, must be the man, and must carry off fifty thousand decuses, the spoils of five thousand bullies, cutters, and spendthrifts,—always deducting from the main sum five thousand pounds for our princely advice and countenance, without which, as matters stand in Alsatia, you would find it hard to win the plate."

"But has your wisdom considered, sir," replied Glenvarloch, "how this wedlock can serve me in my present emergence?"

"As for that, my lord," said Duke Hildebrod, "if, with forty or fifty thousand pounds in your pouch, you cannot save yourself, you will deserve to lose your head for your folly, and your hand for being close-fisted."

"But, since your goodness has taken my matters into such serious consideration," continued Nigel, who conceived there was no prudence in breaking with a man, who, in his way, meant him favour rather than offence, "perhaps you may be able to tell me how my kindred will be likely to receive such a bride as you recommend to me?"

"Touching that matter, my lord, I have always heard your countrymen knew as well as other folks, on which side their bread was buttered. And, truly, speaking from report, I know no place where fifty thousand pounds—fifty thousand pounds, I say—will make a woman more welcome than it is likely to do in your ancient kingdom. And, truly, saving the slight twist in her shoulder, Mrs Martha Trapbois is a person of very awful and majestic appearance, and may, for aught I know, be come of better blood than any one wots of; for old Trapbois looks

not over like to be her father, and her mother was a generous, liberal sort of woman."

"I am afraid," answered Nigel, "that chance is rather too vague to assure her a gracious reception into an honourable house."

"Why then, my lord," replied Hildebrod, "I think it like she will be even with them; for I will venture to say she has as much ill-nature as will make her a match for your whole clan."

"That may inconvenience me a little," replied Nigel.

"Not a whit—not a whit," said the duke, fertile in expedients; "if she should become rather intolerable, which is not unlikely, your honourable house, which I presume to be a castle, hath, doubtless, both turrets and dungeons, and ye may bestow your bonny bride in either the one or the other, and then you know you will be out of hearing of her tongue, and she will be either above or below the contempt of your friends."

"It is sagely counseled, most equitable sir," replied Nigel, "and such restraint would be a fit meed for her folly that gave me any power over her."

"You entertain the project then, my lord?" said Duke Hildebrod.

"I must turn it in my mind for twenty-four hours," said Nigel; "and I will pray you so to order matters that I be not further interrupted by any visitors."

"We will utter an edict to secure your privacy," said the duke; "and you do not think," he added, lowering his voice to a commercial whisper, "that ten thousand is too much to pay to the sovereign, in name of wardship?"

"Ten thousand!" said Lord Glenvarloch; "why, you said five thousand but now."

"Aha! art avised of that?" said the duke, touching the side of his nose with his finger; "nay, if you have marked me so closely, you are thinking on the case more nearly than I believed, till you trapped me. Well, well, we will not quarrel about the consideration, as old Trapbois would call it—do you win and wear the dame; it will be no hard matter with your face and figure, and I will take care that no one interrupts you. I will have an edict from the senate as soon as they meet for their meridiem."

So saying, Duke Hildebrod took his leave.

CHAPTER XXIV.

This is the time—Heaven's maiden sentinel
Hath quitted her high watch—the lesser spangles
Are paling one by one; give me the ladder
And the short lever—bid Anthony
Keep with his carabine the wicket-gate;
And do thou bare thy knife and follow me,
For we will in and do it—darkness like this
Is dawning of our fortunes.

Old Play.

WHEN Duke Hildebrod had withdrawn, Nigel's first impulse was an irresistible feeling to laugh at the sage adviser, who would have thus connected him with age, ugliness, and ill-temper; but his next thought was pity for the unfortunate father and daughter, who, being the only persons possessed of wealth in this unhappy district, seemed like a wreck

on the sea-shore of a barbarous country, only secured from plunder for the moment by the jealousy of the tribes among whom it had been cast. Neither could he help being conscious that his own residence here was upon conditions equally precarious, and that he was considered by the Alsations in the same light of a godsend on the Cornish coast, or a sickly but wealthy caravan travelling through the wilds of Africa, and emphatically termed by the nations of despoilers through whose regions it passes *Dum-malafong*, which signifies a thing given to be devoured—a common prey to all men.

Nigel had already formed his own plan to extricate himself, at whatsoever risk, from his perilous and degrading situation; and, in order that he might carry it into instant execution, he only awaited the return of Lowestoffe's messenger. He expected him, however, in vain, and could only amuse himself by looking through such parts of his baggage as had been sent to him from his former lodgings, in order to select a small packet of the most necessary articles to take with him, in the event of his quitting his lodgings secretly and suddenly, as speed and privacy would, he foresaw, be particularly necessary, if he meant to obtain an interview with the king, which was the course his spirit and his interest alike determined him to pursue.

While he was thus engaged, he found, greatly to his satisfaction, that Master Lowestoffe had transmitted not only his rapier and poniard, but a pair of pistols, which he had used in travelling, of a smaller and more convenient size than the large petronels, or horse-pistols, which were then in common use, as being made for wearing at the girdle or in the pockets. Next to having stout and friendly comrades, a man is chiefly emboldened by finding himself well armed in case of need, and Nigel, who had thought with some anxiety on the hazard of trusting his life, if attacked, to the protection of the clumsy weapon with which Lowestoffe had equipped him, in order to complete his disguise, felt an emotion of confidence approaching to triumph, as, drawing his own good and well-tried rapier, he wiped it with his handkerchief, examined its point, bent it once or twice against the ground to prove its well-known metal, and finally replaced it in the scabbard, the more hastily, that he heard a tap at the door of his chamber, and had no mind to be found vapouring in the apartment with his sword drawn.

It was his old host who entered, to tell him with many cringes that the price of his apartment was to be a crown per diem; and that, according to the custom of Whitefriars, the rent was always payable per advance, although he never scrupled to let the money lie till a week or fortnight, or even a month, in the hands of any honourable guest like Master Grahame, always upon some reasonable consideration for the use. Nigel got rid of the old dotard's intrusion, by throwing down two pieces of gold, and requesting the accommodation of his present apartment for eight days, adding, however, he did not think he should tarry so long.

The miser, with a sparkling eye and a trembling hand, clutched fast the proffered coin, and, having balanced the pieces with exquisite pleasure on the

extremity of his withered finger, began almost instantly to show that not even the possession of gold can gratify for more than an instant the very heart that is most eager in the pursuit of it. First, the pieces might be light—with hasty hand he drew a small pair of scales from his bosom and weighed them, first together, then separately, and smiled with glee as he saw them attain the due depression in the balance—a circumstance which might add to his profits, if it were true, as was currently reported, that little of the gold coinage was current in Alsatia in a perfect state, and that none ever left the sanctuary in that condition.

Another fear then occurred to trouble the old miser's pleasure. He had been just able to comprehend that Nigel intended to leave the Friars sooner than the arrival of the term for which he had deposited the rent. This might imply an expectation of refunding, which, as a Scotch wag said, of all species of funding, jumped least with the old gentleman's humour. He was beginning to enter a hypothetical caveat on this subject, and to quote several reasons why no part of the money once consigned as room-rent, could be repaid back on any pretence, without great hardship to the landlord, when Nigel, growing impatient, told him that the money was his absolutely, and without any intention on his part of resuming any of it—all he asked in return was the liberty of enjoying in private the apartment he had paid for. Old Trapbois, who had still at his tongue's end much of the smooth language, by which in his time, he had hastened the ruin of many a young spendthrift, began to launch out upon the noble and generous disposition of his new guest, until Nigel, growing impatient, took the old gentleman by the hand, and gently, yet irresistibly, leading him to the door of his chamber, put him out, but with such a decent and moderate exertion of his superior strength, as to render the action in no shape indecorous, and, fastening the door, began to do that for his pistols which he had done for his favourite sword, examining with care the flints and locks, and reviewing the state of his small provision of ammunition.

In this operation he was a second time interrupted by a knocking at his door—he called upon the person to enter, having no doubt that it was Lowestoffe's messenger at length arrived. It was, however, the ungracious daughter of old Trapbois, who, muttering something about her father's mistake, laid down upon the table one of the pieces of gold which Nigel had just given to him, saying, that what she retained was the full rent for the term he had specified. Nigel replied, he had paid the money, and had no desire to receive it again.

"Do as you will with it, then," replied his hostess, "for there it lies, and shall lie for me. If you are fool enough to pay more than is reason, my father shall not be knave enough to take it."

"But your father, mistress," said Nigel, "your father told me"—

"O, my father, my father," said she, interrupting him,—“my father managed these affairs while he was able—I manage them now, and that may in the long run be as well for both of us.”

She then looked on the table, and observed the weapons.

"You have arms, I see," she said; "do you know how to use them?"

"I should do so, mistress," replied Nigel, "for it has been my occupation."

"You are a soldier, then?" she demanded.

"No farther as yet, than as every gentleman of my country is a soldier."

"Ay, that is your point of honour—to cut the throats of the poor—a proper gentleman-like occupation for those who should protect them!"

"I do not deal in cutting throats, mistress," replied Nigel; "but I carry arms to defend myself, and my country if she needs me."

"Ay," replied Martha, "it is fairly worded; but men say you are as prompt as others in petty brawls, where neither your safety nor your country is in hazard; and that, had it not been so, you would not have been in the sanctuary to-day."

"Mistress," returned Nigel, "I should labour in vain to make you understand that a man's honour, which is, or should be, dearer to him than his life, may often call on and compel us to hazard our own lives, or those of others, on what would otherwise seem trifling contingencies."

"God's law says nought of that," said the female; "I have only read there, that thou shalt not kill. But I have neither time nor inclination to preach to you—you will find enough of fighting here if you like it, and well if it come not to seek you when you are least prepared. Farewell for the present—the chare-woman will execute your commands for your meals."

She left the room, just as Nigel, provoked at her assuming a superior tone of judgment and of censure, was about to be so superfluous as to enter into a dispute with an old pawnbroker's daughter on the subject of the point of honour. He smiled at himself for the folly into which the spirit of self-vindication had so nearly hurried him.

Lord Glenvarloch then applied to the cares of old Deborah the chare-woman, by whose intermediation he was provided with a tolerably decent dinner; and the only embarrassment which he experienced, was from the almost forcible entry of the old dotard his landlord, who insisted upon giving his assistance at laying the cloth. Nigel had some difficulty to prevent him from displacing his arms and some papers which were lying on the small table at which he had been sitting; and nothing short of a stern and positive injunction to the contrary could compel him to use another board (though there were two in the room), for the purpose of laying the cloth.

Having at length obliged him to relinquish his purpose, he could not help observing that the attention of the old dotard seemed still anxiously fixed upon the small table on which lay his sword and pistols; and that, amidst all the little duties which he seemed officiously anxious to render to his guest, he took every opportunity of looking towards and approaching these objects of his attention. At length, when Trapbois thought he had completely avoided the notice of his guest, Nigel, through the observation of one of the cracked mirrors, on which channel of communication the old man had not calculated, beheld him actually extend his hand towards the table in question. He thought it unnecessary to

use farther ceremony, but telling his landlord, in a stern voice, that he permitted no one to touch his arms, he commanded him to leave the apartment. The old usurer commenced a maundering sort of apology, in which all that Nigel distinctly apprehended, was a frequent repetition of the word *consideration*, and which did not seem to him to require any other answer than a reiteration of his command to him to leave the apartment, upon pain of worse consequences.

The ancient Hebe who acted as Lord Glenvarloch's cup-bearer, took his part against the intrusion of the still more antiquated Ganymede, and insisted on old Trapbois leaving the room instantly, menacing him at the same time with her mistress's displeasure if he remained there any longer. The old man seemed more under petticoat government than any other, for the threat of the chare-woman produced greater effect upon him than the more formidable displeasure of Nigel. He withdrew, grumbling and muttering, and Lord Glenvarloch heard him bar a large door at the nearer end of the gallery, which served as a division betwixt the other parts of the extensive mansion, and the apartment occupied by his guest, which, as the reader is aware, had its access from the landing-place at the head of the grand staircase.

Nigel accepted the careful sound of the bolts and bars as they were severally drawn by the trembling hand of old Trapbois, as an omen that the senior did not mean again to revisit him in the course of the evening, and heartily rejoiced that he was at length to be left to uninterrupted solitude.

The old woman asked if there was aught else to be done for his accommodation; and, indeed, it had hitherto seemed as if the pleasure of serving him, or more properly the reward which she expected, had renewed her youth and activity. Nigel desired to have candles, a fire lighted in his apartment, and a few fagots placed beside it, that he might feed it from time to time, as he began to feel the chilly effects of the damp and low situation of the house, close as it was to the Thames. But while the old woman was absent upon his errand, he began to think in what way he should pass the long solitary evening with which he was threatened.

His own reflections promised to Nigel little amusement, and less applause. He had considered his own perilous situation in every light in which it could be viewed, and foresaw as little utility as comfort in resuming the survey. To divert the current of his ideas, books were, of course, the readiest resource; and although, like most of us, Nigel had, in his time, sauntered through huge libraries, and even spent a long time there without greatly disturbing their learned contents, he was now in a situation where the possession of a volume, even of very inferior merit, becomes a real treasure. The old housewife returned shortly afterwards with fagots, and some pieces of half-burnt wax-candles, the perquisites, probably, real or usurped, of some experienced groom of the chambers, two of which she placed in large brass candlesticks, of different shapes and patterns, and laid the others on the table, that Nigel might renew them from time to time as they burnt to the socket. She heard with interest

Lord Glenvarloch's request to have a book—any sort of book—to pass away the night withal, and returned for answer that she knew of no other books in the house than her young mistress's (as she always denominated Mistress Martha Trapbois) bible, which the owner would not lend; and her master's Whetstone of Witte, being the second part of Arithmetic, by Robert Record, with the Cossike Practice and Rule of Equation; which promising volume Nigel declined to borrow. She offered, however, to bring him some books from Duke Hildebrod—"who sometimes, good gentleman, gave a glance at a book, when the state affairs of Alsatia left him as much leisure."

Nigel embraced the proposal, and his unwearied Iris scuttled away on this second embassy. She returned in a short time with a tattered quarto volume under her arm, and a pottle of sack in her hand; for the duke, judging that mere reading was dry work, had sent the wine by way of sauce to help it down, not forgetting to add the price to the morning's score which he had already run up against the stranger in the sanctuary.

Nigel seized on the book, and did not refuse the wine, thinking that a glass or two, as it really proved to be of good quality, would be no bad interlude to his studies. He dismissed, with thanks and assurance of reward, the poor old drudge who had been so zealous in his service; trimmed his fire and candles, and placed the easiest of the old arm-chairs in a convenient posture betwixt the fire and the table at which he had dined, and which now supported the measure of sack and the lights; and thus accompanying his studies with such luxurious appliances as were in his power, he began to examine the only volume with which the ducal library of Alsatia had been able to supply him.

The contents, though of a kind generally interesting, were not well calculated to dispel the gloom by which he was surrounded. The book was entitled, "God's Revenge against Murther;" not, as the bibliomaniacal reader may easily conjecture, the work which Reynolds published under that imposing name, but one of a much earlier date, printed and sold by old Wolfe; and which, could a copy now be found, would sell for much more than its weight in gold.*

Nigel had soon enough of the doleful tales which the book contains, and attempted one or two other modes of killing the evening. He looked out at the window, but the night was rainy, with gusts of wind; he tried to coax the fire, but the fagots were green, and smoked without burning; and as he was naturally temperate, he felt his blood somewhat heated by the canary sack which he had already drunk, and had no farther inclination to that pastime. He next attempted to compose a memorial, addressed to the king, in which he set forth his case and his grievances; but, speedily stung with the idea that his supplication would be treated with scorn, he flung the

scroll into the fire, and, in a sort of desperation, resumed the book which he had laid aside.

Nigel became more interested in the volume at the second than at the first attempt which he made to peruse it. The narratives, strange and shocking as they were to human feeling, possessed yet the interest of sorcery or of fascination, which rivets the attention by its awakening horrors. Much was told of the strange and horrible acts of blood by which men, setting nature and humanity alike at defiance, had, for the thirst of revenge, the lust of gold, or the cravings of irregular ambition, broken into the tabernacle of life. Yet more surprising and mysterious tales were recounted of the mode in which such deeds of blood had come to be discovered and revenged. Animals, insensible animals, had told the secret, and birds of the air had carried the matter. The elements had seemed to betray the deed which had polluted them—earth had ceased to support the murderer's steps, fire to warm his frozen limbs, water to refresh his parched lips, air to relieve his gasping lungs. All, in short, bore evidence to the homicide's guilt. In other circumstances, the criminal's own awakened conscience pursued and brought him to justice; and in some narratives the grave was said to have yawned, that the ghost of the sufferer might call for revenge.

It was now wearing late into the night, and the book was still in Nigel's hands, when the tapestry which hung behind him flapped against the wall, and the wind produced by its motion, waved the flame of the candles by which he was reading. Nigel started and turned round, in that excited and irritated state of mind which arose from the nature of his studies, especially at a period when a certain degree of superstition was inculcated as a point of religious faith. It was not without emotion that he saw the bloodless countenance, meagre form, and ghastly aspect of old Trapbois, once more in the very act of extending his withered hand towards the table which supported his arms. Convinced by this untimely apparition that something evil was meditated towards him, Nigel sprung up, seized his sword, drew it, and, placing it at the old man's breast, demanded of him what he did in his apartment at so untimely an hour. Trapbois showed neither fear nor surprise, and only answered by some imperfect expressions, intimating he would part with his life rather than with his property; and Lord Glenvarloch, strangely embarrassed, knew not what to think of the intruder's motives, and still less how to get rid of him. As he again tried the means of intimidation, he was surprised by a second apparition from behind the tapestry, in the person of the daughter of Trapbois, bearing a lamp in her hand. She also seemed to possess her father's insensibility to danger, for, coming close to Nigel, she pushed aside impetuously his naked sword, and even attempted to take it out of his hand.

"For shame," she said, "your sword on a man of eighty years and more!—this the honour of a Scottish gentleman!—give it to me to make a spindle of."

"Stand back," said Nigel; "I mean your father no injury—but I *will* know what has caused him to prowl this whole day, and even at this late hour of night, around my arms."

* *Note by Captain Clutterbuck.*—Only three copies are known to exist; one in the library at Kennaquhair, and two—one foxed and cropped, the other tall and in good condition—both in the possession of an eminent member of the Roxburghe Club, now M. P. for a great university.

"Your arms!" repeated she; "alas! young man, the whole arms in the Tower of London are of little value to him, in comparison of this miserable piece of gold which I left this morning on the table of a young spendthrift, too careless to put what belonged to him into his own purse."

So saying, she showed the piece of gold, which, still remaining on the table where she left it, had been the bait that attracted old Trapbois so frequently to the spot; and which, even in the silence of the night, had so dwelt on his imagination, that he had made use of a private passage, long disused, to enter his guest's apartment, in order to possess himself of the treasure during his slumbers. He now exclaimed, at the highest tones of his cracked and feeble voice—

"It is mine—it is mine!—he gave it to me for a consideration—I will die ere I part with my property!"

"It is indeed his own, mistress," said Nigel; "and I do entreat you to restore it to the person on whom I have bestowed it, and let me have my apartment in quiet."

"I will account with you for it, then,"—said the maiden, reluctantly giving to her father the morsel of Mammon, on which he darted as if his bony fingers had been the talons of a hawk seizing its prey; and then making a contented muttering and mumbling, like an old dog after he has been fed, and just when he is wheeling himself thrice round for the purpose of lying down, he followed his daughter behind the tapestry, through a little sliding-door, which was perceived when the hangings were drawn apart.

"This shall be properly fastened to-morrow," said the daughter to Nigel, speaking in such a tone that her father, deaf, and engrossed by his acquisition, could not hear her; "to-night I will continue to watch him closely.—I wish you good repose."

These few words, pronounced in a tone of more civility than she had yet made use of towards her lodger, contained a wish which was not to be accomplished, although her guest, presently after her departure, retired to bed.

There was a slight fever on Nigel's blood, occasioned by the various events of the evening, which put him, as the phrase is, beside his rest. Perplexing and painful thoughts rolled in his mind, like a troubled stream, and the more he laboured to lull himself to slumber, the farther he seemed from attaining his object. He tried all the resources common in such cases; kept counting from one to a thousand, until his head was giddy—he watched the embers of the wood fire till his eyes were dazzled—he listened to the dull moaning of the wind, the swinging and creaking of signs which projected from the houses, and the baying of here and there a homeless dog, till his very ear was weary.

Suddenly, however, amid this monotony, came a sound which startled him at once. It was a female shriek. He sat up in his bed to listen, then remembered he was in Alsatia, where brawls of every sort were current among the unruly inhabitants. But another scream, and another, and another, succeeded so close, that he was certain, though the noise was

remote and sounded stifled, it must be in the same house with himself.

Nigel jumped up hastily, put on a part of his clothes, seized his sword and pistols, and ran to the door of his chamber. Here he plainly heard the screams redoubled, and, as he thought, the sounds came from the usurer's apartment. All access to the gallery was effectually excluded by the intermediate door, which the brave young lord shook with eager, but vain impatience. But the secret passage occurred suddenly to his recollection. He hastened back to his room, and succeeded with some difficulty in lighting a candle, dreadfully agitated by hearing the cries repeated, yet still more afraid lest they should sink into silence.

He rushed along the narrow and winding entrance, guided by the noise, which now burst more wildly on his ear; and, while he descended a narrow staircase which terminated the passage, he heard the stifled voices of men, encouraging, as it seemed, each other.—"D—n her, strike her down—silence her—beat her brains out!"—while the voice of his hostess, though now almost exhausted, was repeating the cry of "murder," and "help." At the bottom of the staircase was a small door, which gave way before Nigel as he precipitated himself upon the scene of action,—a cocked pistol in one hand, a candle in the other, and his naked sword under his arm.

Two ruffians had, with great difficulty, overpowered, or, rather, were on the point of overpowering, the daughter of Trapbois, whose resistance appeared to have been most desperate, for the floor was covered with fragments of her clothes, and handfuls of her hair. It appeared that her life was about to be the price of her defence, for one villain had drawn a long clasp-knife, when they were surprised by the entrance of Nigel, who, as they turned towards him, shot the fellow with the knife dead on the spot, and, when the other advanced on him, hurled the candlestick at his head, and then attacked him with his sword. It was dark, save some pale moon-light from the window; and the ruffian, after firing a pistol without effect, and fighting a traverse or two with his sword, lost heart, made for the window, leaped over it, and escaped. Nigel fired his remaining pistol after him at a venture, and then called for light.

"There is light in the kitchen," answered Martha Trapbois, with more presence of mind than could have been expected. "Stay, you know not the way; I will fetch it myself.—Oh! my father—my poor father!—I knew it would come to this—and all along of the accursed gold!—They have MURDERED him!"

CHAPTER XXV.

Death finds us 'mid our play-things—snatches us
As a cross nurse might do a wayward child,
From all our toys and baubles. His rough call
Unlooses all our favourite ties on earth;
And well if they are such as may be answer'd
In yonder world, where all is judged of truly.

Old Play.

It was a ghastly scene which opened, upon Martha Trapbois' return with a light. Her own haggard

and austere features were exaggerated by all the desperation of grief, fear, and passion—but the latter was predominant. On the floor lay the body of the robber, who had expired without a groan, while his blood, flowing plentifully, had crimsoned all around. Another body lay also there, on which the unfortunate woman precipitated herself in agony, for it was that of her unhappy father. In the next moment she started up, and, exclaiming—"There may be life yet!" strove to raise the body. Nigel went to her assistance, but not without a glance at the open window; which Martha, as acute as if undisturbed either by passion or terror, failed not to interpret justly.

"Fear not," she cried, "fear not; they are base cowards, to whom courage is as much unknown as mercy. If I had had weapons, I could have defended myself against them without assistance or protection. Oh! my poor father! protection comes too late for this cold and stiff corpse.—He is dead—dead!"

While she spoke, they were attempting to raise the dead body of the old miser; but it was evident, even from the feeling of the inactive weight and rigid joints, that life had forsaken her station. Nigel looked for a wound, but saw none. The daughter of the deceased, with more presence of mind than a daughter could have been supposed capable of exerting, discovered the instrument of his murder—a sort of scarf, which had been drawn so tight round his throat as to stifle his cries for assistance in the first instance, and afterwards to extinguish life.

She undid the fatal noose, and, laying the old man's body in the arms of Lord Glenvarloch, she ran for water, for spirits, for essences, in the vain hope that life might be only suspended. That hope proved indeed vain. She chafed his temples, raised his head, opened his night-gown (for it seemed as if he had arisen from bed upon hearing the entrance of the villains), and finally opened with difficulty his fixed and closely-clenched hands, from one of which dropped a key, from the other the very piece of gold about which the unhappy man had been a little before so anxious, and which, probably, in the impaired state of his mental faculties, he was disposed to defend with as desperate energy as if its amount had been necessary to his actual existence.

"It is in vain—it is in vain," said the daughter, desisting from her fruitless attempts to recal the spirit which had been effectually dislodged, for the neck had been twisted by the violence of the murderers—"it is in vain—he is murdered—I always knew it would be thus—and now I witness it!"

She then snatched up the key and the piece of money, but it was only to dash them again on the floor, as she exclaimed, "Accursed be ye both, for you are the causes of this deed!"

Nigel would have spoken—would have reminded her that measures should be instantly taken for the pursuit of the murderer, who had escaped, as well as for her own security against his return; but she interrupted him sharply.

"Be silent," she said, "be silent; think you the thoughts of my own heart are not enough to distract me, and with such a sight as this before me? I say,

be silent," she said again, and in a yet sterner tone, "can a daughter listen, and her father's murdered corpse lying on her knees?"

Lord Glenvarloch, however overpowered by the energy of her grief, felt not the less the embarrassment of his own situation. He had discharged both his pistols—the robber might return—he had, probably, other assistants besides the man who had fallen; and it seemed to him, indeed, as if he had heard a muttering beneath the windows. He explained hastily to his companion the necessity of procuring ammunition.

"You are right," she said, somewhat contemptuously, "and have ventured already more than ever I expected of man. Go and shift for yourself, since that is your purpose—leave me to my fate."

Without stopping for needless expostulation, Nigel hastened to his own room through the secret passage, furnished himself with the ammunition he sought for, and returned with the same celerity, wondering himself at the accuracy with which he achieved, in the dark, all the meanderings of the passage, which he had traversed only once, and that in a moment of such violent agitation.

He found, on his return, the unfortunate woman standing like a statue by the body of her father, which she had laid straight on the floor, having covered the face with the skirt of his gown. She testified neither surprise nor pleasure at Nigel's return, but said to him calmly—"My moan is made; my sorrow—all the sorrow, at least, that man shall ever have noting of—is gone over; but I will have justice, and the base villain who murdered this poor defenceless old man, when he had not, by the course of nature, a twelvemonth's life in him, shall not cumber the earth long after him. Stranger, whom Heaven has sent to forward the revenge reserved for this action, go to Hildebrod's—there they are awake all night in their revels—bid him come hither—he is bound by his duty, and dare not, and shall not, refuse his assistance, which he well knows I can reward. Why do ye tarry?—go instantly."

"I would," said Nigel, "but I am fearful of leaving you alone; the villains may return, and"—

"True, most true—he may return; and, though I care little for his murdering me, he may possess himself of what has most tempted him. Keep this key and this piece of gold; they are both of importance—defend your life if assailed, and if you kill the villain I will make you rich. I go myself to call for aid."

Nigel would have remonstrated with her, but she had departed, and in a moment he heard the house-door clank behind her. For an instant he thought of following her; but upon recollection that the distance was but short betwixt the tavern of Hildebrod and the house of Trapbois, he concluded that she incurred little danger in passing it, and that he would do well in the meanwhile to remain on the watch as she recommended.

It was no pleasant situation for one unused to such scenes to remain in the apartment with two dead bodies, recently those of living and breathing men, who had both, within the space of less than half an hour, suffered violent death; one of them by the hand of the assassin, the other, whose blood still

continued to flow from the wound in his throat, and to flood all around him, by the spectator's own deed of violence, though of justice. He turned his face from those wretched relics of mortality with a feeling of disgust, mingled with superstition; and he found, when he had done so, that the consciousness of the presence of these ghastly objects, though unseen by him, rendered him more uncomfortable than even when he had his eyes fixed upon, and reflected by, the cold, staring, lifeless eye-balls of the deceased. Fancy also played her usual sport with him. He now thought he heard the well-worn damask night-gown of the deceased usurer rustle; anon, that he heard the slaughtered bravo draw up his leg, the boot scratching the floor as if he was about to rise; and again he deemed he heard the footsteps and the whisper of the returned ruffian under the window from which he had lately escaped. To face the last and most real danger, and to parry the terrors which the other class of feelings were like to impress upon him, Nigel went to the window, and was much cheered to observe the light of several torches illuminating the street, and followed, as the murmur of voices denoted, by a number of persons, armed, it would seem, with firelocks and halberts, and attendant on Hildebrod, who (not in his fantastic office of duke, but in that which he really possessed, of bailiff of the liberty and sanctuary of Whitefriars) was on his way to inquire into the crime and its circumstances.

It was a strange and melancholy contrast to see these debauchees, disturbed in the very depth of their midnight revel, on their arrival at such a scene as this. They stared on each other, and on the bloody work before them, with lack-lustre eyes; staggered with uncertain steps over boards slippery with blood; their noisy brawling voices sunk into stammering whispers; and, with spirits quelled by what they saw, while their brains were still stupified by the liquor which they had drunk, they seemed like men walking in their sleep.

Old Hildebrod was an exception to the general condition. That seasoned cask, however full, was at all times capable of motion, when there occurred a motive sufficiently strong to set him a-rolling. He seemed much shocked at what he beheld, and his proceedings, in consequence, had more in them of regularity and propriety, than he might have been supposed capable of exhibiting upon any occasion whatever. The daughter was first examined, and stated, with wonderful accuracy and distinctness, the manner in which she had been alarmed with a noise of struggling and violence in her father's apartment, and that the more readily, because she was watching him on account of some alarm concerning his health. On her entrance, she had seen her father sinking under the strength of two men, upon whom she rushed with all the fury she was capable of. As their faces were blackened, and their figures disguised, she could not pretend, in the hurry of a moment so dreadfully agitating, to distinguish either of them as persons whom she had seen before. She remembered little more excepting the firing of shots, until she found herself alone with her guest, and saw that the ruffians had escaped.

Lord Glenvarloch told his story as we have given

it to the reader. The direct evidence thus received, Hildebrod examined the premises. He found that the villains had made their entrance by the window out of which the survivor had made his escape; yet it seemed singular that they should have done so, as it was secured with strong iron bars, which old Trapbois was in the habit of shutting with his own hand at nightfall. He minuted down, with great accuracy, the state of everything in the apartment, and examined carefully the features of the slain robber. He was dressed like a seaman of the lowest order, but his face was known to none present. Hildebrod next sent for an Alsatian surgeon, whose vices, undoing what his skill might have done for him, had consigned him to the wretched practice of this place. He made him examine the dead bodies, and make a proper description of the manner in which the sufferers seemed to have come by their end. The circumstance of the sash did not escape the learned judge, and, having listened to all that could be heard or conjectured on the subject, and collected all particulars of evidence which appeared to bear on the bloody transaction, he commanded the door of the apartment to be locked until next morning; and carrying the unfortunate daughter of the murdered man into the kitchen, where there was no one in presence but Lord Glenvarloch, he asked her gravely, whether she suspected no one in particular of having committed the deed.

"Do you suspect no one?" answered Martha, looking fixedly on him.

"Perhaps I may, mistress; but it is my part to ask questions, yours to answer them. That's the rule of the game."

"Then I suspect him who wore yonder sash.—Do not you know who I mean?"

"Why, if you call on me for honours, I must needs say I have seen the captain have one of such a fashion, and he was not a man to change his suits often."

"Send out, then," said Martha, "and have him apprehended."

"If it is he, he will be far by this time; but I will communicate with the higher powers," answered the judge.

"You would have him escape," resumed she, fixing her eyes on him sternly.

"By cock and pie," replied Hildebrod, "did it depend on me, the murdering cut-throat should hang as high as ever Haman did—but let me take my time. He has friends among us, *that* you wot well; and all that should assist me, are as drunk as fiddlers."

"I will have revenge—I *will* have it," repeated she; "and take heed you trifle not with me."

"Trifle! I would sooner trifle with a she-bear the minute after they had baited her. I tell you, mistress, be but patient, and we will have him. I know all his haunts, and he cannot forbear them long; and I will have trap-doors open for him. You cannot want justice, mistress, for you have the means to get it."

"They who help me in my revenge," said Martha, "shall share those means."

"Enough said," replied Hildebrod; "and now I would have you go to my house, and get something

hot—you will be but dreary here by yourself."

"I will send for the old chare-woman," replied Martha, "and we have the stranger gentleman besides."

"Umph, umph—the stranger gentleman!" said Hildebrod to Nigel, whom he drew a little apart. "I fancy the captain has made the stranger gentleman's fortune when he was making a bold dash for his own. I can tell your honour—I must not say lordship—that I think my having chanced to give the greasy buff-and-iron scoundrel some hint of what I recommended to you to-day, has put him on this rough game. The better for you—you will get the cash without the father-in-law.—You will keep conditions, I trust?"

"I wish you had said nothing to any one of a scheme so absurd," said Nigel.

"Absurd!—Why, think you she will not have thee? Take her with the tear in her eye, man—take her with the tear in her eye. Let me hear from you to-morrow. Good night, good night—a nod is as good as a wink. I must to my business of sealing and locking up. By the way, this horrid work has put all out of my head—Here is a fellow from Mr Lowestoffe has been asking to see you. As he said his business was express, the senate only made him drink a couple of flagons, and he was just coming to beat up your quarters when this breeze blew up.—Ahey, friend! there is Master Nigel Grahame."

A young man, dressed in a green plush jerkin, with a badge on the sleeve, and having the appearance of a waterman, approached and took Nigel aside, while Duke Hildebrod went from place to place to exercise his authority, and to see the windows fastened, and the doors of the apartment locked up. The news communicated by Lowestoffe's messenger were not the most pleasant. They were intimated in a courteous whisper to Nigel, to the following effect:—That Master Lowestoffe prayed him to consult his safety by instantly leaving Whitefriars, for that a warrant from the lord chief justice had been issued out for apprehending him, and would be put in force to-morrow, by the assistance of a party of musketeers, a force which the Alsations neither would nor dared to resist.

"And so, squire," said the aquatic emissary, "my wherry is to wait you at the Temple-stairs yonder, at five this morning, and, if you would give the blood-hounds the slip, why, you may."

"Why did not Master Lowestoffe write to me?" said Nigel.

"Alas! the good gentleman lies up in lavender for it himself, and has as little to do with pen and ink as if he were a parson."

"Did he send any token to me?" said Nigel.

"Token!—ay, marry did he—token enough, an I have not forgot it," said the fellow; then, giving a hoist to the waistband of his breeches, he said,—

"Ay, I have it—you were to believe me, because your name was written with an O, for Grahame. Ay, that was it, I think.—Well, shall we meet in two hours, when tide turns, and go down the river like a twelve-oared barge?"

"Where is the king just now, knowest thou?" answered Lord Glenvarloch.

"The king? why, he went down to Greenwich

yesterday by water, like a noble sovereign as he is, who will always float where he can. He was to have hunted this week, but that purpose is broken, they say; and the prince, and the duke, and all of them at Greenwich, are as merry as minnows."

"Well," replied Nigel, "I will be ready to go at five; do thou come hither to carry my baggage."

"Ay, ay, master," replied the fellow, and left the house, mixing himself with the disorderly attendants of Duke Hildebrod, who were now retiring. That potentate entreated Nigel to make fast the doors behind him, and, pointing to the female who sat by the expiring fire with her limbs outstretched, like one whom the hand of death had already arrested, he whispered, "Mind your hits, and mind your bargain, or I will cut your bow-string for you before you can draw it."

Feeling deeply the ineffable brutality which could recommend the prosecuting such views over a wretch in such a condition, Lord Glenvarloch yet commanded his temper so far as to receive the advice in silence, and attend to the former part of it, by barring the door carefully behind Duke Hildebrod and his suite, with the tacit hope that he should never again see or hear of them. He then returned to the kitchen, in which the unhappy woman remained, her hands still clenched, her eyes fixed, and her limbs extended, like those of a person in a trance. Much moved with her situation, and with the prospect which lay before her, he endeavoured to awaken her to existence by every means in his power, and at length apparently succeeded in dispelling her stupor, and attracting her attention. He then explained to her that he was in the act of leaving Whitefriars in a few hours—that his future destination was uncertain, but that he desired anxiously to know whether he could contribute to her protection by apprising any friend of her situation, or otherwise. With some difficulty she seemed to comprehend his meaning, and thanked him with her usual short ungracious manner. "He might mean well," she said, "but he ought to know that the miserable had no friends."

Nigel said, "He would not willingly be importunate, but as he was about to leave the Friars——" She interrupted him,

"You are about to leave the Friars? I will go with you."

"You go with me!" exclaimed Lord Glenvarloch.

"Yes," she said, "I will persuade my father to leave this murdering den." But, as she spoke, the more perfect recollection of what had passed crowded on her mind. She hid her face in her hands, and burst out into a dreadful fit of sobs, moans, and lamentations, which terminated in hysterics, violent in proportion to the uncommon strength of her body and mind.

Lord Glenvarloch, shocked, confused, and inexperienced, was about to leave the house in quest of medical, or at least female assistance; but the patient, when the paroxysm had somewhat spent its force, held him fast by the sleeve with one hand, covering her face with the other, while a copious flood of tears came to relieve the emotions of grief by which she had been so violently agitated.

"Do not leave me," she said—"do not leave me, and call no one. I have never been in this way before, and would not now," she said, sitting upright, and wiping her eyes with her apron,—“would not now—but that—but that he loved *me*, if he loved nothing else that was human—To die so, and by such hands!”

And again the unhappy woman gave way to a paroxysm of sorrow, mingling her tears with sobbing, wailing, and all the abandonment of female grief, when at its utmost height. At length, she gradually recovered the austerity of her natural composure, and maintained it as if by a forcible exertion of resolution, repelling, as she spoke, the repeated returns of the hysterical affection, by such an effort as that by which epileptic patients are known to suspend the recurrence of their fits. Yet her mind, however resolved, could not so absolutely overcome the affection of her nerves, but that she was agitated by strong fits of trembling, which, for a minute or two at a time, shook her whole frame in a manner frightful to witness. Nigel forgot his own situation, and, indeed, every⁴hing else, in the interest inspired by the unhappy woman before him—an interest which affected a proud spirit the more deeply, that she herself, with corresponding highness of mind, seemed determined to owe as little as possible either to the humanity or the pity of others.

"I am not wont to be in this way," she said,—“but—but—Nature will have power over the frail beings it has made. Over you, sir, I have some right; for, without you, I had not survived this awful night. I wish your aid had been either earlier or later—but you *have* saved my life, and you are bound to assist in making it endurable to me.”

"If you will show me how it is possible," answered Nigel.

"You are going hence, you say, instantly—carry me with you," said the unhappy woman. "By my own efforts, I shall never escape from this wilderness of guilt and misery."

"Alas! what can I do for you?" replied Nigel. "My own way, and I must not deviate from it, leads me, in all probability, to a dungeon. I might, indeed, transport you from hence with me, if you could afterwards bestow yourself with any friend."

"Friend!" she exclaimed—"I have no friend—they have long since discarded us.—A spectre arising from the dead were more welcome than I should be at the doors of those who have disclaimed us; and, if they were willing to restore their friendship to me now, I would despise it, because they withdrew it from him—from him—(here she underwent strong but suppressed agitation, and then added firmly)—from him who lies yonder.—I have no friend." Here she paused; and then suddenly, as if recollecting herself, added, "I have no friend, but I have that will purchase many—I have that which will purchase both friends and avengers.—It is well thought of; I must not leave it for a prey to cheats and ruffians.—Stranger, you must return to yonder room. Pass through it boldly to his—that is, to the sleeping apartment; push the bedstead aside; beneath each of the posts is a brass plate, as if to support the weight, but it is that upon the left, nearest to the wall, which must serve your turn—

press the corner of the plate, and it will spring up and show a key-hole, which this key will open. You will then lift a concealed trap-door, and in a cavity of the floor you will discover a small chest. Bring it hither; it shall accompany our journey, and it will be hard if the contents cannot purchase me a place of refuge."

"But the door communicating with the kitchen has been locked by these people," said Nigel.

"True, I had forgot; they had their reasons for that, doubtless," answered she. "But the secret passage from your apartment is open, and you may go that way."

Lord Glenvarloch took the key, and, as he lighted a lamp to show him the way, she read in his countenance some unwillingness to the task imposed.

"You fear," she said—"there is no cause; the murderer and his victim are both at rest. Take courage, I will go with you myself—you cannot know the trick of the spring, and the chest will be too heavy for you."

"No fear, no fear," answered Lord Glenvarloch, ashamed of the construction she put upon a momentary hesitation, arising from a dislike to look upon what is horrible, often connected with those high-wrought minds which are the last to fear what is merely dangerous—"I will do your errand as you desire; but for you, you must not—you cannot go yonder."

"I can—I will," she said. "I am composed. You shall see that I am so." She took from the table a piece of unfinished sewing-work, and, with steadiness and composure, passed a silken thread into the eye of a fine needle.—“Could I have done that,” she said, with a smile yet more ghastly than her previous look of fixed despair, “had not my heart and hand been both steady?”

She then led the way rapidly up stairs to Nigel's chamber, and proceeded through the secret passage with the same haste, as if she had feared her resolution might have failed her ere her purpose was executed. At the bottom of the stairs she paused a moment, before entering the fatal apartment, then hurried through with a rapid step to the sleeping chamber beyond, followed closely by Lord Glenvarloch, whose reluctance to approach the scene of butchery was altogether lost in the anxiety which he felt on account of the survivor of the tragedy.

Her first action was to pull aside the curtains of her father's bed. The bed-clothes were thrown aside in confusion, doubtless in the action of his starting from sleep to oppose the entrance of the villains into the next apartment. The hard mattress scarcely showed the slight pressure where the emaciated body of the old miser had been deposited. His daughter sank beside the bed, clasped her hands, and prayed to Heaven, in a short and affecting manner, for support in her affliction, and for vengeance on the villains who had made her fatherless. A low-muttered and still more brief petition, recommended to Heaven the soul of the sufferer, and invoked pardon for his sins, in virtue of the great christian atonement.

This duty of piety performed, she signed to Nigel to give her his assistance; and, having pushed aside the heavy bedstead, they saw the brass plate which

Martha had described. She pressed the spring, and, at once, the plate starting up, showed the key-hole, and a large iron ring used in lifting the trap-door, which, when raised, displayed the strong-box, or small chest, she had mentioned, and which proved indeed so very weighty, that it might perhaps have been scarcely possible for Nigel, though a very strong man, to have raised it without assistance.

Having replaced everything as they had found it, Nigel, with such assistance as his companion was able to afford, assumed his load, and made a shift to carry it into the next apartment, where lay the miserable owner, insensible to sounds and circumstances, which, if anything could have broken his long last slumber, would certainly have done so.

His unfortunate daughter went up to his body, and had even the courage to remove the sheet which had been decently disposed over it. She put her hand on the heart, but there was no throb—held a feather to the lips, but there was no motion—then kissed with deep reverence the starting veins of the pale forehead, and then the emaciated hand.

"I would you could hear me," she said,—"*Father!* I would you could hear me swear, that, if I now save what you most valued on earth, it is only to assist me in obtaining vengeance for your death."

She replaced the covering, and, without a tear, a sigh, or an additional word of any kind, renewed her efforts, until they conveyed the strong-box betwixt them into Lord Glenvarloch's sleeping apartment. "It must pass," she said, "as part of your baggage. I will be in readiness so soon as the waterman calls."

She retired; and Lord Glenvarloch, who saw the hour of their departure approach, tore down a part of the old hanging to make a covering, which he corded upon the trunk, lest the peculiarity of its shape, and the care with which it was banded and counter-banded with bars of steel, might afford suspicions respecting the treasure which it contained. Having taken this measure of precaution, he changed the rascally disguise, which he had assumed on entering Whitefriars, into a suit becoming his quality, and then, unable to sleep, though exhausted with the events of the night, he threw himself on his bed to await the summons of the waterman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Give us good voyage, gentle stream—we stun not
Thy sober ear with sounds of revelry;
Wake not the slumbering echoes of thy banks
With voice of flute and horn—we do but seek
On the broad path way of thy swelling bosom
To glide in silent safety.

The Double Bridal.

GREY, or rather yellow light, was beginning to twinkle through the fogs of Whitefriars, when a low tap at the door of the unhappy miser announced to Lord Glenvarloch the summons of the boatman. He found at the door the man whom he had seen the night before, with a companion.

"Come, come, master, let us get afloat," said one of them, in a rough and impressive whisper, "time and tide wait for no man."

VOL. III.

"They shall not wait for me," said Lord Glenvarloch; "but I have some things to carry with me."

"Ay, ay, no man will take a pair of oars now, Jack, unless he means to load the wherry like a six-horse waggon. When they don't want to shift the whole kitt, they take a sculler, and be d—d to them.—Come, come, where be your rattle-traps?"

One of the men was soon sufficiently loaded, in his own estimation at least, with lord Glenvarloch's mail and its accompaniments, with which burden he began to trudge towards the Temple-stairs. His comrade, who seemed the principal, began to handle the trunk which contained the miser's treasure, but pitched it down again in an instant, declaring, with a great oath, that it was as reasonable to expect a man to carry Paul's on his back. The daughter of Trapbois, who had by this time joined them, muffled up in a long dark hood and mantle, exclaimed to Lord Glenvarloch—"Let them leave it if they will—let them leave it all; let us but escape from this horrible place."

We have mentioned somewhere, that Nigel was a very athletic young man, and, impelled by a strong feeling of compassion and indignation, he showed his bodily strength singularly on this occasion, by seizing on the ponderous strong-box, and by means of the rope he had cast around it, throwing it on his shoulders, and marching resolutely forward under a weight which would have sunk to the earth three young gallants at least, of our degenerate day. The waterman followed him in amazement, calling out, "Why, master, master, you might as well gie me t'other end on't!" and anon offered his assistance to support it in some degree behind, which after the first minute or two Nigel was fain to accept. His strength was almost exhausted when he reached the wherry, which was lying at the Temple-stairs according to appointment; and, when he pitched the trunk into it, the weight sank the bow of the boat so low in the water as well nigh to upset it.

"We shall have as hard a fare of it," said the waterman to his companion, "as if we were ferrying over an honest bankrupt with all his secreted goods—Ho, ho! good woman, what are you stepping in for?—our gunwale lies deep enough in the water without live lumber to boot."

"This person comes with me," said Lord Glenvarloch; "she is for the present under my protection."

"Come, come, master," rejoined the fellow, "that is out of my commission. You must not double my freight on me—she may go by land—and, as for protection, her face will protect her from Berwick to the Land's End."

"You will not except at my doubling the loading, if I double the fare?" said Nigel, determined on no account to relinquish the protection of this unhappy woman, for which he had already devised some sort of plan, likely now to be baffled by the characteristic rudeness of the Thames watermen.

"Ay, by G—, but I will except though," said the fellow with the green plush jacket; "I will overload my wherry neither for love nor money—I love my boat as well as my wife, and a thought better."

"Nay, nay, comrade," said his mate, "that is

speaking no true water language. For double fare we are bound to row a witch in her egg-shell, if she bid us; and so pull away, Jack, and let us have no more prating."

They got into the stream-way accordingly, and, although heavily laden, began to move down the river with reasonable speed.

The lighter vessels which passed, overtook, or crossed them, in their course, failed not to assail them with the boisterous raillery, which was then called water-wit; for which the extreme plainness of Mistress Martha's features, contrasted with the youth, handsome figure, and good looks of Nigel, gave the principal topics; while the circumstance of the boat being somewhat overloaded, did not escape their notice. They were hailed successively, as a grocer's wife upon a party of pleasure with her eldest apprentice—as an old woman carrying her grandson to school—and as a young strapping Irishman, conveying an ancient maiden to Dr Rigmarole's at Redriffe, who buckles beggars for a tester and a dram of Geneva. All this abuse was retorted in a similar strain of humour by Green-jacket and his companion, who maintained the war of wit with the same alacrity with which they were assailed.

Meanwhile, Lord Glenvarloch asked his desolate companion if she had thought on any place where she could remain in safety with her property. She confessed, in more detail than formerly, that her father's character had left her no friends; and that, from the time he had betaken himself to Whitefriars, to escape certain legal consequences of his eager pursuit of gain, she had lived a life of total seclusion; not associating with the society which the place afforded, and, by her residence there, as well as her father's parsimony, effectually cut off from all other company. What she now wished, was, in the first place, to obtain the shelter of a decent lodging, and the countenance of honest people, however low in life, until she should obtain legal advice as to the mode of obtaining justice on her father's murderer. She had no hesitation to charge the guilt upon Colepepper (commonly called Peppercole), whom she knew to be as capable of any act of treacherous cruelty, as he was cowardly where actual manhood was required. He had been strongly suspected of two robberies before, one of which was coupled with an atrocious murder. He had, she intimated, made pretensions to her hand as the easiest and safest way of obtaining possession of her father's wealth; and, on her refusing his addresses, if they could be termed so, in the most positive terms, he had thrown out such obscure hints of vengeance, as, joined with some imperfect assaults upon the house, had kept her in frequent alarm, both on her father's account and her own.

Nigel, but that his feeling of respectful delicacy to the unfortunate woman forbade him to do so, could here have communicated a circumstance corroborative of her suspicions, which had already occurred to his own mind. He recollected the hint that old Hildebrod threw forth on the preceding night, that some communication betwixt himself and Colepepper had hastened the catastrophe. As this communication related to the plan which Hildebrod had been pleased to form of promoting a marriage betwixt

Nigel himself and the rich heiress of Trapbois, the fear of losing an opportunity not to be regained, together with the mean malignity of a low-bred ruffian, disappointed in a favourite scheme, was most likely to instigate the bravo to the deed of violence which had been committed. The reflection that his own name was in some degree implicated with the causes of this horrid tragedy, doubled Lord Glenvarloch's anxiety in behalf of the victim whom he had rescued, while at the same time he formed the tacit resolution, that, so soon as his own affairs were put upon some footing, he would contribute all in his power to the investigation of this bloody affair.

After ascertaining from his companion that she could form no better plan of her own, he recommended to her to take up her lodging for the time, at the house of his old landlord, Christie the ship-chandler, at Paul's Wharf, describing the decency and honesty of that worthy couple, and expressing his hopes that they would receive her into their own house, or recommend her at least to that of some person for whom they would be responsible, until she should have time to enter upon other arrangements for herself.

The poor woman received advice so grateful to her in her desolate condition, with an expression of thanks, brief indeed, but deeper than anything had yet extracted from the austerity of her natural disposition.

Lord Glenvarloch then proceeded to inform Martha, that certain reasons, connected with his personal safety, called him immediately to Greenwich, and, therefore, it would not be in his power to accompany her to Christie's house, which he would otherwise have done with pleasure; but tearing a leaf from his tablet, he wrote on it a few lines, addressed to his landlord, as a man of honesty and humanity, in which he described the bearer as a person who stood in singular necessity of temporary protection and good advice, for which her circumstances enabled her to make ample acknowledgment. He, therefore, requested John Christie, as his old and good friend, to afford her the shelter of his roof for a short time; or, if that might not be consistent with his convenience, at least to direct her to a proper lodging—and, finally, he imposed on him the additional, and somewhat more difficult commission, to recommend her to the counsel and services of an honest, at least a reputable and skilful attorney, for the transacting some law-business of importance. This note he subscribed with his real name, and, delivering it to his *protégée*, who received it with another deeply uttered "I thank you," which spoke the sterling feelings of her gratitude better than a thousand combined phrases, he commanded the watermen to pull in for Paul's Wharf, which they were now approaching.

"We have not time," said Green-jacket; "we cannot be stopping every instant."

But, upon Nigel insisting upon his commands being obeyed, and adding, that it was for the purpose of putting the lady ashore, the waterman declared he would rather have her room than her company, and put the wherry alongside of the wharf accordingly. Here two of the porters, who ply in such places, were easily induced to undertake the charge of the

ponderous strong-box, and at the same time to guide the owner to the well-known mansion of John Christie, with whom all who lived in that neighbourhood were perfectly acquainted.

The boat, much lightened of its load, went down the Thames at a rate increased in proportion. But we must forbear to pursue her in her voyage for a few minutes, since we have previously mentioned the issue of Lord Glenvarloch's recommendation.

Mistress Martha Trapbois reached the shop in perfect safety, and was about to enter it, when a sickening sense of the uncertainty of her situation, and of the singularly painful task of telling her story, came over her so strongly, that she paused a moment at the very threshold of her proposed place of refuge, to think in what manner she could best second the recommendation of the friend whom Providence had raised up to her. Had she possessed that knowledge of the world, from which her habits of life had completely excluded her, she might have known that the large sum of money which she brought along with her, would have been a passport to her into the mansions of nobles, and the palaces of princes. But, however conscious of its general power, which assumes so many forms and complexions, she was so inexperienced as to be most unnecessarily afraid that the means by which the wealth had been acquired, might exclude its inheritrix from shelter even in the house of a humble tradesman.

While she thus delayed, a more reasonable cause for hesitation arose, in a considerable noise and altercation within the house, which grew louder and louder as the disputants issued forth upon the street or lane before the door.

The first who entered upon the scene was a tall, raw-boned, hard-favoured man, who stalked out of the shop hastily, with a gait like that of a Spaniard in a passion, who, disdaining to add speed to his loco-motion by running, only condescends, in the utmost extremity of his angry haste, to add length to his stride. He faced about, so soon as he was out of the house, upon his pursuer, a decent-looking, elderly, plain tradesman—no less than John Christie himself, the owner of the shop and tenement, by whom he seemed to be followed, and who was in a state of agitation more than is usually expressed by such a person.

"I'll hear no more on't," said the personage who first appeared on the scene.—"Sir, I will hear no more on it. Besides being a most false and impudent figment, as I can testify—it is *scandaalum magnaatum*, sir—*scandaalum magnaatum*," he reiterated with a broad accentuation of the first vowel, well known in the Colleges of Edinburgh and Glasgow, which we can only express in print by doubling the said first of letters and of vowels, and which would have cheered the cockles of the reigning monarch had he been within hearing,—a severer stickler as he was for what he deemed the genuine pronunciation of the Roman tongue, than for any of the royal prerogatives, for which he was at times disposed to insist so strenuously in his speeches to parliament.

"I care not an ounce of rotten cheese," said John Christie in reply, "what you call it—but it is

TRUE; and I am a free Englishman, and have right to speak the truth in my own concerns; and your master is little better than a villain, and you no more than a swaggering coxcomb, whose head I will presently break, as I have known it well broken before on lighter occasion."

And, so saying, he flourished the paring-shovel which usually made clean the steps of his little shop, and which he had caught up as the readiest weapon of working his foeman damage, and advanced therewith upon him. The cautious Scot (for such our readers must have already pronounced him, from his language and pedantry) drew back as the enraged ship-chandler approached, but in a surly manner, and bearing his hand on his sword-hilt rather in the act of one who was losing habitual forbearance and caution of deportment, than as alarmed by the attack of an antagonist inferior to himself in youth, strength, and weapons.

"Bide back," he said, "Maister Christie—I say bide back, and consult your safety, man. I have evited striking you in your ain house under muckle provocation, because I am ignorant how the laws here may pronounce respecting burglary and hame-sucken, and such matters; and, besides, I would not willingly hurt ye, man, e'en on the causeway, that is free to us baith, because I mind your kindness of lang syne, and partly consider ye as a poor deceived creature. But de'il d—n me, sir, and I am not wont to swear, but if you touch my Scotch shouter with that shule of yours, I will make six inches of my Andrew Ferrara deevilish intimate with your guts, neighbour."

And therewithal, though still retreating from the brandished shovel, he made one-third of the basket-hilted broad-sword which he wore visible from the sheath. The wrath of John Christie was abated, either by his natural temperance of disposition, or perhaps in part by the glimmer of cold steel, which flashed on him from his adversary's last action.

"I would do well to cry clubs on thee, and have thee ducked at the wharf," he said, grounding his shovel, however, at the same time, "for a paltry swaggerer that would draw thy bit of iron there on an honest citizen before his own door; but get thee gone, and reckon on a salt eel for thy supper, if thou shouldst ever come near my house again. I wish it had been at the bottom of the Thames when it first gave the use of its roof to smooth-faced, oily-tongued, double-minded Scotch thieves!"

"It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest," replied his adversary, not perhaps the less bold that he saw matters were taking the turn of a pacific debate; "and a pity it is that a kindly Scot should ever have married in foreign parts, and given life to a purse-proud, pudding-headed, fat-gutted, lean-brained southron, e'en such as you, Maister Christie. But fare ye weel—fare ye weel, for ever and a day; and if you quarrel wi' a Scot again, man, say as mickle ill o' himsell as ye like, but say nane o' his patron or of his countrymen, or it will scarce be your flat cap that will keep your lang lugs from the sharp abridgment of a Highland whinger, man."

"And if you continue your insolence to me before my own door, were it but two minutes longer, re-

torted John Christie, "I will call the constable, and make your Scotch ancles acquainted with an English pair of stocks."

So saying, he turned to retire into his shop with some show of victory; for his enemy, whatever might be his innate valour, manifested no desire to drive matters to extremity—conscious, perhaps, that whatever advantage he might gain in single combat with John Christie would be more than overbalanced by incurring an affair with the constituted authorities of Old England, not at that time apt to be particularly favourable to their new fellow-subjects, in the various successive trials which were then constantly taking place between the individuals of two proud nations, who still retained a stronger sense of their national animosity during centuries, than of their late union for a few years under the government of the same prince.

Mrs Martha Trapbois had dwelt too long in Alsatia to be either surprised or terrified at the altercation she had witnessed. Indeed, she only wondered that the debate did not end in some of those acts of violence by which they were usually terminated in the sanctuary. As they separated from each other, she, who had no idea that the cause of the quarrel was more deeply rooted than in the daily scenes of the same nature which she had heard of or witnessed, did not hesitate to stop Master Christie in his return to his shop, and present to him the letter which Lord Glenvarloch had given to her. Had she been better acquainted with life and its business, she would certainly have waited for a more temperate moment; and she had reason to repent of her precipitation when, without saying a single word, or taking the trouble to gather more of the information contained in the letter than was expressed in the subscription, the incensed ship-chandler threw it down on the ground, trampled it in high disdain, and, without saying a single word to the bearer—excepting, indeed, something much more like a hearty curse than was perfectly consistent with his own grave appearance—he retired into his shop and shut the hatch-door.

It was with the most inexpressible anguish that the desolate, friendless, and unhappy female thus beheld her sole hope of succour, countenance, and protection, vanish at once, without being able to conceive a reason; for, to do her justice, the idea that her friend, whom she knew by the name of Nigel Grahame, had imposed on her—a solution which might readily have occurred to many in her situation—never once entered her mind. Although it was not her temper easily to bend her mind to entreaty, she could not help exclaiming after the ireful and retreating ship-chandler—"Good master, hear me but a moment!—for mercy's sake, for honesty's sake!"

"Mercy and honesty from him, mistress!" said the Scot, who, though he essayed not to interrupt the retreat of his antagonist, still kept stout possession of the field of action—"ye might as well expect brandy from bean-stalks, or milk from a crag of blue whunstane. The man is mad, horn mad, to boot."

"I must have mistaken the person to whom the letter was addressed, then;" and, as she spoke,

Mistress Martha Trapbois was in the act of stooping to lift the paper which had been so uncourtously received. Her companion, with natural civility, anticipated her purpose; but, what was not quite so much in etiquette, he took a sly glance at it as he was about to hand it to her, and his eye having caught the subscription, he said, with surprise, "Glenvarloch—Nigel Olifaunt, of Glenvarloch! Do you know the Lord Glenvarloch, mistress?"

"I know not of whom you speak," said Mrs Martha, peevishly. "I had that paper from one Master Nigel Gram."

"Nigel Grahame!—umph.—O, ay, very true—I had forgot," said the Scotsman. "A tall, well-set young man, about my height; bright blue eyes like a hawk's; a pleasant speech, something leaning to the kindly north-country accentuation, but not much, in respect of his having been resident abroad?"

"All this is true—and what of it all?" said the daughter of the miser.

"Hair of my complexion?"

"Yours is red," replied she.

"I pray you, peace," said the Scotsman. "I was going to say—of my complexion, but with a deeper shade of the chesnut. Weel, mistress, if I have guessed the man aright, he is one with whom I am and have been intimate and familiar,—nay, I may truly say I have done him much service in my time, and may live to do him more. I had indeed a sincere good will for him, and I doubt he has been much at a loss since we parted; but the fault is not mine. Wherefore, as this letter will not avail you with him to whom it is directed, you may believe that Heaven hath sent it to me, who have a special regard for the writer—have, besides, as much mercy and honesty within me as man can weel make his bread with, and am willing to aid any distressed creature, that is my friend's friend, with my counsel, and otherwise, so that I am not put to much charges, being in a strange country, like a poor lamb that has wandered from its own native hirsle, and leaves a tail of its woo' in every d—d southern bramble that comes across it." While he spoke thus, he read the contents of the letter, without waiting for permission, and then continued,—“And so this is all that you are wanting, my dove? nothing more than safe and honourable lodging, and sustenance, upon your own charges?”

"Nothing more," said she. "If you are a man and a christian, you will help me to what I need so much."

"A man I am," replied the formal Caledonian, "e'en sic as ye see me; and a christian I may call myself, though unworthy, and though I have heard little pure doctrine since I came hither—a' polluted with men's devices—ahem!—Weel, and if ye be an honest woman (here he peeped under her muffler), as an honest woman ye seem likely to be—though, let me tell you, they are a kind of cattle not so rife in the streets of this city as I would desire them—I was almost strangled with my own band by twa rampallians, wha wanted yestreen, nae farther gane, to harle me into a change-house—however, if ye be a decent honest woman (here he took another peep at features certainly bearing no beauty which could infer suspicion), as decent and honest ye seem to

be, why, I will advise you to a decent house, where you will get douce, quiet entertainment, on reasonable terms, and the occasional benefit of my own counsel and direction—that is, from time to time, as my other avocations may permit.”

“May I venture to accept of such an offer from a stranger?” said Martha, with natural hesitation.

“Troth, I see nothing to hinder you, mistress,” replied the bonny Scot; “ye can but see the place, and do after as ye think best. Besides, we are nae such strangers, neither; for I know your friend, and you, it’s like, know mine, whilk knowledge, on either hand, is a medium of communication between us, even as the middle of the string connecteth its twa ends, or extremities. But I will enlarge on this farther as we pass along, gin ye list to bid your twa lazy loons of porters there lift up your little kist between them, whilk ae true Scotsman might carry under his arm. Let me tell you, mistress, ye will soon make a toom pock-end of it in Lon’on, if ye hire twa knaves to do the work of ane.”

So saying, he led the way, followed by Mistress Martha Trapbois, whose singular destiny, though it had heaped her with wealth, had left her, for the moment, no wiser counsellor, or more distinguished protector, than honest Richie Moniplies, a discarded serving-man.

CHAPTER XXVII.

This way lies safety and a sure retreat;
Yonder lie danger, shame, and punishment.
Most welcome danger then—Nay, let me say,
Though spoke with swelling heart—welcome e’en shame;
And welcome punishment—for, call me guilty,
I do but pay the tax that’s due to justice;
And call me guiltless, then that punishment
Is shame to those alone who do inflict it.

The Tribunal.

WE left Lord Glenvarloch, to whose fortunes our story chiefly attaches itself, gliding swiftly down the Thames. He was not, as the reader may have observed, very popular in his disposition, or apt to enter into conversation with those into whose company he was casually thrown. This was, indeed, an error in his conduct, arising less from pride, though of that feeling we do not pretend to exculpate him, than from a sort of bashful reluctance to mix in the conversation of those with whom he was not familiar. It is a fault only to be cured by experience and knowledge of the world, which soon teaches every sensible and acute person the important lesson, that amusement, and what is more important, that information and increase of knowledge, are to be derived from the conversation of every individual whatsoever, with whom he is thrown into a natural train of communication. For ourselves, we can assure the reader—and perhaps if we have ever been able to afford him amusement, it is owing in a great degree to this cause—that we never found ourselves in company with the stupidest of all possible companions in a post-chaise, or with the most arrant cumber-corner that ever occupied a place in the mail-coach, without finding, that in the course of our conversation with him, we had some ideas suggested to us, either grave or gay, or some informa-

tion communicated in the course of our journey, which we should have regretted not to have learned, and what we should be sorry to have immediately forgotten. But Nigel was somewhat immured within the Bastile of his rank, as some philosopher (Tom Paine, we think) has happily enough expressed that sort of shyness which men of dignified situations are apt to be beset with, rather from not exactly knowing how far, or with whom, they ought to be familiar, than from any real touch of aristocratic pride; besides, the immediate pressure of his own affairs was such as exclusively to engross his attention.

He sat, therefore, wrapt in his cloak, in the stern of the boat, with his mind entirely bent upon the probable issue of the interview with his sovereign, which it was his purpose to seek; for which abstraction of mind he may be fully justified, although perhaps, by questioning the watermen who were transporting him down the river, he might have discovered matters of high concernment to him.

At any rate, Nigel remained silent till the wherry approached the town of Greenwich, when he commanded the men to put in for the nearest landing-place, as it was his purpose to go ashore there, and dismiss them from farther attendance.

“That is not possible,” said the fellow with the green jacket, who, as we have already said, seemed to take on himself the charge of pilotage. “We must go,” he continued, “to Gravesend, where a Scotch vessel, which dropt down the river last tide for the very purpose, lies with her anchor a-peak, waiting to carry you to your own dear northern country. Your hammock is slung, and all is ready for you, and you talk of going ashore at Greenwich, as readily as if such a thing were possible!”

“I see no impossibility,” said Nigel, “in your landing me where I desire to be landed; but very little possibility of your carrying me anywhere I am not desirous of going.”

“Why, whether do you manage the wherry, or we, master?” asked Green-jacket, in a tone betwixt jest and earnest; “I take it she will go the way we row her.”

“Ay,” retorted Nigel, “but I take it you will row her on the course I direct you, otherwise your chance of payment is but a poor one.”

“Suppose we are content to risk that,” said the undaunted waterman, “I wish to know how you, who talk so big—I mean no offence, master, but you *do* talk big—would help yourself in such a case?”

“Simply thus,” answered Lord Glenvarloch—“You saw me, an hour since, bring down to the boat a trunk that neither of you could lift. If we are to contest the destination of our voyage, the same strength which tossed that chest into the wherry, will suffice to fling you out of it; wherefore, before we begin the scuffle, I pray you to remember that, whither I would go, there I will oblige you to carry me.”

“Gramercy for your kindness,” said Green-jacket; “and now mark me in return. My comrade and I are two men—and you, were you as stout as George-a-Green, can pass but for one; and two, you will allow, are more than a match for one. You mistake in your reckoning, my friend.”

"It is you who mistake," answered Nigel, who began to grow warm; "it is I who am three to two, sirrah—I carry two men's lives at my girdle."

So saying, he opened his cloak and showed the two pistols which he had disposed at his girdle. Green-jacket was unmoved at the display.

"I have got," said he, "a pair of barkers that will match yours," and he showed that he also was armed with pistols; "so you may begin as soon as you list."

"Then," said Lord Glenvarloch, drawing forth and cocking a pistol, "the sooner the better. Take notice, I hold you as a ruffian, who have declared you will put force on my person; and that I will shoot you through the head if you do not instantly put me ashore at Greenwich."

The other waterman, alarmed at his gesture, lay upon his oar; but Green-jacket replied coolly—"Look you, master, I should not care a tester to venture a life with you on this matter; but the truth is, I am employed to do you good, and not to do you harm."

"By whom are you employed?" said the Lord Glenvarloch; "or who dare concern themselves in me, or my affairs, without my authority?"

"As to that," answered the waterman, in the same tone of indifference, "I shall not show my commission. For myself, I care not, as I said, whether you land at Greenwich to get yourself hanged, or go down to get aboard the Royal Thistle, to make your escape to your own country; you will be equally out of my reach either way. But it is fair to put the choice before you."

"My choice is made," said Nigel. "I have told you thrice already it is my pleasure to be landed at Greenwich."

"Write it on a piece of paper," said the waterman, "that such is your positive will; I must have something to show to my employers, that the transgression of their orders lies with yourself, not with me."

"I chuse to hold this trinket in my hand for the present," said Nigel, showing his pistol, "and will write you the acquittance when I go ashore."

"I would not go ashore with you for a hundred pieces," said the waterman. "Ill luck has ever attended you, except in small gaming; do me fair justice, and give me the testimony I desire. If you are afraid of foul play while you write it, you may hold my pistols, if you will." He offered the weapons to Nigel accordingly, who, while they were under his control, and all possibility of his being taken at advantage was excluded, no longer hesitated to give the waterman an acknowledgment, in the following terms:—

"Jack in the green, with his mate, belonging to the wherry called the Jolly Raven, have done their duty faithfully by me, landing me at Greenwich by my express command; and being themselves willing and desirous to carry me on board the Royal Thistle, presently lying at Gravesend." Having finished this acknowledgment, which he signed with the letters N. O. G., as indicating his name and title, he again requested to know of the waterman, to whom he delivered it, the name of his employers.

"Sir," replied Jack in the green, "I have re-

spected your secret, do not you seek to pry into mine. It would do you no good to know for whom I am taking this present trouble; and, to be brief, you shall not know it—and if you will fight in the quarrel, as you said even now, the sooner we begin the better. Only this you may be cock-sure of, that we designed you no harm, and that, if you fall into any, it will be of your own wilful seeking." As he spoke, they approached the landing-place, where Nigel instantly jumped ashore. The waterman placed his small mail-trunk on the stairs, observing that there were plenty of spare hands about, to carry it where he would.

"We part friends, I hope, my lads," said the young nobleman, offering at the same time a piece of money more than double the usual fare, to the boatmen.

"We part as we met," answered Green-jacket; "and, for your money, I am paid sufficiently with this bit of paper. Only, if you owe me any love for the cast I have given you, I pray you not to dive so deep into the pockets of the next apprentice that you find fool enough to play the cavalier.—And you, you greedy swine," said he to his companion, who still had a longing eye fixed on the money which Nigel continued to offer, "push off, or, if I take a stretcher in hand, I'll break the knave's pate of thee." The fellow pushed off, as he was commanded, but still could not help muttering, "this was entirely out of watermen's rules."

Glenvarloch, though without the devotion of the "injured Thales" of the moralist, to the memory of that great princess, had now attained

The hallow'd soil which gave Eliza birth,

whose halls were now less respectably occupied by her successor. It was not, as has been well shown by a late author, that James was void either of parts or of good intentions; and his predecessor was at least as arbitrary in effect as he was in theory. But, while Elizabeth possessed a sternness of masculine sense and determination which rendered even her weaknesses, some of which were in themselves sufficiently ridiculous, in a certain degree respectable, James, on the other hand, was so utterly devoid of "firm resolve" so well called by the Scottish bard,

The stalk of carle-hemp in man,

that even his virtues and his good meaning became laughable, from the whimsical uncertainty of his conduct; so that the wisest things he ever said, and the best actions he ever did, were often touched with a strain of the ludicrous and fidgety character of the man. Accordingly, though at different periods of his reign he contrived to acquire with his people a certain degree of temporary popularity, it never long outlived the occasion which produced it; so true it is, that the mass of mankind will respect a monarch stained with actual guilt, more than one whose foibles render him only ridiculous.

To return from this digression, Lord Glenvarloch soon received, as Green-jacket had assured him, the offer of an idle bargeman to transport his baggage where he listed; but that *where* was a question of momentary doubt. At length, recollecting the necessity that his hair and beard should be properly

arranged before he attempted to enter the royal presence, and desirous, at the same time, of obtaining some information of the motions of the sovereign and of the court, he desired to be guided to the next barber's shop, which we have already mentioned as the place where news of every kind circled and centred. He was speedily shown the way to such an emporium of intelligence, and soon found he was like to hear all he desired to know, and much more, while his head was subjected to the art of a nimble tonsor, the glibness of whose tongue kept pace with the nimbleness of his fingers, while he ran on, without stint or stop, in the following excursive manner:—

"The court here, master?—yes, master—much to the advantage of trade—good custom stirring. His majesty loves Greenwich—hunts every morning in the park—all decent persons admitted that have the entries of the palace—no rabble—frightened the king's horse with their hallooing, the uncombed slaves.—Yes, sir, the beard more peaked? Yes, master, so it is worn. I know the last cut—dress several of the courtiers—one valet of the chamber, two pages of the body, the clerk of the kitchen, three running footmen, two dog-boys, and an honourable Scotch knight, Sir Munko Malgrowler."

"Malagrowther, I suppose?" said Nigel, thrusting in his conjectural emendation, with infinite difficulty, betwixt two clauses of the barber's text.

"Yes, sir—Malcrowder, sir, as you say, sir—hard names the Scotch have, sir, for an English mouth. Sir Munko is a handsome person, sir—perhaps you know him—bating the loss of his fingers, and the lameness of his leg, and the length of his chin. Sir, it takes me one minute, twelve seconds, more time to trim that chin of his, than any chin that I know in the town of Greenwich, sir. But he is a very comely gentleman, for all that; and a pleasant—a very pleasant gentleman, sir—and a good-humoured, saving that he is so deaf he can never hear good of any one, and so wise, that he can never believe it; but he is a very good-natured gentleman for all that, except when one speaks too low, or when a hair turns awry.—Did I graze you, sir? We shall put it to right in a moment, with one drop of styptic—my styptic, or rather my wife's, sir—she makes the water herself. One drop of the styptic, sir, and a bit of black taffeta patch, just big enough to be the saddle to a flea, sir—Yes, sir, rather improves than otherwise. The prince had a patch the other day, and so had the duke; and, if you will believe me, there are seventeen yards three quarters of black taffeta already cut into patches for the courtiers."

"But Sir Mungo Malagrowther?" again interjected Nigel, with difficulty.

"Ay, ay, sir—Sir Munko, as you say; a pleasant, good-humoured gentleman as ever—To be spoken with, did you say? O ay, easily to be spoken withal, that is, as easily as his infirmity will permit. He will presently, unless some one hath asked him forth to breakfast, be taking his bone of broiled beef at my neighbour Ned Kilderkin's yonder, removed from over the way. Ned keeps an eating-house, sir, famous for pork-griskins; but Sir Munko cannot abide pork, no more than the king's most sacred majesty, nor my Lord Duke of Lennox, nor Lord

Dalgarno,—nay, I am sure, sir, if I touched you this time, it was your fault, not mine.—But a single drop of the styptic, another little patch that would make a doublet for a flea, just under the left moustache; it will become you when you smile, sir, as well as a dimple; and if you would salute your fair mistress—but I beg pardon, you are a grave gentleman, very grave to be so young.—Hope I have given no offence; it is my duty to entertain customers—my duty, sir, and my pleasure—Sir Munko Malcrowther?—yes, sir, I dare say he is at this moment in Ned's eating-house, for few folks ask him out, now Lord Huntinglen is gone to London. You will get touched again—yes, sir—there you shall find him with his can of single ale, stirred with a sprig of rosemary, for he never drinks strong potations, sir, unless to oblige Lord Huntinglen—take heed, sir—or any other person who asks him forth to breakfast—but single beer he always drinks at Ned's, with his broiled bone of beef or mutton—or, it may be, lamb at the season—but not pork, though Ned is famous for his griskins. But the Scotch never eat pork—strange that! some folks think they are a sort of Jews. There is a resemblance, sir—Do you not think so? Then they call our most gracious sovereign the second Solomon, and Solomon, you know, was king of the Jews; so the thing bears a face, you see. I believe, sir, you will find yourself trimmed now to your content. I will be judged by the fair mistress of your affections. Crave pardon—no offence, I trust. Pray, consult the glass—one touch of the crisping tongs, to reduce this straggler.—Thank your munificence, sir—hope your custom while you stay in Greenwich. Would you have a tune on that ghittern, to put your temper in concord for the day?—Twang, twang—twang, twang, dillo. Something out of tune, sir—too many hands to touch it—we cannot keep these things like artists. Let me help you with your cloak, sir—yes, sir—You would not play yourself, sir, would you?—Way to Sir Munko's eating-house?—Yes, sir; but it is Ned's eating-house, not Sir Munko's.—The knight, to be sure, eats there, and that makes it his eating-house in some sense, sir—ha, ha! Yonder it is, removed from over the way, new white-washed posts, and red lattice—fat man in his doublet at the door—Ned himself, sir—worth a thousand pounds, they say—better singeing pigs' faces than trimming courtiers—but ours is the less mechanical vocation. Farewell, sir; hope your custom." So saying, he at length permitted Nigel to depart, whose ears, so long tormented with his continued babble, tingled when it had ceased, as if a bell had been rung close to them for the same space of time.

Upon his arrival at the eating-house, where he proposed to meet with Sir Mungo Malagrowther, from whom, in despair of better advice, he trusted to receive some information as to the best mode of introducing himself into the royal presence, Lord Glenvarloch found, in the host with whom he communed, the consequential taciturnity of an Englishman well to pass in the world. Ned Kilderkin spoke as a banker writes, only touching the needful. Being asked if Sir Mungo Malagrowther was there? he replied, No. Being interrogated whether he was expected? he said, Yes. And, being again

required to say *when* he was expected, he answered, Presently. As Lord Glenvarloch next inquired, whether he himself could have any breakfast? the landlord wasted not even a syllable in reply, but, ushering him into a neat room where there were several tables, he placed one of them before an arm-chair, and beckoning Lord Glenvarloch to take possession, he set before him, in a very few minutes, a substantial repast of roast-beef, together with a foaming tankard, to which refreshment the keen air of the river disposed him, notwithstanding his mental embarrassments, to do much honour.

While Nigel was thus engaged in discussing his commons, but raising his head at the same time whenever he heard the door of the apartment open, eagerly desiring the arrival of Sir Mungo Malagrowth (an event which had seldom been expected with so much anxious interest), a personage, as it seemed, of at least equal importance with the knight, entered into the apartment, and began to hold earnest colloquy with the publican, who thought proper to carry on the conference on his side unbonnated. This important gentleman's occupation might be guessed from his dress. A milk-white jerkin, and hose of white kersey; a white apron twisted around his body in the manner of a sash, in which, instead of a warlike dagger, was stuck a long-bladed knife, hilted with buck's-horn; a white night-cap on his head, under which his hair was neatly tucked, sufficiently displayed him as one of those priests of Comus whom the vulgar call cooks; and the air with which he rated the publican for having neglected to send some provisions to the palace, showed that he ministered to royalty itself.

"This will never answer," he said, "Master Kilderkin—the king twice asked for sweet-breads, and fricasseed coxcombs, which are a favourite dish of his most sacred majesty, and they were not to be had, because Master Kilderkin had not supplied them to the clerk of the kitchen, as by bargain bound." Here Kilderkin made some apology, brief, according to his own nature, and muttered in a lowly tone, after the fashion of all who find themselves in a scrape. His superior replied, in a lofty strain of voice, "Do not tell me of the carrier and his wain, and of the hen-coops coming from Norfolk with the poultry; a loyal man would have sent an express—he would have gone upon his stumps, like Widdrington. What if the king had lost his appetite, Master Kilderkin? What if his most sacred majesty had lost his dinner? O Master Kilderkin, if you had but the just sense of the dignity of our profession, which is told of by the witty African slave, for so the king's most excellent majesty designates him, Publius Terentius, *Tanquam in speculum—in patinas inspicere jubeo.*"

"You are learned, Master Linklater," replied the English publican, compelling, as it were with difficulty, his mouth to utter three or four words consecutively.

"A poor smatterer," said Mr Linklater; "but it would be a shame to us, who are his most excellent majesty's countrymen, not in some sort to have cherished those arts wherewith he is so deeply imbued—*Regis ad exemplar*, Master Kilderkin, *totus componitur orbis*—which is as much as to say, as

the king quotes the cook learns. In brief, Master Kilderkin, having had the luck to be bred where humanities may be had at the matter of an English five groats by the quarter, I, like others, have acquired—ahem—hem!—" Here, the speaker's eye having fallen upon Lord Glenvarloch, he suddenly stopped in his learned harangue, with such symptoms of embarrassment as induced Ned Kilderkin to stretch his taciturnity so far as not only to ask him what he ailed, but whether he would take anything.

"Ail nothing," replied the learned rival of the philosophical Syrus; "Nothing—and yet I do feel a little giddy. I could taste a glass of your dame's *aqua mirabilis.*"

"I will fetch it," said Ned, giving a nod; and his back was no sooner turned, than the cook walked near the table where Lord Glenvarloch was seated, and, regarding him with a look of significance, where more was meant than met the ear, said,—“You are a stranger in Greenwich, sir. I advise you to take the opportunity to step into the park—the western wicket was ajar when I came hither; I think it will be locked presently, so you had better make the best of your way—that is, if you have any curiosity. The venison are coming into season just now, sir, and there is a pleasure in looking at a hart of grease. I always think, when they are bounding so blithely past, what a pleasure it would be, to broach their plump haunches on a spit, and to embattle their breasts in a noble fortification of puff-paste, with plenty of black pepper.”

He said no more, as Kilderkin re-entered with the cordial, but edged off from Nigel without waiting any reply, only repeating the same look of intelligence with which he had accosted him.

Nothing makes men's wits so alert as personal danger. Nigel took the first opportunity which his host's attention to the yeoman of the royal kitchen permitted, to discharge his reckoning, and readily obtained a direction to the wicket in question. He found it upon the latch, as he had been taught to expect; and perceived, that it admitted him to a narrow foot-path, which traversed a close and tangled thicket, designed for the cover of the does and the young fawns. Here he conjectured it would be proper to wait; nor had he been stationary above five minutes, when the cook, scalded as much with heat of motion as ever he had been at his huge fireplace, arrived almost breathless, and with his pass-key hastily locked the wicket behind him.

Ere Lord Glenvarloch had time to speculate upon this action, the man approached with anxiety, and said—"Good lord, my Lord Glenvarloch!—why will you endanger yourself thus?"

"You know me, then, my friend?" said Nigel.

"Not so much of that, my lord—but I know your honour's noble house well.—My name is Laurie Linklater, my lord."

"Linklater!" repeated Nigel. "I should recollect"—

"Under your lordship's favour," he continued, "I was 'prentice, my lord, to old Mungo Moniplies, the flesher at the wanton West-port of Edinburgh, which I wish I saw again before I died. And, your honour's noble father having taken Richie Moni-

plies into his house to wait on your lordship, there was a sort of connexion, your lordship sees."

"Ah!" said Lord Glenvarloch, "I have forgot your name, but not your kind purpose. You tried to put Richie in the way of presenting a supplication to his majesty."

"Most true, my lord," replied the king's cook. "I had like to have come by mischief in the job; for Richie was always wilful, 'wadua be guided by me,' as the sang says. But nobody amongst these brave English cooks can kittle up his majesty's most sacred palate with our own gusty Scotch dishes. So I e'en betook myself to my craft, and concocted a mess of friar's chicken for the soup, and a savoury hachis, that made the whole cabal coup the crans; and, instead of disgrace, I came by preferment. I am one of the clerks of the kitchen now, make me thankful—with a finger in the purveyor's office, and may get my whole hand in by and by."

"I am truly glad," said Nigel, "to hear that you have not suffered on my account,—still more so at your good fortune."

"You bear a kind heart, my lord," said Linklater, "and do not forget poor people; and, troth, I see not why they should be forgotten, since the king's errand may sometimes fall in the cadger's gate. I have followed your lordship in the street, just to look at such a stately shoot of the old oak-tree; and my heart jumped into my throat, when I saw you sitting openly in the eating-house yonder, and knew there was such danger to your person."

"What! there are warrants against me, then?" said Nigel.

"It is even true, my lord; and there are those are willing to blacken you as much as they can.—God forgive them, that would sacrifice an honourable house for their own base ends!"

"Amen," said Nigel.

"For, say your lordship may have been a little wild, like other young gentlemen"——

"We have little time to talk of it, my friend," said Nigel. "The point in question is, how am I to get speech of the king?"

"The king, my lord!" said Linklater, in astonishment; "why, will not that be rushing wilfully into danger?—scalding yourself, as I may say, with your own ladle?"

"My good friend," answered Nigel, "my experience of the court, and my knowledge of the circumstances in which I stand, tell me, that the manliest and most direct road is, in my case, the surest and safest. The king has both a head to apprehend what is just, and a heart to do what is kind."

"It is e'en true, my lord, and so we his old servants know," added Linklater; "but, woe's me, if you knew how many folks make it their daily and nightly purpose to set his head against his heart, and his heart against his head—to make him do hard things because they are called just, and unjust things because they are represented as kind. Woe's me! it is with his sacred majesty, and the favourites who work upon him, even according to the homely proverb that men taunt my calling with,—'God sends good meat, but the devil sends cooks.'"

"It signifies not talking of it, my good friend," said Nigel, "I must take my risk—my honour per-

VOL. III.

emptorily demands it. They may maim me, or beggar me, but they shall not say I fled from my accusers. My peers shall hear my vindication."

"Your peers!" exclaimed the cook—"Alack-a-day, my lord, we are not in Scotland, where the nobles can bang it out bravely, were it even with the king himself, now and then. This mess must be cooked in the Star-chamber, and that is an oven seven times heated, my lord;—and yet, if you are determined to see the king, I will not say but you may find some favour, for he likes well anything that is appealed directly to his own wisdom, and sometimes, in the like cases, I have known him stick by his own opinion, which is always a fair one. Only mind, if you will forgive me my lord—mind to spice high with Latin; a curn or two of Greek would not be amiss; and, if you can bring in anything about the judgment of Solomon, in the original Hebrew, and season with a merry jest or so, the dish will be the more palatable.—Truly, I think that, besides my skill in art, I owe much to the stripes of the Rector of the High School, who imprinted on my mind that cooking scene in the Heautontimorumenos."

"Leaving that aside, my friend," said Lord Glenvarloch, "can you inform me which way I will most readily get to the sight and speech of the king?"

"To the sight of him readily enough," said Linklater; "he is galloping about these alleys, to see them strike the hart, to get him an appetite for a nooning—and that reminds me I should be in the kitchen. To the speech of the king you will not come so easily, unless you could either meet him alone, which rarely chances, or wait for him among the crowd that go to see him alight.—And now, farewell, my lord, and God speed!—if I could do more for you, I would offer it."

"You have done enough, perhaps, to endanger yourself," said Lord Glenvarloch. "I pray you to be gone, and leave me to my fate."

The honest cook lingered, but a nearer burst of the horns apprised him that there was no time to lose; and acquainting Nigel that he would leave the postern-door on the latch to secure his retreat in that direction, he bade God bless him, and farewell.

In the kindness of this humble countryman, flowing partly from national partiality, partly from a sense of long-remembered benefits, which had been scarce thought on by those who had bestowed them, Lord Glenvarloch thought he saw the last touch of sympathy which he was to receive in this cold and courtly region, and felt that he must now be sufficient to himself, or be utterly lost.

He traversed more than one alley, guided by the sounds of the chase, and met several of the inferior attendants upon the king's sport, who regarded him only as one of the spectators who were sometimes permitted to enter the park by the concurrence of the officers about the court. Still there was no appearance of James, or any of his principal courtiers, and Nigel began to think whether, at the risk of incurring disgrace similar to that which had attended the rash exploit of Richie Moniplies, he should not repair to the palace-gate, in order to address the king on his return, when fortune presented to him the opportunity of doing so, in her own way.

He was in one of those long walks by which the

park was traversed, when he heard, first a distant rustling, then the rapid approach of hoofs shaking the firm earth on which he stood; then a distant halloo, warned by which he stood up by the side of the avenue, leaving free room for the passage of the chase. The stag, reeling, covered with foam, and blackened with sweat, his nostrils expanded as he gasped for breath, made a shift to come up as far as where Nigel stood, and, without turning to bay, was there pulled down by two tall greyhounds of the breed still used by the hardy deer-stalkers of the Scottish Highlands, but which has been long unknown in England. One dog struck at the buck's throat, another dashed his sharp nose and fangs, I might almost say, into the animal's bowels. It would have been natural for Lord Glenvarloch, himself persecuted as if by hunters, to have thought upon the occasion like the melancholy Jacques; but habit is a strange matter, and I fear that his feelings on the occasion were rather those of the practised huntsman than of the moralist. He had no time, however, to indulge them, for mark what followed.

A single horseman followed the chase, upon a steed so thoroughly subjected to the rein, that it obeyed the touch of the bridle as if it had been a mechanical impulse operating on the nicest piece of machinery; so that, seated deep in his demi-pique saddle, and so trussed up there as to make falling almost impossible, the rider, without either fear or hesitation, might increase or diminish the speed at which he rode, which, even on the most animating occasions of the chase, seldom exceeded three-fourths of a gallop, the horse keeping his haunches under him, and never stretching forward beyond the managed pace of the academy. The security with which he chose to prosecute even this favourite, and, in the ordinary case, somewhat dangerous amusement, as well as the rest of his equipage, marked King James. No attendant was within sight; indeed, it was often a nice strain of flattery to permit the sovereign to suppose he had outridden and distanced all the rest of the chase.

"Weel dune, Bash—weel dune, Battie!" he exclaimed, as he came up. "By the honour of a king, ye are a credit to the Braes of Balwhither!—Haud my horse, man," he called out to Nigel, without stopping to see to whom he had addressed himself—"Haud my naig, and help me doun out o' the saddle—de'il ding your saul, sirrah, canna ye mak haste before these lazy smaiks come up?—haud the rein easy—dinna let him swerve—now, haud the stirrup—that will do, man, and now we are on terra firma." So saying, without casting an eye on his assistant, gentle King Jamie, unsheathing the short, sharp hanger (*couteau de chasse*), which was the only thing approaching to a sword that he could willingly endure the sight of, drew the blade with great satisfaction across the throat of the buck, and put an end at once to its struggles and its agonies.

Lord Glenvarloch, who knew well the sylvan duty which the occasion demanded, hung the bridle of the king's palfrey on the branch of a tree, and, kneeling duteously down, turned the slaughtered deer upon its back, and kept the quarrée in that position, while the king, too intent upon his sport to observe anything else, drew his *couteau* down the

breast of the animal, *secundum artem*; and, having made a cross cut, so as to ascertain the depth of the fat upon the chest, exclaimed, in a sort of rapture, "Three inches of white fat on the brisket!—prime—prime, as I am a crowned sinner—and de'il ane o' the lazy loons in but mysell! Seven—aught—tines aught on the antlers. By G—d, a hart of aught tines, and the first of the season! Bash and Battie, blessings on the heart's-root of ye! Buss me, my bairns, buss me." The dogs accordingly fawned upon him, licked him with bloody jaws, and soon put him in such a state that it might have seemed treason had been doing its full work upon his anointed body. "Bide doun, with a mischief to ye—bide doun, with a wanion," cried the king, almost overturned by the obstreperous caresses of the large stag-hounds. "But ye are just like ither folks, gie ye an inch and ye take an ell.—And wha may ye be, friend?" he said, now finding leisure to take a nearer view of Nigel, and observing what in his first emotion of sylvan delight had escaped him,—“Ye are nane of our train, man. In the name of God, what the devil are ye?”

"An unfortunate man, sire," replied Nigel.

"I dare say that," answered the king, snappishly, "or I wad have seen naething of you. My lieges keep a' their happiness to themselves; but let bowls row wrang wi' them, and I am sure to hear of it."

"And to whom else can we carry our complaints but to your majesty, who is Heaven's vicegerent over us?" answered Nigel.

"Right, man, right—very weel spoken," said the king; "but ye should leave Heaven's vicegerent some quiet on earth, too."

"If your majesty will look on me," (for hitherto the king had been so busy, first with the dogs, and then with the mystic operation of breaking, in vulgar phrase, cutting up the deer, that he had scarce given his assistant above a transient glance,) "you will see whom necessity makes bold to avail himself of an opportunity which may never again occur."

King James looked; his blood left his cheek, though it continued stained with that of the animal which lay at his feet, he dropped the knife from his hand, cast behind him a faltering eye, as if he either meditated flight or looked out for assistance, and then exclaimed,—“Glenvarlochides! as sure as I was christened James Stuart. Here is a bonny spot of work, and me alone, and on foot too!” he added, hustling to get upon his horse.

"Forgive me that I interrupt you, my liege," said Nigel, placing himself between the king and the steed; "hear me but a moment."

"I'll hear ye best on horseback," said the king. "I canna hear a word on foot, man, not a word; and it is not seemly to stand cheek-for-chowl, confronting us that gate. Bide out of our gate, sir, we charge you, on your allegiance.—The de'il's in them a', what can they be doing?"

"By the crown which you wear, my liege," said Nigel, "and for which my ancestors have worthily fought, I conjure you to be composed, and to hear me but a moment!"

That which he asked was entirely out of the monarch's power to grant. The timidity which he showed was not the plain downright cowardice, which,

like a natural impulse, compels a man to flight, and which can excite little but pity or contempt, but a much more ludicrous, as well as a more mingled sensation. The poor king was frightened at once and angry, desirous of securing his safety, and at the same time ashamed to compromise his dignity; so that without attending to what Lord Glenvarloch endeavoured to explain, he kept making at his horse, and repeating, "We are a free king, man—we are a free king—we will not be controled by a subject.—In the name of God, what keeps Steenie? And, praised be his name, they are coming—Hillo, ho—here, here—Steenie, Steenie!"

The Duke of Buckingham galloped up, followed by several courtiers and attendants of the royal chase, and commenced with his usual familiarity,—
—"I see fortune has graced our dear dad, as usual.—But what's this?"

"What is it? It is treason, for what I ken," said the king; "and a' your wyte, Steenie. Your dear dad and gossip might have been murdered, for what you care."

"Murdered! Secure the villain!" exclaimed the duke. "By Heaven it is Olifaunt himself!" A dozen of the hunters dismounted at once, letting their horses run wild through the park. Some seized roughly on Lord Glenvarloch, who thought it folly to offer resistance, while others busied themselves with the king. "Are you wounded, my liege—are you wounded?"

"Not that I ken of," said the king, in the paroxysm of his apprehension (which, by the way, might be pardoned in one of so timorous a temper, and who, in his time, had been exposed to so many strange attempts)—"Not that I ken of—but search him—search him. I am sure I saw fire-arms under his cloak. I am sure I smelled powder—I am dooms sure of that."

Lord Glenvarloch's cloak being stripped off, and his pistols discovered, there was a shout of wonder and of execration on the supposed criminal purpose, arose from the crowd, now thickening every moment. Not that celebrated pistol, which, though resting on a bosom as gallant and as loyal as Nigel's, spread such causeless alarm among knights and dames at a late high solemnity—not that very pistol caused more temporary consternation than was so groundlessly excited by the arms which were taken from Lord Glenvarloch's person; and not Mhic-Allastair-More himself could repel with greater scorn and indignation, the insinuations that they were worn for any sinister purposes.

"Away with the wretch—the parricide—the bloody-minded villain!" was echoed on all hands; and the king, who naturally enough set the same value on his own life at which it was, or seemed to be, rated by others, cried out, louder than all the rest, "Ay, ay—away with him! I have had enough of him, and so has the country. But do him not bodily harm—and, for God's sake, sirs, if ye are sure that ye have thoroughly disarmed him, put up your swords, dirks, and skenes, for you will certainly do each other a mischief."

There was a speedy sheathing of weapons at the king's command; for those who had hitherto been brandishing them in loyal bravado, began thereby to

call to mind the extreme dislike which his majesty nourished against naked steel, a foible which seemed to be as constitutional as his timidity, and was usually ascribed to the brutal murder of Rizzio having been perpetrated in his unfortunate mother's presence before he yet saw the light.

At this moment, the prince, who had been hunting in a different part of the then extensive park, and had received some hasty and confused information of what was going forward, came rapidly up, with one or two noblemen in his train, and amongst others Lord Dalgarno. He sprung from his horse, and asked eagerly if his father was wounded.

"Not that I am sensible of, Baby Charles—but a wee matter exhausted, with struggling single-handed with the assassin.—Steenie, fill us a cup of wine—the leathern bottle is hanging at our pommel.—Buss me then, Baby Charles," continued the monarch, after he had taken this cup of comfort; "O man, the commonwealth and you have had a fair escape from the heavy and bloody loss of a dear father; for we are *pater patriæ*, as weel as *pater familias*—*Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus tam cari capitis!*—Woe is me, black cloth would have been dear in England, and dry een scarce?"

And, at the very idea of the general grief which must have attended his death, the good-natured monarch cried heartily himself.

"Is this possible?" said Charles, sternly; for his pride was hurt at his father's demeanour on the one hand, while, on the other, he felt the resentment of a son and a subject, at the supposed attempt on the king's life. "Let some one speak who has seen what happened—My Lord of Buckingham?"

"I cannot say, my lord," replied the duke, "that I saw any actual violence offered to his majesty, else I should have avenged him on the spot."

"You would have done wrong then in your zeal, George," answered the prince; "such offenders were better left to be dealt with by the laws. But was the villain not struggling with his majesty?"

"I cannot term it so," my lord, said the duke, who, with many faults, would have disdained an untruth; "he seemed to desire to detain his majesty, who, on the contrary, seemed to wish to mount his horse; but they found pistols on his person, contrary to the proclamation, and, as it proves to be Nigel Olifaunt, of whose ungoverned disposition your royal highness has seen some samples, we seem to be justified in apprehending the worst."

"Nigel Olifaunt!" said the prince; "can that unhappy man so soon have engaged in a new trespass? Let me see those pistols."

"Ye are not so unwise as to meddle with such snap-haunces, Baby Charles?" said James—"Do not give him them, Steenie—I command you on your allegiance. They may go off of their own accord, whilk often befals.—You will do it, then?—Saw ever man sic wilful bairns as we are cumbered with!—Havena we guardsmen and soldiers enow, but ye must unload the weapons yoursell—you, the heir of our body and dignities, and sae mony men around that are paid for venturing life in our cause?"

But, without regarding his father's exclamations, Prince Charles, with the obstinacy which characterized him in trifles, as well as matters of conse-

quence, persisted in unloading the pistols with his own hand, of the double bullets with which each was charged. The hands of all around were held up in astonishment at the horror of the crime supposed to have been intended, and the escape which was presumed so narrow.

Nigel had not yet spoken a word—he now calmly desired to be heard.

“To what purpose?” answered the prince, coldly. “You knew yourself accused of a heavy offence, and, instead of rendering yourself up to justice, in terms of the proclamation, you are here found intruding yourself on his majesty’s presence, and armed with unlawful weapons.”

“May it please you, sir,” answered Nigel, “I wore these unhappy weapons for my own defence; and not very many hours since, they were necessary to protect the lives of others.”

“Doubtless, my lord,” answered the prince, still calm and unmoved,—“your late mode of life, and the associates with whom you have lived, have made you familiar with scenes and weapons of violence. But it is not to me you are to plead your cause.”

“Hear me—hear me, noble prince,” said Nigel, eagerly. “Hear me! You—even you yourself—may one day ask to be heard, and in vain.”

“How, sir,” said the prince, haughtily—“how am I to construe that, my lord?”

“If not on earth, sir,” replied the prisoner, “yet to Heaven we must all pray for patient and favourable audience.”

“True, my lord,” said the prince, bending his head with haughty acquiescence; “nor would I now refuse such audience to you, could it avail you. But you shall suffer no wrong. We will ourselves look into your case.”

“Ay, ay,” answered the king, “he hath made *appellatio ad Cæsarem*—we will interrogate Glenvarlochides ourselves, time and place fitting; and, in the meanwhile, have him and his weapons away, for I am weary of the sight of them.”

In consequence of directions hastily given, Nigel was accordingly removed from the presence, where, however, his words had not altogether fallen to the ground. “This is a most strange matter, George,” said the prince to the favourite; “this gentleman hath a good countenance, a happy presence, and much calm firmness in his look and speech. I cannot think he would attempt a crime so desperate and useless.”

“I profess neither love nor favour to the young man,” answered Buckingham, whose high-spirited ambition bore always an open character; “but I cannot but agree with your highness, that our dear gossip hath been something hasty in apprehending personal danger from him.”

“By my saul, Steenie, ye are not blate, to say so,” said the king. “Do I not ken the smell of pouter, think ye? Who else nosed out the fifth of November, save our royal selves? Cecil, and Suffolk, and all of them, were at fault, like sae mony mongrel tikes, when I puzzled it out; and trow ye that I cannot smell pouter? Why, ’sblood, man, Joannes Barclaius thought my ingine was in some measure inspiration, and terms his history of the plot,

Series patefacti divinitus parricidii; and Spondanus, in like manner, saith of us, *Divinitus evasit*.”

“The land was happy in your majesty’s escape,” said the Duke of Buckingham, “and not less in the quick wit which tracked that labyrinth of treason by so fine and almost invisible a clew.”

“Saul, man, Steenie, ye are right! There are few youths have sic true judgment as you, respecting the wisdom of their elders; and, as for this fause, traitorous smaik, I doubt he is a hawk of the same nest. Saw ye not something papistical about him? Let him look that he bears not a crucifix, or some sic Roman trinket, about him.”

“It would ill become me to attempt the exculpation of this unhappy man,” said Lord Dalgarno, “considering the height of his present attempt, which has made all true men’s blood curdle in their veins. Yet I cannot avoid intimating, with all due submission to his majesty’s infallible judgment, in justice to one who showed himself formerly only my enemy, though he now displays himself in much blacker colours, that this Olifaunt always appeared to me more as a puritan than as a papist.”

“Ah, Dalgarno, art thou there, man?” said the king. “And ye behoved to keep back, too, and leave us to our own natural strength and the care of Providence, when we were in grips with the villain!”

“Providence, may it please your most gracious majesty, would not fail to aid, in such a strait, the care of three weeping kingdoms,” said Lord Dalgarno.

“Surely, man—surely,” replied the king—“but a sight of your father, with his long whinyard, would have been a blithe matter a short while syne; and in future we will aid the ends of Providence in our favour, by keeping near us two stout beef-eaters of the guard.—And so this Olifaunt is a puritan?—not the less like to be a papist, for all that—for extremities meet, as the scholiast proveth. There are, as I have proved in my book, puritans of papistical principles—it is just a new tout on an auld horn.”

Here the king was reminded by the prince, who dreaded perhaps that he was going to recite the whole *Basilicon Doron*, that it would be best to move towards the palace, and consider what was to be done for satisfying the public mind, in whom the morning’s adventure was like to excite much speculation. As they entered the gate of the palace, a female bowed and presented a paper, which the king received, and, with a sort of groan, thrust it into his side-pocket. The prince expressed some curiosity to know its contents. “The valet in waiting will tell you them,” said the king, “when I strip off my cassock. D’ye think, Baby, that I can read all that is thrust into my hands? See to me, man,—(he pointed to the pockets of his great trunk breeches, which were stuffed with papers)—We are like an ass—that we should so speak—stooping betwixt two burdens. Ay, ay, *Asinus fortis accumbens inter terminos*, as the Vulgate hath it—Ay, ay, *Vidi terram quod esset optima, et supposui humerum ad portandum, et factus sum tributis serviens*. I saw this land of England, and became an overburdened king thereof.”

“You are indeed well loaded, my dear dad and gossip,” said the Duke of Buckingham, receiving

the papers which King James emptied out of his pockets.

"Ay, ay," continued the monarch; "take them to you *per aversionem*, bairns—the one pouch stuffed with petitions, t'other with pasquinadoes; a fine time we have on't. On my conscience, I believe the tale of Cadmus was hieroglyphical, and that the dragon's teeth whilk he sowed were the letters he invented. Ye are laughing, Baby Charles?—Mind what I say.—When I came here first frae our ain country, where the men are as rude as the weather, by my conscience, England was a bielly bit; one would have thought the king had little to do but to walk by quiet waters, *per aquam refectionis*. But, I kenna how or why, the place is sair changed—read that libel upon us and on our regimen. The dragon's teeth are sown, Baby Charles; I pray God they bearna their armed harvest in your day, if I suld not live to see it. God forbid I should, for there will be an awful day's kemping at the shearing of them."

"I shall know how to stifle the crop in the blade,—ha, George!" said the prince, turning to the favourite with a look expressive of some contempt for his father's apprehensions, and full of confidence in the superior firmness and decision of his own counsels.

While this discourse was passing, Nigel, in charge of a pursuivant-at-arms, was pushed and dragged through the small town, all the inhabitants of which, having been alarmed by the report of an attack on the king's life, now pressed forward to see the supposed traitor. Amid the confusion of the moment, he could descry the face of the victualler, arrested into a stare of stolid wonder, and that of the barber grinning betwixt horror and eager curiosity. He thought that he also had a glimpse of his waterman in the green jacket.

He had no time for remarks, being placed in a boat with the pursuivant and two yeomen of the guard, and rowed up the river as fast as the arms of six stout watermen could pull against the tide. They passed the groves of masts which even then astonished the stranger with the extended commerce of London, and now approached those low and blackened walls of curtain and bastion, which exhibit here and there a piece of ordnance, and here and there a solitary sentinel under arms, but have otherwise so little of the military terrors of a citadel. A projecting low-browed arch, which had lowered o'er many an innocent, and many a guilty head, in similar circumstances, now spread its dark frowns over that of Nigel. The boat was put close up to the broad steps against which the tide was lapping its lazy wave. The warder on duty looked from the wicket, and spoke to the pursuivant in whispers. In a few minutes the Lieutenant of the Tower appeared, received, and granted an acknowledgment for the body of Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ye towers of Julius! London's lasting shame;
With many a foul and midnight murder fed!

GRAY.

SUCH is the exclamation of Gray. Bandello, long before him, has said something like it; and the

same sentiment must in some shape or other have frequently occurred to those, who, remembering the fate of other captives in that memorable state-prison, may have had but too much reason to anticipate their own. The dark and low arch, which seemed, like the entrance to Dante's Hell, to forbid hope of regress—the muttered sounds of the warders, and petty formalities observed in opening and shutting the grated wicket—the cold and constrained salutation of the lieutenant of the fortress, who showed his prisoner that distant and measured respect which authority pays as a tax to decorum, all struck upon Nigel's heart, impressing on him the cruel consciousness of captivity.

"I am a prisoner," he said, the words escaping from him almost unawares; "I am a prisoner, and in the Tower!"

The lieutenant bowed—"And it is my duty," he said, "to show your lordship your chamber, where, I am compelled to say, my orders are to place you under some restraint. I will make it as easy as my duty permits."

Nigel only bowed in return to this compliment, and followed the lieutenant to the ancient buildings on the western side of the parade, and adjoining to the chapel, used in those days as a state-prison, but in ours as the mess-room of the officers of the guard upon duty at the fortress. The double doors were unlocked, the prisoner ascended a few steps, followed by the lieutenant, and a warder of the higher class. They entered a large, but irregular, low-roofed, and dark apartment, exhibiting a very scanty proportion of furniture. The warder had orders to make a fire, and attend to Lord Glenvarloch's commands in all things consistent with his duty; and the lieutenant, having made his reverence with the customary compliment, that he trusted his lordship would not long remain under his guardianship, took his leave.

Nigel would have asked some questions at the warder, who remained to put the apartment into order, but the man had caught the spirit of his office. He seemed not to hear some of the prisoner's questions, though of the most ordinary kind; did not reply to others, and when he did speak, it was in a short and sullen tone, which, though not positively disrespectful, was such as at least to encourage no farther communication.

Nigel left him, therefore, to do his work in silence, and proceeded to amuse himself with the melancholy task of deciphering the names, mottoes, verses, and hieroglyphics, with which his predecessors in captivity had covered the walls of their prison-house. There he saw the names of many a forgotten sufferer mingled with others which will continue in remembrance until English history shall perish. There were the pious effusions of the devout catholic, poured forth on the eve of his sealing his profession at Tyburn, mingled with those of the firm protestant, about to feed the fires of Smithfield. There the slender hand of the unfortunate Jane Gray, whose fate was to draw tears from future generations, might be contrasted with the bolder touch which impressed deep on the walls the Bear and Ragged Staff, the proud emblem of the proud Dudleys. It was like the roll of the prophet, a record of lamentation and

mourning, and yet not unmixed with brief interjections of resignation and sentences expressive of the firmest resolution.

In the sad task of examining the miseries of his predecessors in captivity, Lord Glenvarloch was interrupted by the sudden opening of the door of his prison room. It was the warder, who came to inform him, that, by order of the Lieutenant of the Tower, his lordship was to have the society and attendance, of a fellow-prisoner in his place of confinement. Nigel replied hastily, that he wished no attendance and would rather be left alone; but the warder gave him to understand, with a kind of grumbling civility, that the lieutenant was the best judge how his prisoners should be accommodated, and that he would have no trouble with the boy, who was such a slip of a thing as was scarce worth turning a key upon.—"There, Giles," he said, "bring the child in."

Another warder put the "lad before him" into the room, and, both withdrawing, bolt crashed and chain clanged, as they replaced these ponderous obstacles to freedom. The boy was clad in a grey suit of the finest cloth, laid down with silver lace, with a buff-coloured cloak of the same pattern. His cap, which was a Montero of black velvet, was pulled over his brows, and, with the profusion of his long ringlets, almost concealed his face. He stood on the very spot where the warder had quitted his collar, about two steps from the door of the apartment, his eyes fixed on the ground, and every joint trembling with confusion and terror. Nigel could well have dispensed with his society, but it was not in his nature to behold distress, whether of body or mind, without endeavouring to relieve it.

"Cheer up," he said, "my pretty lad. We are to be companions, it seems, for a little time—at least I trust your confinement will be short, since you are too young to have done aught to deserve long restraint. Come, come—do not be discouraged. Your hand is cold and trembles; the air is warm too—but it may be the damp of this darksome room. Place you by the fire.—What! weeping-ripe, my little man? I pray you, do not be a child. You have no beard yet, to be dishonoured by your tears; but yet you should not cry like a girl. Think you are only shut up for playing truant, and you can pass a day without weeping, surely."

The boy suffered himself to be led and seated by the fire, but, after retaining for a long time the very posture which he assumed in sitting down, he suddenly changed it in order to wring his hands with an air of the bitterest distress, and then, spreading them before his face, wept so plentifully, that the tears found their way in floods through his slender fingers.

Nigel was in some degree rendered insensible to his own situation, by his feelings for the intense agony by which so young and beautiful a creature seemed to be utterly overwhelmed; and, sitting down close beside the boy, he applied the most soothing terms which occurred, to endeavour to alleviate his distress; and with an action which the difference of their age rendered natural, drew his hand kindly along the long hair of the disconsolate child. The lad appeared so shy as even to shrink from this slight approach to familiarity—yet, when

Lord Glenvarloch, perceiving and allowing for his timidity, sat down on the farther side of the fire, he appeared to be more at his ease, and to hearken with some apparent interest to the arguments which from time to time Nigel used, to induce him to moderate, at least, the violence of his grief. As the boy listened, his tears, though they continued to flow freely, seemed to escape from their source more easily, his sobs were less convulsive, and became gradually changed into low sighs, which succeeded each other, indicating as much sorrow, perhaps, but less alarm than his first transports had shown.

"Tell me who and what you are, my pretty boy," said Nigel—"Consider me, child, as a companion, who wishes to be kind to you, would you but teach him how he can be so."

"Sir—my lord, I mean," answered the boy, very timidly, and in a voice which could scarce be heard even across the brief distance which divided them, "you are very good—and I—am very unhappy"—

A second fit of tears interrupted what else he had intended to say, and it required a renewal of Lord Glenvarloch's good-natured expostulations and encouragements, to bring him once more to such composure as rendered the lad capable of expressing himself intelligibly. At length, however, he was able to say—"I am sensible of your goodness, my lord—and grateful for it—but I am a poor unhappy creature, and, what is worse, have myself only to thank for my misfortunes."

"We are seldom absolutely miserable, my young acquaintance," said Nigel, "without being ourselves more or less responsible for it—I may well say so, otherwise I had not been here to-day—but you are very young, and can have but little to answer for."

"O sir! I wish I could say so—I have been self-willed and obstinate—and rash and ungovernable—and now—now, how dearly do I pay the price of it!"

"Pshaw! my boy," replied Nigel; "this must be some childish frolic—some breaking out of bounds—some truant trick; and yet how should any of these have brought you to the Tower? There is something mysterious about you, young man, which I must inquire into."

"Indeed, indeed, my lord, there is no harm about me," said the boy, more moved, it would seem, to confession by the last words, by which he seemed considerably alarmed, than by all the kind expostulations and arguments which Nigel had previously used. "I am innocent—that is, I have done wrong, but nothing to deserve being in this frightful place."

"Tell me the truth, then," said Nigel, in a tone in which command mingled with encouragement; "you have nothing to fear from me, and as little to hope, perhaps—yet, placed as I am, I would know with whom I speak."

"With an unhappy—boy, sir—and idle and truantly-disposed, as your lordship said," answered the lad, looking up and showing a countenance in which paleness and blushes succeeded each other, as fear and shame-facedness alternately had influence. "I left my father's house without leave to see the king hunt in the park at Greenwich; there came a cry of treason, and all the gates were shut—I was frightened, and hid myself in a thicket, and

I was found by some of the rangers and examined—and they said I gave no good account of myself—and so I was sent hither.”

“I am an unhappy, a most unhappy being,” said Lord Glenvarloch, rising and walking through the apartment—“nothing approaches me but shares my own bad fate! Death and imprisonment dog my steps, and involve all who are found near me. Yet this boy’s story sounds strangely.—You say you were examined, my young friend—let me pray you to say whether you told your name, and your means of gaining admission into the park—if so, they surely would not have detained you.”

“O my lord,” said the boy, “I took care not to tell them the name of the friend that let me in; and as to my father—I would not he knew where I now am for all the wealth in London!”

“But you do not expect,” said Nigel, “that they will dismiss you till you let them know who and what you are?”

“What good will it do them to keep so useless a creature as myself?” said the boy; “they must let me go, were it but out of shame.”

“Do not trust to that—tell me your name and station—I will communicate them to the lieutenant—he is a man of quality and honour, and will not only be willing to procure your liberation, but also, I have no doubt, will intercede with your father. I am partly answerable for such poor aid as I can afford to get you out of this embarrassment, since I occasioned the alarm owing to which you were arrested; so tell me your name, and your father’s name.”

“My name to you? O never, never!” answered the boy, in a tone of deep emotion, the cause of which Nigel could not comprehend.

“Are you so much afraid of me, young man,” he replied, “because I am here accused and a prisoner? Consider a man may be both, and deserve neither suspicion nor restraint. Why should you distrust me? You seem friendless, and I am myself so much in the same circumstances, that I cannot but pity your situation when I reflect on my own. Be wise; I have spoken kindly to you—I mean as kindly as I speak.”

“O, I doubt it not, I doubt it not, my lord,” said the boy, “and I could tell you all—that is, almost all.”

“Tell me nothing, my young friend, excepting what may assist me in being useful to you,” said Nigel.

“You are generous, my lord,” said the boy; “and I am sure—O sure, I might safely trust to your honour—But yet—but yet—I am so sore beset—I have been so rash, so unguarded—I can never tell you of my folly. Besides, I have already told too much to one whose heart I thought I had moved—yet I find myself here.”

“To whom did you make this disclosure?” said Nigel.

“I dare not tell,” replied the youth.

“There is something singular about you, my young friend,” said Lord Glenvarloch, withdrawing with a gentle degree of compulsion the hand with which the boy had again covered his eyes; “do not pain yourself with thinking on your situation just at present—your pulse is high, and your hand feverish

—lay yourself on yonder pallet, and try to compose yourself to sleep. It is the readiest and best remedy for the fancies with which you are worrying yourself.”

“I thank you for your considerate kindness, my lord,” said the boy; “with your leave, I will remain for a little space quiet in this chair—I am better thus than on the couch, I can think undisturbedly on what I have done, and have still to do; and, if God sends slumber to a creature so exhausted, it shall be most welcome.”

So saying, the boy drew his hand from Lord Nigel’s, and, drawing around him and partly over his face the folds of his ample cloak, he resigned himself to sleep or meditation, while his companion, notwithstanding the exhausting scenes of this and the preceding day, continued his pensive walk up and down the apartment.

Every reader has experienced, that times occur, when, far from being lord of external circumstances, man is unable to rule even the wayward realm of his own thoughts. It was Nigel’s natural wish to consider his own situation coolly, and fix on the course which it became him as a man of sense and courage to adopt; and yet, in spite of himself, and notwithstanding the deep interest of the critical state in which he was placed, it did so happen that his fellow-prisoner’s situation occupied more of his thoughts than did his own. There was no accounting for this wandering of the imagination, but also there was no striving with it. The pleading tones of one of the sweetest voices he had ever heard, still rung in his ear, though it seemed that sleep had now fettered the tongue of the speaker. He drew near on tiptoe to satisfy himself whether it were so. The folds of the cloak hid the lower part of his face entirely; but the bonnet, which had fallen a little aside, permitted him to see the forehead streaked with blue veins, the closed eyes, and the long silken eye-lashes.

“Poor child,” said Nigel to himself, as he looked on him, nestled up as it were in the folds of his mantle, “the dew is yet on thy eye-lashes, and thou hast fairly wept thyself asleep. Sorrow is a rough nurse to one so young and delicate as thou art. Peace be to thy slumbers, I will not disturb them. My own misfortunes require my attention, and it is to their contemplation that I must resign myself.”

He attempted to do so, but was crossed at every turn by conjectures which intruded themselves as before, and which all regarded the sleeper rather than himself. He was angry and vexed, and expostulated with himself concerning the overweening interest which he took in the concerns of one of whom he knew nothing, saving that the boy was forced into his company, perhaps as a spy, by those to whose custody he was committed—but the spell could not be broken, and the thoughts which he struggled to dismiss, continued to haunt him.

Thus passed half an hour, or more; at the conclusion of which, the harsh sound of the revolving bolts was again heard, and the voice of the warder announced that a man desired to speak with Lord Glenvarloch. “A man to speak with me, under my present circumstances!—who can it be?” And

John Christie, his landlord of Paul's Wharf, resolved his doubts, by entering the apartment. "Welcome—most welcome, mine honest landlord!" said Lord Glenvarloch. "How could I have dreamt of seeing you in my present close lodgings?" And at the same time, with the frankness of his old kindness, he walked up to Christie and offered his hand; but John started back as from the look of a basilisk.

"Keep your courtesies to yourself, my lord," said he, gruffly; "I have had as many of them already as may serve me for my life."

"Why, Master Christie," said Nigel, "what means this? I trust I have not offended you?"

"Ask me no questions, my lord," said Christie, bluntly. "I am a man of peace—I came not hither to wrangle with you at this place and season. Just suppose that I am well informed of all the obligations from your honour's nobleness, and then acquaint me, in as few words as may be, where is the unhappy woman—What have you done with her?"

"What have I done with her!" said Lord Glenvarloch—"Done with whom? I know not what you are speaking of."

"Oh yes, my lord," said Christie; "play surprise as well as you will, you must have some guess that I am speaking of the poor fool that was my wife, till she became your lordship's light-o'-love."

"Your wife! Has your wife left you? and, if she has, do you come to ask her of me?"

"Yes, my lord; singular as it may seem," returned Christie, in a tone of bitter irony, and with a sort of grin widely discording from the discomposure of his features, the gleam of his eye, and the froth which stood on his lip, "I do come to make that demand of your lordship. Doubtless, you are surprised I should take the trouble; but, I cannot tell, great men and little men think differently. She has lain in my bosom, and drunk of my cup; and, such as she is, I cannot forget that—though I will never see her again—she must not starve, my lord, or do worse to gain bread, though I reckon your lordship may think I am robbing the public in trying to change her courses."

"By my faith as a christian, by my honour as a gentleman," said Lord Glenvarloch, "if aught amiss has chanced with your wife, I know nothing of it. I trust in Heaven you are as much mistaken in imputing guilt to her, as in supposing me her partner in it."

"Fie! fie! my lord," said Christie, "why will you make it so tough? She is but the wife of a clod-pated old chandler, who was idiot enough to marry a wench twenty years younger than himself. Your lordship cannot have more glory by it than you have had already; and, as for advantage and solace, I take it Dame Nelly is now unnecessary to your gratification. I should be sorry to interrupt the course of your pleasure; an old wittol should have more consideration of his condition. But, your precious lordship being mewed up here among other choice jewels of the kingdom, Dame Nelly cannot, I take it, be admitted to share the hours of dalliance which —" Here the incensed husband stammered, broke off his tone of irony, and proceeded, striking his staff against the ground—"O that these false limbs of yours, which I wish had been hamstrung

when they first crossed my honest threshold, were free from the fetters they have well deserved! I would give you the odds of your youth, and your weapon, and would bequeath my soul to the foul fiend if I, with this piece of oak, did not make you such an example to all ungrateful, pick-thank courtiers, that it should be a proverb to the end of time, how John Christie swaddled his wife's fine leman."

"I understand not your insolence," said Nigel, "but I forgive it, because you labour under some strange delusion. In so far as I can comprehend your vehement charge, it is entirely undeserved on my part. You seem to impute to me the seduction of your wife—I trust she is innocent. For me, at least, she is as innocent as an angel in bliss. I never thought of her—never touched her hand or cheek, save in honourable courtesy."

"O, ay—courtesy!—that is the very word. She always praised your lordship's *honourable courtesy*. Ye have cozened me between you, with your courtesy. My lord—my lord, you came to us no very wealthy man—you know it. It was for no lucre of gain I took you and your swash-buckler, your Don Diego yonder, under my poor roof. I never cared if the little room were let or no; I could live without it. If you could not have paid for it, you should never have been asked. All the wharf knows John Christie has the means and spirit to do a kindness. When you first darkened my honest door-way, I was as happy as a man need to be, who is no youngster, and has the rheumatism. Nelly was the kindest and best-humoured wench—we might have a word now and then of a gown or a ribbon, but a kinder soul, on the whole, and a more careful, considering her years, till you came—and what she is now! —But I will not be a fool to cry, if I can help it. *What* she is, is not the question, but *where* she is; and that I must learn, sir, of you."

"How can you, when I tell you," replied Nigel, "that I am as ignorant as yourself, or rather much more so? Till this moment, I never heard of any disagreement betwixt your dame and you."

"That is a lie," said John Christie, bluntly.

"How, you base villain!" said lord Glenvarloch—"do you presume on my situation? If it were not that I hold you mad, and perhaps made so by some wrong sustained, you should find my being weaponless were no protection. I would beat your brains out against the wall."

"Ay, ay," answered Christie, "bully as ye list. Ye have been at the ordinaries, and in Alsatia, and learned the ruffian's rant, I doubt not. But I repeat, you have spoken an untruth, when you said you knew not of my wife's falsehood; for, when you were twitted with it among your gay mates, it was a common jest among you, and your lordship took all the credit they would give you for your gallantry and gratitude."

There was a mixture of truth in this part of the charge, which disconcerted Lord Glenvarloch exceedingly; for he could not, as a man of honour, deny that Lord Dalgarno, and others, had occasionally jested with him on the subject of Dame Nelly, and that, though he had not played exactly *le fanfaron des vices qu'il n'avait pas*, he had not at least been sufficiently anxious to clear himself of

the suspicion of such a crime to men who considered it as a merit. It was therefore with some hesitation, and in a sort of qualifying tone, that he admitted that some idle jests had passed upon such a supposition, although without the least foundation in truth. John Christie would not listen to his vindication any longer. "By your own account," he said, "you permitted lies to be told of you in jest. How do I know you are speaking truth, now you are serious? You thought it, I suppose, a fine thing to wear the reputation of having dishonoured an honest family,—who will not think that you had real grounds for your base bravado to rest upon? I will not believe otherwise for one, and therefore, my lord, mark what I have to say. You are now yourself in trouble—As you hope to come through it safely, and without loss of life and property, tell me where this unhappy woman is. Tell me, if you hope for heaven—tell me, if you fear hell—tell me, as you would not have the curse of an utterly ruined woman, and a broken-hearted man, attend you through life, and bear witness against you at the great day, which shall come after death. You are moved, my lord. I see it. I cannot forget the wrong you have done me. I cannot even promise to forgive it—but—tell me, and you shall never see me again, or hear more of my reproaches."

"Unfortunate man," said Lord Glenvarloch, "you have said more, far more than enough, to move me deeply. Were I at liberty, I would lend you my best aid to search out him who has wronged you, the rather that I do suspect my having been your lodger has been in some degree the remote cause of bringing the spoiler into the sheepfold."

"I am glad your lordship grants me so much," said John Christie, resuming the tone of embittered irony with which he had opened the singular conversation; "I will spare you farther reproach and remonstrance—your mind is made up, and so is mine—So, ho, warder!" The warder entered, and John went on,—*"I want to get out, brother. Look well to your charge—it were better that half the wild beasts in their dens yonder were turned loose upon Tower Hill, than that this same smooth-faced, civil-spoken gentleman were again returned to honest men's company."*

So saying, he hastily left the apartment; and Nigel had full leisure to lament the waywardness of his fate, which seemed never to tire of persecuting him for crimes of which he was innocent, and investing him with the appearances of guilt which his mind abhorred. He could not, however, help acknowledging to himself, that all the pain which he might sustain from the present accusation of John Christie, was so far deserved, from his having suffered himself, out of vanity, or rather an unwillingness to encounter ridicule, to be supposed capable of a base inhospitable crime, merely because fools called it an affair of gallantry; and it was no balsam to the wound, when he recollected what Richie had told him of his having been ridiculed behind his back by the gallants of the ordinary, for affecting the reputation of an intrigue which he had not in reality spirit enough to have carried on. His simulation had, in a word, placed him in the unlucky predicament of being rallied as a braggart

VOL. III.

amongst the dissipated youths, with whom the reality of the amour would have given him credit; whilst, on the other hand, he was branded as an inhospitable seducer by the injured husband, who was obstinately persuaded of his guilt.

CHAPTER XXIX.

How fares the man on whom good men would look
With eyes where scorn and censure combated,
But that kind christian love hath taught the lesson—
That they who merit most contempt and hate,
Do most deserve our pity.—

Old Play.

It might have seemed natural that the visit of John Christie should have entirely diverted Nigel's attention from his slumbering companion, and, for a time, such was the immediate effect of the chain of new ideas which the incident introduced; yet, soon after the injured man had departed, Lord Glenvarloch began to think it extraordinary that the boy should have slept so soundly, while they talked loudly in his vicinity. Yet he certainly did not appear to have stirred. Was he well—was he only feigning sleep? He went close to him to make his observations, and perceived that he had wept, and was still weeping, though his eyes were closed. He touched him gently on the shoulder—the boy shrunk from his touch, but did not awake. He pulled him harder, and asked him if he was sleeping.

"Do they waken folks in your country to know whether they are asleep or no?" said the boy, in a peevish tone.

"No, my young sir," answered Nigel; "but when they weep in the manner you do in your sleep, they awaken them to see what ails them."

"It signifies little to any one what ails me," said the boy.

"True," replied Lord Glenvarloch; "but you knew before you went to sleep how little I could assist you in your difficulties, and you seemed disposed, notwithstanding, to put some confidence in me."

"If I did, I have changed my mind," said the lad.

"And what may have occasioned this change of mind, I trow?" said Lord Glenvarloch.—"Some men speak through their sleep—perhaps you have the gift of hearing in it?"

"No, but the Patriarch Joseph never dreamt truer dreams than I do."

"Indeed!" said Lord Glenvarloch. "And pray what dream have you had that has deprived me of your good opinion; for that, I think, seems the moral of the matter?"

"You shall judge yourself," answered the boy. "I dreamed I was in a wild forest, where there was a cry of hounds, and winding of horns, exactly as I heard in Greenwich Park."

"That was because you were in the park this morning, you simple child," said Nigel.

"Stay, my lord," said the youth. "I went on in my dream, till, at the top of a broad green alley, I saw a noble stag which had fallen into the toils; and methought I knew that he was the very stag which

the whole party were hunting, and that if the chase came up, the dogs would tear him to pieces, or the hunters would cut his throat; and I had pity on the gallant stag, and though I was of a different kind from him, and though I was somewhat afraid of him, I thought I would venture something to free so stately a creature; and I pulled out my knife, and just as I was beginning to cut the meshes of the net, the animal started up in my face in the likeness of a tiger, much larger and fiercer than any you may have seen in the ward of the wild beasts yonder, and was just about to tear me limb from limb, when you awaked me."

"Methinks," said Nigel, "I deserve more thanks than I have got, for rescuing you from such a danger by waking you. But, my pretty master, methinks all this tale of a tiger and a stag has little to do with your change of temper towards me."

"I know not whether it has or no," said the lad; "but I will not tell you who I am."

"You will keep your secret yourself then, peevish boy," said Nigel, turning from him, and resuming his walk through the room; then stopping suddenly, he said,—“And yet you shall not escape from me without knowing that I penetrate your mystery.”

"My mystery!" said the youth, at once alarmed and irritated,—“what mean you, my lord?”

"Only that I can read your dream without the assistance of a Chaldean interpreter, and my exposition is—that my fair companion does not wear the dress of her sex."

"And if I do not, my lord," said his companion, hastily starting up, and folding her cloak tight around her, "my dress, such as it is, covers one who will not disgrace it."

"Many would call that speech a fair challenge," said Lord Glenvarloch, looking on her fixedly; "women do not masquerade in men's clothes, to make use of men's weapons."

"I have no such purpose," said the seeming boy; "I have other means of protection, and powerful—but I would first know what is *your* purpose."

"An honourable and a most respectful one," said Lord Glenvarloch; "whatever you are—whatever motive may have brought you into this ambiguous situation, I am sensible—every look, word, and action of yours, makes me sensible, that you are no proper subject of importunity, far less of ill usage. What circumstances can have forced you into so doubtful a situation, I know not; but I feel assured there is, and can be, nothing in them of premeditated wrong, which should expose you to cold-blooded insult. From me you have nothing to dread."

"I expected nothing less from your nobleness, my lord," answered the female; "my adventure, though I feel it was both desperate and foolish, is not so very foolish, nor my safety here so utterly unprotected, as at first sight, and in this strange dress, it may appear to be. I have suffered enough, and more than enough, by the degradation of having been seen in this unfeminine attire, and the comments you must necessarily have made on my conduct—but I thank God that I am so far protected, that I could not have been subjected to insult unavenged."

When this extraordinary explanation had proceeded thus far, the warder appeared, to place be-

fore Lord Glenvarloch a meal, which, for his present situation, might be called comfortable, and which, if not equal to the cookery of the celebrated Chevalier Beaujeu, was much superior in neatness and cleanliness to that of Alsatia. A warder attended to do the honours of the table, and made a sign to the disguised female to rise and assist him in his attendance. But Nigel declared that he knew the youth's parents, interfered, and caused his companion to eat along with him. She consented with a sort of embarrassment, which rendered her pretty features yet more interesting. Yet she maintained with a natural grace that sort of good-breeding which belongs to the table; and it seemed to Nigel, whether already prejudiced in her favour by the extraordinary circumstances of their meeting, or whether really judging from what was actually the fact, that he had seldom seen a young person comport herself with more decorous propriety, mixed with ingenuous simplicity; while the consciousness of the peculiarity of her situation threw a singular colouring over her whole demeanour, which could be neither said to be formal, nor easy, nor embarrassed, but was compounded of, and shaded with, an interchange of all these three characteristics. Wine was placed on the table, of which she could not be prevailed on to taste a glass. Their conversation was, of course, limited by the presence of the warder to the business of the table; but Nigel had, long ere the cloth was removed, formed the resolution, if possible, of making himself master of this young person's history, the more especially as he now began to think that the tones of her voice and her features were not so strange to him as he had originally supposed. This, however, was a conviction which he adopted slowly, and only as it dawned upon him from particular circumstances during the course of the repast.

At length the prison meal was finished, and Lord Glenvarloch began to think how he might most easily enter upon the topic he meditated, when the warder announced a visitor.

"Soh!" said Nigel, something displeased, "I find even a prison does not save one from importunate visitations."

He prepared to receive his guest, however, while his alarmed companion flew to the large cradle-shaped chair, which had first served her as a place of refuge, drew her cloak around her, and disposed herself as much as she could to avoid observation. She had scarce made her arrangements for that purpose when the door opened, and the worthy citizen, George Heriot, entered the prison chamber.

He cast around the apartment his usual sharp, quick glance of observation, and, advancing to Nigel, said—"My lord, I wish I could say I was happy to see you."

"The sight of those who are unhappy themselves, Master Heriot, seldom produces happiness to their friends—I, however, am glad to see you."

He extended his hand, but Heriot bowed with much formal complaisance, instead of accepting the courtesy, which in those times, when the distinction of ranks was much guarded by etiquette and ceremony, was considered as a distinguished favour.

"You are displeased with me, Master Heriot," said Lord Glenvarloch, reddening, for he was not

deceived by the worthy citizen's affectation of extreme reverence and respect.

"By no means, my lord," replied Heriot; "but I have been in France, and have thought it as well to import, along with other more substantial articles, a small sample of that good-breeding which the French are so renowned for."

"It is not kind of you," said Nigel, "to bestow the first use of it on an old and obliged friend."

Heriot only answered to this observation with a short dry cough, and then proceeded.

"Hem! hem! I say, ahem! My lord, as my French politeness may not carry me far, I would willingly know whether I am to speak as a friend, since your lordship is pleased to term me such; or whether I am, as befits my condition, to confine myself to the needful business which must be treated of between us."

"Speak as a friend by all means, Master Heriot," said Nigel; "I perceive you have adopted some of the numerous prejudices against me, if not all of them. Speak out, and frankly—what I cannot deny I will at least confess."

"And I trust, my lord, redress," said Heriot.

"So far as is in my power, certainly," answered Nigel.

"Ah! my lord," continued Heriot, "that is a melancholy though a necessary restriction! for how lightly may any one do an hundred times more than the degree of evil which it may be within his power to repair to the sufferers and to society. But we are not alone here," he said, stopping, and darting his shrewd eye towards the muffled figure of the disguised maiden, whose utmost efforts had not enabled her so to adjust her position as altogether to escape observation. More anxious to prevent her being discovered than to keep his own affairs private, Nigel hastily answered—

"'Tis a page of mine; you may speak freely before him. He is of France and knows no English."

"I am then to speak freely," said Heriot, after a second glance at the chair; "perhaps my words may be more free than welcome."

"Go on, sir," said Nigel, "I have told you I can bear reproof."

"In one word then, my lord—why do I find you in this place, and whelmed with charges which must blacken a name rendered famous by ages of virtue?"

"Simply then, you find me here," said Nigel, "because, to begin from my original error, I would be wiser than my father."

"It was a difficult task, my lord," replied Heriot; "your father was voiced generally as the wisest and one of the bravest men of Scotland."

"He commanded me," continued Nigel, "to avoid all gambling; and I took upon me to modify this injunction into regulating my play according to my skill, means, and the course of my luck."

"Ay, self-opinion acting on a desire of acquisition, my lord—you hoped to touch pitch and not to be defiled," answered Heriot. "Well, my lord, you need not say, for I have heard with much regret, how far this conduct diminished your reputation. Your next error I may without scruple remind you of—My lord, my lord, in whatever degree Lord Dalgarno may have failed towards you, the son of

his father should have been sacred from your violence."

"You speak in cold blood, Master Heriot, and I was smarting under a thousand wrongs inflicted on me under the masque of friendship."

"That is, he gave your lordship bad advice, and you," said Heriot—

"Was fool enough to follow his counsel," answered Nigel—"But we will pass this, Master Heriot, if you please. Old men and young men, men of the sword and men of peaceful occupation, always have thought, always will think, differently on such subjects."

"I grant," answered Heriot, "the distinction between the old goldsmith and the young nobleman—still you should have had patience for Lord Huntinglen's sake, and prudence for your own. Supposing your quarrel just"—

"I pray you to pass on to some other charge," said Lord Glenvarloch.

"I am not your accuser, my lord; but I trust in Heaven, that your own heart has already accused you bitterly on the inhospitable wrong which your late landlord has sustained at your hand."

"Had I been guilty of what you allude to," said Lord Glenvarloch,—"had a moment of temptation hurried me away, I had long ere now most bitterly repented it. But whoever may have wronged the unhappy woman, it was not I—I never heard of her folly until within this hour."

"Come, my lord," said Heriot, with some severity, "this sounds too much like affectation. I know there is among our modern youth a new creed respecting adultery as well as homicide—I would rather hear you speak of a revision of the Decalogue, with mitigated penalties in favour of the privileged orders—I would rather hear you do this, than deny a fact in which you have been known to glory."

"Glory!—I never did, never would have taken honour to myself from such a cause," said Lord Glenvarloch. "I could not prevent other idle tongues and idle brains from making false inferences."

"You would have known well enough how to stop their mouths, my lord," replied Heriot, "had they spoke of you what was displeasing to your ears, and what the truth did not warrant. Come, my lord, remember your promise to confess—and, indeed, to confess is, in this case, in some slight sort, to redress. I will grant you are young—the woman handsome, and, as I myself have observed, light-headed enough. Let me know where she is. Her foolish husband has still some compassion for her—will save her from infamy—perhaps, in time, receive her back—for we are a good-natured generation, we traders. Do not, my lord, emulate those who work mischief merely for the pleasure of doing so—it is the very devil's worst quality."

"Your grave remonstrances will drive me mad," said Nigel. "There is a show of sense and reason in what you say; and yet it is positively insisting on my telling the retreat of a fugitive of whom I know nothing earthly."

"It is well, my lord," answered Heriot, coldly. "You have a right, such as it is, to keep your own secrets; but, since my discourse on these points

seems so totally unavailing, we had better proceed to business. Yet your father's image rises before me, and seems to plead that I should go on."

"Be it as you will, sir," said Glenvarloch; "he who doubts my word shall have no additional security for it."

"Well, my lord. In the sanctuary at Whitefriars—a place of refuge so unsuitable to a young man of quality and character—I am told a murder was committed."

"And you believe that I did the deed, I suppose?"

"God forbid! my lord," said Heriot. "The coroner's inquest hath sat, and it appeared that your lordship, under your assumed name of Grahame, behaved with the utmost bravery."

"No compliment, I pray you," said Nigel; "I am only too happy to find that I did not murder, or am not believed to have murdered, the old man."

"True, my lord," said Heriot; "but even in this affair there lacks explanation. Your lordship embarked this morning in a wherry with a female and, it is said, an immense sum of money, in specie and other valuables—but the woman has not since been heard of."

"I parted with her at Paul's Wharf," said Nigel, "where she went ashore with her charge. I gave her a letter to that very man, John Christie."

"Ay, that is the waterman's story; but John Christie denies that he remembers anything of the matter."

"I am sorry to hear this," said the young nobleman; "I hope, in Heaven, she has not been trepanned for the treasure she had with her."

"I hope not, my lord," replied Heriot; "but men's minds are much disturbed about it. Our national character suffers on all hands. Men remember the fatal case of Lord Sanquhar, hanged for the murder of a fencing-master; and exclaim, they will not have their wives whored, and their property stolen, by the nobility of Scotland."

"And all this is laid to my door!" said Nigel; "my exculpation is easy."

"I trust so, my lord," said Heriot;—"nay, in this particular, I do not doubt it.—But why did you leave Whitefriars under such circumstances?"

"Master Reginald Lowestoffe sent a boat for me, with intimation to provide for my safety."

"I am sorry to say," replied Heriot, "that he denies all knowledge of your lordship's motions, after having dispatched a messenger to you with some baggage."

"The watermen told me they were employed by him."

"Watermen!" said Heriot; "one of these proves to be an idle apprentice, an old acquaintance of mine—the other has escaped; but the fellow who is in custody persists in saying he was employed by your lordship, and you only."

"He lies!" said Lord Glenvarloch, hastily;—"He told me Master Lowestoffe had sent him.—I hope that kind-hearted gentleman is at liberty?"

"He is," answered Heriot; "and has escaped with a rebuke from the benchers, for interfering in such a matter as your lordship's. The court desire to keep

well with the young Templars in these times of commotion, or he had not come off so well."

"That is the only word of comfort I have heard from you," replied Nigel. "But this poor woman,—she and her trunk were committed to the charge of two porters."

"So said the pretended waterman; but none of the fellows who ply at the wharf will acknowledge the employment.—I see the idea makes you uneasy, my lord; but every effort is made to discover the poor woman's place of retreat—if, indeed, she yet lives.—And now, my lord, my errand is spoken, so far as it relates exclusively to your lordship; what remains, is matter of business of a more formal kind."

"Let us proceed to it without delay," said Lord Glenvarloch. "I would hear of the affairs of any one rather than of my own."

"You cannot have forgotten, my lord," said Heriot, "the transaction which took place some weeks since at Lord Huntinglen's—by which a large sum of money was advanced for the redemption of your lordship's estate?"

"I remember it perfectly," said Nigel; "and your present austerity cannot make me forget your kindness on the occasion."

Heriot bowed gravely, and went on.—"That money was advanced under the expectation and hope, that it might be replaced by the contents of a grant to your lordship, under the royal sign-manual, in payment of certain moneys due by the crown to your father.—I trust your lordship understood the transaction at the time—I trust you now understand my resumption of its import, and hold it to be correct?"

"Undeniably correct," answered Lord Glenvarloch. "If the sums contained in the warrant cannot be recovered, my lands become the property of those who paid off the original holders of the mortgage, and now stand in their right."

"Even so, my lord," said Heriot. "And your lordship's unhappy circumstances having, it would seem, alarmed these creditors, they are now, I am sorry to say, pressing for one or other of these alternatives—possession of the land, or payment of their debt."

"They have a right to one or other," answered Lord Glenvarloch; "and, as I cannot do the last in my present condition, I suppose they must enter on possession."

"Stay, my lord," replied Heriot; "if you have ceased to call me a friend to your person, at least you shall see I am willing to be such to your father's house, were it but for the sake of your father's memory. If you will trust me with the warrant under the sign-manual, I believe circumstances do now so stand at court, that I may be able to recover the money for you."

"I would do so gladly," said Lord Glenvarloch, "but the casket which contains it is not in my possession. It was seized when I was arrested at Greenwich."

"It will be no longer withheld from you," said Heriot; "for, I understand, my master's natural good sense, and some information which he has procured, I know not how, has induced him to contradict the whole charge of the attempt on his

person. It is entirely hushed up; and you will only be proceeded against for your violence on Lord Dalgarno, committed within the verge of the palace—and that you will find heavy enough to answer.”

“I will not shrink under the weight,” said Lord Glenvarloch. “But that is not the present point.—If I had that casket”——

“Your baggage stood in the little ante-room, as I passed,” said the citizen; “the casket caught my eye. I think you had it of me.—It was my old friend Sir Faithful Frugal’s. Ay, he too had a son”——

Here he stopped short.

“A son who, like Lord Glenvarloch’s, did no credit to his father.—Was it not so you would have ended the sentence, Master Heriot?” said the young lord.

“My lord, it was a word spoken rashly,” answered Heriot. “God may mend all in his own good time. This however, I will say, that I have sometimes envied my friends their fair and flourishing families; and yet have I seen such changes when death has removed the head, so many rich men’s sons penniless, the heirs of so many knights and nobles acreless, that I think mine own estate and memory, as I shall order it, has a fair chance of outliving those of greater men, though God has given me no heir of my name. But this is from the purpose.—Ho! warder, bring in Lord Glenvarloch’s baggage.” The officer obeyed. Seals had been placed upon the trunk and casket, but were now removed, the warder said, in consequence of the subsequent orders from court, and the whole was placed at the prisoner’s free disposal.

Desirous to bring this painful visit to a conclusion, Lord Glenvarloch opened the casket, and looked through the papers which it contained, first hastily, and then more slowly and accurately, but it was all in vain. The sovereign’s signed warrant had disappeared.

“I thought and expected nothing better,” said George Heriot, bitterly. “The beginning of evil is the letting out of water. Here is a fair heritage lost, I dare say, on a foul cast at dice, or a conjuring trick at cards!—My lord, your surprise is well played. I give you full joy of your accomplishments. I have seen many as young brawlers and spendthrifts, but never so young and accomplished a dissembler.—Nay, man, never bend your angry brows on me. I speak in bitterness of heart, from what I remember of your worthy father; and if his son hears of his degeneracy from no one else, he shall hear it from the old goldsmith.”

This new suspicion drove Nigel to the very extremity of his patience; yet the motives and zeal of the good old man, as well as the circumstances of suspicion which created his displeasure, were so excellent an excuse for it, that they formed an absolute curb on the resentment of Lord Glenvarloch, and constrained him, after two or three hasty exclamations, to observe a proud and sullen silence. At length Master Heriot resumed his lecture.

“Hark you, my lord,” he said, “it is scarce possible that this most important paper can be absolutely assigned away. Let me know in what obscure

corner, and for what petty sum, it lies pledged—something may yet be done.”

“Your efforts in my favour are the more generous,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “as you offer them to one whom you believe you have cause to think hardly of—but they are altogether unavailing. Fortune has taken the field against me at every point. Even let her win the battle.”

“Zouns!” exclaimed Heriot, impatiently,—“you would make a saint swear. Why, I tell you, if this paper, the loss of which seems to sit so light on you, be not found, farewell to the fair lordship of Glenvarloch—firth and forest—lea and furrow—lake and stream—all that has been in the house of Olifaunt since the days of William the Lion.”

“Farewell to them, then,” said Nigel,—“and that moan is soon made.”

“’Sdeath! my lord, you will make more moan for it ere you die,” said Heriot, in the same tone of angry impatience.

“Not I, my old friend,” said Nigel. “If I mourn, Master Heriot, it will be for having lost the good opinion of a worthy man, and lost it, as I must say, most undeservedly.”

“Ay, ay, young man,” said Heriot, shaking his head, “make me believe that, if you can.—To sum the matter up,” he said, rising from his seat, and walking towards that occupied by the disguised female, “for our matters are now drawn into small compass, you shall as soon make me believe that this masquerading mummer, on whom I now lay the hand of paternal authority, is a French page, who understands no English.”

So saying, he took hold of the supposed page’s cloak, and, not without some gentle degree of violence, led into the middle of the apartment the disguised fair one, who in vain attempted to cover her face, first with her mantle, and afterwards with her hands; both which impediments Master Heriot removed, something unceremoniously, and gave to view the detected daughter of the old chronologist, his own fair goddaughter, Margaret Ramsay.

“Here is goodly gear,” he said; and, as he spoke, he could not prevent himself from giving her a slight shake, for we have elsewhere noticed that he was a severe disciplinarian.—“How comes it, minion, that I find you in so shameless a dress, and so unworthy a situation? Nay, your modesty is now mistimed—it should have come sooner. Speak, or I will.”

“Master Heriot,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “whatever right you may have over this maiden elsewhere, while in my apartment, she is under my protection.”

“Your protection, my lord!—a proper protector.—And how long, mistress, have you been under my lord’s protection? Speak out, forsooth.”

“For the matter of two hours, godfather,” answered the maiden, with a countenance bent to the ground, and covered with blushes, “but it was against my will.”

“Two hours!” repeated Heriot,—“space enough for mischief.—My lord, this is, I suppose, another victim offered to your character of gallantry—another adventure to be boasted of at Beaujeu’s ordinary? Methinks, the roof under which you first

met this silly maiden, should have secured her at least from such a fate."

"On my honour, Master Heriot," said Lord Glenvarloch, "you remind me now, for the first time, that I saw this young lady in your family. Her features are not easily forgotten, and yet I was trying in vain to recollect where I had last looked on them. For your suspicions, they are as false as they are injurious both to her and me. I had but discovered her disguise as you entered. I am satisfied, from her whole behaviour, that her presence here in this dress was involuntary; and God forbid that I had been capable of taking advantage of it to her prejudice."

"It is well mouthed, my lord," said Master Heriot; "but a cunning clerk can read the Apocrypha as loud as the Scripture. Frankly, my lord, you are come to that pass, where your words will not pass without a warrant."

"I should not speak, perhaps," said Margaret, the natural vivacity of whose temper could never be long suppressed by any situation, however disadvantageous, "but I cannot be silent. Godfather, you do me wrong—and no less wrong to this young nobleman. You say his words want a warrant. I know where to find a warrant for some of them, and the rest I deeply and devoutly believe without one."

"And I thank you, maiden," replied Nigel, "for the good opinion you have expressed. I am at that point it seems, though how I have been driven to it I know not, where every fair construction of my actions and motives is refused me. I am the more obliged to her who grants me that right which the world denies me. For you, lady, were I at liberty, I have a sword and arm should know how to guard your reputation."

"Upon my word, a perfect Amadis and Oriana!" said George Heriot. "I should soon get my throat cut betwixt the knight and the princess, I suppose, but that the beef-eaters are happily within halloo.—Come, come, Lady Light-o'-love—if you mean to make your way with me, it must be by plain facts, not by speeches from romaunts and play-books. How, in Heaven's name, came you here?"

"Sir," answered Margaret, "since I must speak, I went to Greenwich this morning with Monna Paula, to present a petition to the king on the part of the Lady Hermione."

"Mercy-a-gad!" exclaimed Heriot, "is she in the dance, too? Could she not have waited my return to stir in her affairs? But I suppose the intelligence I sent her had rendered her restless. Ah! woman, woman—he that goes partner with you, had need of a double share of patience, for you will bring none into the common stock.—Well, but what on earth had this embassy of Monna Paula's to do with your absurd disguise? Speak out."

"Monna Paula was frightened," answered Margaret, "and did not know how to set about the errand, for you know she scarce ever goes out of doors—and so—and so—I agreed to go with her to give her courage; and, for the dress, I am sure you remember I wore it at a Christmas mumming, and you thought it not unbeseeming."

"Yes, for a Christmas parlour," said Heriot, "but not to go a-masquing through the country in. I

do remember it, minion, and I knew it even now; that and your little shoe there, linked with a hint I had in the morning from a friend, or one who called himself such, led to your detection."—Here Lord Glenvarloch could not help giving a glance at the pretty foot, which even the staid citizen thought worth recollection—it was but a glance, for he saw how much the least degree of observation added to Margaret's distress and confusion. "And tell me, maiden," continued Master Heriot, for what we have observed was by-play,—“did the Lady Hermione know of this fair work?”

"I dared not have told her for the world," said Margaret—"she thought one of our apprentices went with Monna Paula."

It may be here noticed, that the words, "our apprentices," seemed to have in them something of a charm to break the fascination with which Lord Glenvarloch had hitherto listened to the broken, yet interesting details of Margaret's history.

"And wherefore went he not?—he had been a fitter companion for Monna Paula than you, I wot," said the citizen.

"He was otherwise employed," said Margaret, in a voice scarce audible.

Master George darted a hasty glance at Nigel, and when he saw his features betoken no consciousness, he muttered to himself,—“It must be better than I feared.—And so this cursed Spaniard, with her head full, as they all have, of disguises, trap-doors, rope-ladders, and masques, was jade and fool enough to take you with her on this wild-goose errand?—And how sped you, I pray?”

"Just as we reached the gate of the park," replied Margaret, "the cry of treason was raised. I know not what became of Monna, but I ran till I fell into the arms of a very decent serving-man, called Linklater; and I was fain to tell him I was your god-daughter, and so he kept the rest of them from me, and got me to speech of his majesty, as I entreated him to do."

"It is the only sign you showed in the whole matter, that common sense had not utterly deserted your little skull," said Heriot.

"His majesty," continued the damsel, "was so gracious as to receive me alone, though the courtiers cried out against the danger to his person, and would have searched me for arms, God help me, but the king forbade it. I fancy he had a hint from Linklater how the truth stood with me."

"Well, maiden, I ask not what passed," said Heriot; "it becomes not me to pry into my master's secrets. Had you been closeted with his grandfather, the Red Tod of Saint Andrews, as Davie Lindsay used to call him, by my faith, I should have had my own thoughts of the matter; but our master, God bless him, is douce and temperate, and Solomon in everything, save in the chapter of wives and concubines."

"I know not what you mean, sir," answered Margaret. "His majesty was most kind and compassionate, but said I must be sent hither, and that the lieutenant's lady, the Lady Mansel, would have a charge of me, and see that I sustained no wrong; and the king promised to send me in a tilted barge, and under conduct of a person well known

to you; and thus I come to be in the Tower."

"But how, or why, in this apartment, nymph?" said George Heriot—"Expound that to me, for I think the riddle needs reading."

"I cannot explain it, sir, farther than that the Lady Mansel sent me here, in spite of my earnest prayers, tears, and entreaties.—I was not afraid of anything, for I knew I should be protected. But I could have died then—could die now—for very shame and confusion."

"Well, well, if your tears are genuine," said Heriot, "they may the sooner wash out the memory of your fault.—Knows your father aught of this escape of yours?"

"I would not for the world he did," replied she; "he believes me with the Lady Hermione."

"Ay, honest Davie can regulate his horologes better than his family. Come, damsel, now I will escort you back to the Lady Mansel, and pray her, of her kindness, that when she is again trusted with a goose, she will not give it to the fox to keep.—The warders will let us pass to my lady's lodgings, I trust."

"Stay but one moment," said Lord Glenvarloch. "Whatever hard opinion you may have formed of me, I forgive you, for time will show that you do me wrong; and you yourself, I think, will be the first to regret the injustice you have done me. But involve not in your suspicions this young person, for whose purity of thought angels themselves should be vouchers. I have marked every look, every gesture; and whilst I can draw breath, I shall ever think of her with"—

"Think not at all of her, my lord," answered George Heriot, interrupting him; "it is, I have a notion, the best favour you can do her;—or think of her as the daughter of Davy Ramsay, the clock-maker, no proper subject for fine speeches, romantic adventures, or high-flown Arcadian compliments.—I give you god-den, my lord. I think not altogether so harshly as my speech may have spoken. If I can help—that is, if I saw my way clearly through this labyrinth—but it avails not talking now. I give your lordship god-den.—Here, warder! Permit us to pass to the Lady Mansel's apartment."

The warder said he must have orders from the lieutenant; and as he retired to procure them, the parties remained standing near each other, but without speaking, and scarce looking at each other save by stealth, a situation which, in two of the party at least, was sufficiently embarrassing. The difference of rank, though in that age a consideration so serious, could not prevent Lord Glenvarloch from seeing that Margaret Ramsay was one of the prettiest young women he had ever beheld—from suspecting, he could scarce tell why, that he himself was not indifferent to her—from feeling assured that he had been the cause of much of her present distress—admiration, self-love, and generosity, acting in favour of the same object; and when the yeoman returned with permission to his guests to withdraw, Nigel's obeisance to the beautiful daughter of the mechanic was marked with an expression, which called up in her cheeks as much colour as any incident of the eventful day had hitherto excited. She returned the courtesy timidly and irresolutely—

clung to her godfather's arm, and left the apartment, which, dark as it was, had never yet appeared so obscure to Nigel, as when the door closed behind her.

CHAPTER XXX.

Yet though thou shouldst be dragg'd in scorn
To yonder ignominious tree,
Thou shalt not want one faithful friend
To share the cruel fates' decree.

SHENSTONE'S *Jemmy Dawson*.

MASTER GEORGE HERIOT and his ward, as she might justly be termed, for his affection to Margaret imposed on him all the cares of a guardian, were ushered by the yeoman of the guard to the lodging of the lieutenant, where they found him seated with his lady. They were received by both with that decorous civility which Master Heriot's character and supposed influence demanded, even at the hand of a punctilious old soldier and courtier like Sir Edward Mansel. Lady Mansel received Margaret with like courtesy, and informed Master George that she was now only her guest, and no longer her prisoner.

"She is at liberty," she said, "to return to her friends under your charge—such is his majesty's pleasure."

"I am glad of it, madam," answered Heriot; "but only I could have wished her freedom had taken place before her foolish interview with that singular young man; and I marvel your ladyship permitted it."

"My good Master Heriot," said Sir Edward, "we act according to the commands of one better and wiser than ourselves—our orders from his majesty must be strictly and literally obeyed; and I need not say that the wisdom of his majesty doth more than insure"—

"I know his majesty's wisdom well," said Heriot; "yet there is an old proverb about fire and flax—well, let it pass."

"I see Sir Mungo Malagrowth stalking towards the door of the lodging," said the Lady Mansel, "with the gait of a lame crane—it is his second visit this morning."

"He brought the warrant for discharging Lord Glenvarloch of the charge of treason," said Sir Edward.

"And from him," said Heriot, "I heard much of what had befallen; for I came from France only late last evening, and somewhat unexpectedly."

As they spoke, Sir Mungo entered the apartment—saluted the Lieutenant of the Tower and his lady with ceremonious civility—honoured George Heriot with a patronizing nod of acknowledgment, and accosted Margaret with—"Hey! my young charge, you have not doffed your masculine attire yet?"

"She does not mean to lay it aside, Sir Mungo," said Heriot, speaking loud, "until she has had satisfaction from you, for betraying her disguise to me like a false knight—and in very deed, Sir Mungo, I think when you told me she was rambling about in so strange a dress, you might have said also that she was under Lady Mansel's protection."

"That was the king's secret, Master Heriot,"

said Sir Mungo, throwing himself into a chair with an air of atrabilious importance; "the other was a well-meaning hint to yourself as the girl's friend."

"Yes," replied Heriot, "it was done like yourself—enough told to make me unhappy about her—not a word which could relieve my uneasiness."

"Sir Mungo will not hear that remark," said the lady; "we must change the subject.—Is there any news from court, Sir Mungo? you have been to Greenwich?"

"You might as well ask me, madam," answered the knight, "whether there is any news from hell."

"How, Sir Mungo, how!" said Sir Edward, "measure your words something better—You speak of the court of King James."

"Sir Edward, if I spoke of the court of the twelve Kaisars, I would say it is as confused for the present as the infernal regions. Courtiers of forty years' standing, and such I may write myself, are as far to seek in the matter as a minnow in the Maelstrom. Some folks say the king has frowned on the prince—some that the prince has looked grave on the duke—some that Lord Glenvarloch shall be hanged for high treason—and some that there is matter against Lord Dalgarno that may cost him as much as his head's worth."

"And what do you, that are a courtier of forty years standing, think of it all?" said Sir Edward Mansel.

"Nay, nay, do not ask him, Sir Edward," said the lady, with an expressive look to her husband.

"Sir Mungo is too witty," added Master Heriot, "to remember that he who says aught that may be repeated to his own prejudice, does but load a piece for any of the company to shoot him dead with, at their pleasure and convenience."

"What!" said the bold knight, "you think I am afraid of the trepan? Why now, what if I should say that Dalgarno has more wit than honesty,—the duke more sail than ballast,—the prince more pride than prudence,—and that the king"—The Lady Mansel held up her finger in a warning manner—"that the King is my very good master, who has given me, for forty years and more, dog's wages, videlicet, bones and beating.—Why now, all this is said, and Archie Armstrong says worse than this of the best of them, every day."

"The more fool he," said George Heriot; "yet he is not so utterly wrong, for folly is his best wisdom. But do not you, Sir Mungo, set your wit against a fool's, though he be a court fool."

"A fool, said you?" replied Sir Mungo, not having fully heard what Master Heriot said, or not chusing to have it thought so,—"I have been a fool indeed, to hang on at a close-fisted court here, when men of understanding and men of action have been making fortunes in every other place of Europe. But here a man comes indifferently off, unless he gets a great key to turn (looking at Sir Edward), or can beat tattoo with a hammer on a pewter plate.—Well, sirs, I must make as much haste back on mine errand as if I were a fee'd messenger.—Sir Edward and my lady, I leave my commendations with you—and my good will with you, Master Heriot—and for this breaker of bounds, if you will act by my counsel, some maceration by fasting, and a gentle

use of the rod, is the best cure for her giddy fits."

"If you propose for Greenwich, Sir Mungo," said the lieutenant, "I can spare you the labour—the king comes immediately to Whitehall."

"And that must be the reason the council are summoned to meet in such a hurry," said Sir Mungo. "Well—I will, with your permission, go to the poor lad Glenvarloch, and bestow some comfort on him."

The lieutenant seemed to look up, and pause for a moment as if in doubt.

"The lad will want a pleasant companion, who can tell him the nature of the punishment which he is to suffer, and other matters of concernment. I will not leave him until I show him how absolutely he hath ruined himself from feather to spur, how deplorable is his present state, and how small his chance of mending it."

"Well, Sir Mungo," replied the lieutenant, "if you really think all this likely to be very consolatory to the party concerned, I will send a warder to conduct you."

"And I," said George Heriot, "will humbly pray of Lady Mansel, that she will lend some of her handmaiden's apparel to this giddy-brained girl; for I shall forfeit my reputation if I walk up Tower Hill with her in that mad guise—and yet the silly lassie looks not so ill in it neither."

"I will send my coach with you instantly," said the obliging lady.

"Faith, madam, and if you will honour us by such courtesy, I will gladly accept it at your hands," said the citizen, "for business presses hard on me, and the forenoon is already lost, to little purpose."

The coach being ordered accordingly, transported the worthy citizen and his charge to his mansion in Lombard-street. There he found his presence was anxiously expected by the Lady Hermione, who had just received an order to be in readiness to attend upon the royal privy council in the course of an hour; and upon whom, in her inexperience of business, and long retirement from society and the world, the intimation had made as deep an impression as if it had not been the necessary consequence of the petition which she had presented to the king by Monna Paula. George Heriot gently blamed her for taking any steps in an affair so important until his return from France, especially as he had requested her to remain quiet, in a letter which accompanied the evidence he had transmitted to her from Paris. She could only plead in answer the influence which her immediately stirring in the matter was likely to have on the affair of her kinsman Lord Glenvarloch, for she was ashamed to acknowledge how much she had been gained on by the eager importunity of her youthful companion. The motive of Margaret's eagerness was, of course, the safety of Nigel; but we must leave it to time, to show in what particulars that came to be connected with the petition of the Lady Hermione. Meanwhile, we return to the visit with which Sir Mungo Malagrowther favoured the afflicted young nobleman in his place of captivity.

The knight, after the usual salutations, and having prefaced his discourse with a great deal of professed regret for Nigel's situation, sat down beside

him, and, composing his grotesque features into the most lugubrious despondence, began his raven-song as follows :—

"I bless God, my lord, that I was the person who had the pleasure to bring his majesty's mild message to the lieutenant, discharging the higher prosecution against ye, for anything meditated against his majesty's sacred person; for, admit you be prosecuted on the lesser offence, or breach of privilege of the palace and its precincts, *usque ad mutilationem*, even to dismembration, as it is most likely you will, yet the loss of a member is nothing to being hanged and drawn quick, after the fashion of a traitor."

"I should feel the shame of having deserved such a punishment," answered Nigel, "more than the pain of undergoing it."

"Doubtless, my lord, the having, as you say, deserved it, must be an excruciation to your own mind," replied his tormentor; "a kind of mental and metaphysical hanging, drawing, and quartering, which may be in some measure equipollent with the external application of hemp, iron, fire, and the like, to the outer man."

"I say, Sir Mungo," repeated Nigel, "and beg you to understand my words, that I am unconscious of any error, save that of having arms on my person when I chanced to approach that of my sovereign."

"Ye are right, my lord, to acknowledge nothing," said Sir Mungo. "We have an old proverb,—Confess, and—so forth. And indeed, as to the weapons, his majesty has a special ill will at all arms whatsoever, and more especially pistols; but, as I said, there is an end of that matter. I wish you as well through the next, which is altogether unlikely."

"Surely, Sir Mungo," answered Nigel, "you yourself might say something in my favour concerning the affair in the park. None knows better than you that I was at that moment urged by wrongs of the most heinous nature, offered to me by Lord Dalgarno, many of which were reported to me by yourself, much to the inflammation of my passion."

"Alack-a-day!—Alack-a-day!" replied Sir Mungo, "I remember but too well how much your choler was inflamed, in spite of the various remonstrances which I made to you respecting the sacred nature of the place. Alas! alas! you cannot say you leaped into the mire for lack of warning."

"I see, Sir Mungo, you are determined to remember nothing which can do me service," said Nigel.

"Blithely would I do ye service," said the knight; "and the best whilk I can think of is, to tell you the process of the punishment to the whilk you will be indubitably subjected, I having had the good fortune to behold it performed in the queen's time, on a chield that had written a pasquinado. I was then in my Lord Gray's train, who lay leaguer here, and being always covetous of pleasing and profitable sights, I could not dispense with being present on the occasion."

"I should be surprised indeed," said Lord Glenvarloch, "if you had so far put restraint upon your benevolence, as to stay away from such an exhibition."

"Hey! was your lordship praying me to be pre-

VOL. III.

sent at your own execution?" answered the knight. "Troth, my lord, it will be a painful sight to a friend, but I will rather punish myself than baulk you. It is a pretty pageant, in the main—a very pretty pageant. The fallow came on with such a bold face, it was a pleasure to look on him. He was dressed all in white, to signify harmlessness and innocence. The thing was done on a scaffold at Paul's Cross—most likely yours will be at Charing. There were the sheriff's and the marshal's men, and what not—the executioner, with his cleaver and mallet, and his man, with a pan of hot charcoal, and the irons for cautery. He was a dexterous fallow that Derrick. This man Gregory is not fit to jipper a joint with him; it might be worth your lordship's while to have the loon sent to a barber-surgeon's, to learn some needful scantling of anatomy—it may be for the benefit of yourself and other unhappy sufferers, and also a kindness to Gregory."

"I will not take the trouble," said Nigel,—"If the laws will demand my hand, the executioner may get it off as he best can. If the king leaves it where it is, it may chance to do him better service."

"Vera noble—vera grand indeed, my lord," said Sir Mungo; "it is pleasant to see a brave man suffer. This fallow whom I spoke of—this Tubbs, or Stubbes, or whatever the plebeian was called, came forward as bold as an emperor, and said to the people, 'Good friends, I come to leave here the hand of a true Englishman,' and clapped it on the dressing-block with as much ease as if he had laid it on his sweetheart's shoulder, whereupon Derrick the hangman, adjusting, d'ye mind me, the edge of his cleaver on the very joint, hit it with the mallet with such force, that the hand flew off as far from the owner as a gauntlet which the challenger casts down in the tilt-yard. Well, sir, Stubbes, or Tubbs, lost no whit of countenance, until the fallow clapped the hissing-hot iron on his raw stump. My lord, it fizzed like a rasher of bacon, and the fallow set up an elritch screech, which made some think his courage was abated; but not a whit, for he plucked off his hat with his left hand, and waved it, crying, 'God save the queen, and confound all evil counselors!' The people gave him three cheers, which he deserved for his stout heart; and, truly, I hope to see your lordship suffer with the same magnanimity."

"I thank you, Sir Mungo," said Nigel, who had not been able to forbear some natural feelings of an unpleasant nature during this lively detail,—"I have no doubt the exhibition will be a very engaging one to you and the other spectators, whatsoever it may prove to the party principally concerned."

"Vera engaging," answered Sir Mungo, "vera interesting—vera interesting indeed, though not altogether so much so as an execution for high treason. I saw Digby, the Winters, Fawkes, and the rest of the gunpowder gang, suffer for that treason, whilk was a vera grand spectacle, as well in regard to their sufferings, as to their constancy in enduring."

"I am the more obliged to your goodness, Sir Mungo," replied Nigel, "that has induced you, although you have lost the sight, to congratulate me on my escape from the hazard of making the same edifying appearance."

"As you say, my lord," answered Sir Mungo,

"the loss is chiefly in appearance. Nature has been very bountiful to us, and has given duplicates of some organs, that we may endure the loss of one of them, should some such circumstance chance in our pilgrimage. See my poor dexter abridged to one thumb, one finger, and a stump,—by the blow of my adversary's weapon, however, and not by any carnifical knife. Weel, sir, this poor maimed hand doth me, in some sort, as much service as ever; and, admit yours to be taken off by the wrist, you have still your left hand for your service, and are better off than the little Dutch dwarf here about town, who threads a needle, limns, writes, and tosses a pike, merely by means of his feet, without ever a hand to help him."

"Well, Sir Mungo," said Lord Glenvarloch, "this is all no doubt very consolatory; but I hope the king will spare my hand to fight for him in battle, where, notwithstanding all your kind encouragement, I could spend my blood much more cheerfully than on a scaffold."

"It is even a sad truth," replied Sir Mungo, "that your lordship was but too like to have died on a scaffold—not a soul to speak for you but that deluded lassie, Maggie Ramsay."

"Whom mean you?" said Nigel, with more interest than he had hitherto shown in the knight's communications.

"Nay, who should I mean, but that travestied lassie whom we dined with when we honoured Heriot the goldsmith? Ye ken best how you have made interest with her, but I saw her on her knees to the king for you. She was committed to my charge, to bring her up hither in honour and safety. Had I had my own will, I would have had her to Bridewell, to flog the wild blood out of her—a cutty quean, to think of wearing the breeches, and not so much as married yet!"

"Hark ye, Sir Mungo Malagrowther," answered Nigel, "I would have you talk of that young person with fitting respect."

"With all the respect that befits your lordship's paramour, and Davie Ramsay's daughter, I shall certainly speak of her, my lord," said Sir Mungo, assuming a dry tone of irony.

Nigel was greatly disposed to have made a serious quarrel of it, but with Sir Mungo such an affair would have been ridiculous; he smothered his resentment, therefore, and conjured him to tell what he had heard and seen respecting this young person.

"Simply, that I was in the ante-room where she had audience, and heard the king say, to my great perplexity, '*Pulchra sane puella*;' and Maxwell, who hath but indifferent Latin ears, thought that his majesty called on him by his own name of Sawney, and thrust into the presence, and there I saw him, with his own hand, raising up the lassie, who, as I said heretofore, was travestied in man's attire. I should have had my own thoughts of it, but our gracious master is auld, and was nae great gillraver among the queans even in his youth; and he was comforting her in his own way, and saying,—'Ye needna greet about it, my bonnie woman, Glenvarlochides shall have fair play; and, indeed, when the hurry was off our spirits, we could not believe that he had any design on our person. And touch-

ing his other offences, we will look wisely and closely into the matter.' So I got charge to take the young fence-louper to the Tower here, and deliver her to the charge of Lady Mansel; and his majesty charged me to say not a word to her about your offences, 'for,' said he, 'the poor thing is breaking her heart for him.'"

"And on this you charitably have founded the opinion to the prejudice of this young lady, which you have now thought proper to express?" said Lord Glenvarloch.

"In honest truth, my lord," replied Sir Mungo, "what opinion would you have me form of a wench who gets into male habiliments, and goes on her knees to the king for a wild young nobleman? I wot not what the fashionable world may be, for the phrase changes, though the custom abides. But truly I must needs think this young leddy—if you call Watchie Ramsay's daughter a young leddy—de-means herself more like a leddy of pleasure than a leddy of honour."

"You do her egregious wrong, Sir Mungo," said Nigel; "or rather you have been misled by appearances."

"So will all the world be misled, my lord, unless you were doing that to disabuse them which your father's son will hardly judge it fit to do."

"And what may that be, I pray you?"

"E'en marry the lass—make her Leddy Glenvarloch.—Ay, ay, ye may start—but it's the course you are driving on. Rather marry than do worse, if the worst be not done already."

"Sir Mungo," said Nigel, "I pray you to forbear this subject, and rather return to that of the mutilation, upon which it pleased you to enlarge a short while since."

"I have not time at present," said Sir Mungo, hearing the clock strike four; "but so soon as you shall have received sentence, my lord, you may rely on my giving you the fullest detail of the whole solemnity; and I give you my word, as a knight and gentleman, that I will myself attend you on the scaffold, whoever may cast sour looks on me for doing so. I bear a heart to stand by a friend in the worst of times."

So saying, he wished Lord Glenvarloch farewell; who felt as heartily rejoiced at his departure, though it may be a bold word, as any person who had ever undergone his society.

But, when left to his own reflections, Nigel could not help feeling solitude nearly as irksome as the company of Sir Mungo Malagrowther. The total wreck of his fortune,—which seemed now to be rendered unavoidable by the loss of the royal warrant, that had afforded him the means of redeeming his paternal estate,—was an unexpected and additional blow. When he had seen the warrant he could not precisely remember; but was inclined to think, it was in the casket when he took out money to pay the miser for his lodgings at Whitefriars. Since that time, the casket had been almost constantly under his own eye, excepting during the short time he was separated from his baggage by the arrest in Greenwich Park. It might, indeed, have been abstracted at that time, for he had no reason to think either his person or his property was in the hands of

those who wished him well; but, on the other hand, the locks of the strong-box had sustained no violence that he could observe, and, being of a particular and complicated construction, he thought they could scarce be opened without an instrument made on purpose, adapted to their peculiarities, and for this there had been no time. But, speculate as he would on the matter, it is clear that this important document was gone, and probable that it had passed into no friendly hands. "Let it be so," said Nigel to himself; "I am scarcely worse off respecting my prospects of fortune, than when I first reached this accursed city. But to be hampered with cruel accusations, and stained with foul suspicions—to be the object of pity of the most degrading kind to yonder honest citizen, and of the malignity of that envious and atrabilious courtier, who can endure the good fortune and good qualities of another no more than the mole can brook sunshine—this is, indeed, a deplorable reflection; and the consequences must stick to my future life, and impede whatever my head, or my hand, if it is left me, might be able to execute in my favour."

The feeling, that he is the object of general dislike and dereliction, seems to be one of the most unendurably painful to which a human being can be subjected. The most atrocious criminals, whose nerves have not shrunk from the most horrid cruelty, suffer more from the consciousness that no man will sympathize with their sufferings, than from apprehension of the personal agony of their impending punishment; and are known often to attempt to palliate their enormities, and sometimes altogether to deny what is established by the clearest proof, rather than to leave life under the general ban of humanity. It was no wonder that Nigel, labouring under the sense of general, though unjust suspicion, should, while pondering on so painful a theme, recollect that one, at least, had not only believed him innocent, but hazarded herself, with all her feeble power, to interpose in his behalf.

"Poor girl!" he repeated; "poor, rash, but generous maiden! your fate is that of her in Scottish story, who thrust her arm into the staple of the door, to oppose it as a bar against the assassins who threatened the murder of her sovereign. The deed of devotion was useless; save to give an immortal name to her by whom it was done, and whose blood flows, it is said, in the veins of my house."

I cannot explain to the reader, whether the recollection of this historical deed of devotion, and the lively effect which the comparison, a little overstrained perhaps, was like to produce in favour of Margaret Ramsay, was not qualified by the concomitant ideas of ancestry and ancient descent with which that recollection was mingled. But the contending feelings suggested a new train of ideas.—"Ancestry," he thought, "and ancient descent, what are they to me?—my patrimony alienated—my title become a reproach—for what can be so absurd as titled beggary?—my character subjected to suspicion.—I will not remain in this country; and should I, at leaving it, procure the society of one so lovely, so brave, and so faithful, who should say that I derogated from the rank which I am virtually renouncing?"

There was something romantic and pleasing, as he pursued this picture of an attached and faithful pair, becoming all the world to each other, and stemming the tide of fate arm in arm; and to be linked thus with a creature so beautiful, and who had taken such devoted and disinterested concern in his fortunes, formed itself into such a vision as romantic youth loves best to dwell upon.

Suddenly his dream was painfully dispelled, by the recollection, that its very basis rested upon the most selfish ingratitude on his own part. Lord of his castle and his towers, his forests and fields, his fair patrimony and noble name, his mind would have rejected, as a sort of impossibility, the idea of elevating to his rank the daughter of a mechanic; but, when degraded from his nobility, and plunged into poverty and difficulties, he was ashamed to feel himself not unwilling, that this poor girl, in the blindness of her affection, should abandon all the better prospects of her own settled condition, to embrace the precarious and doubtful course which he himself was condemned to. The generosity of Nigel's mind recoiled from the selfishness of the plan of happiness which he projected; and he made a strong effort to expel from his thoughts for the rest of the evening this fascinating female, or, at least, not to permit them to dwell upon the perilous circumstance, that she was at present the only creature living who seemed to consider him as an object of kindness.

He could not, however, succeed in banishing her from his slumbers; when, after having spent a weary day, he betook himself to a perturbed couch. The form of Margaret mingled with the wild mass of dreams which his late adventures had suggested; and even when, copying the lively narrative of Sir Mungo, fancy presented to him the blood bubbling and hissing on the heated iron, Margaret stood behind him like a spirit of light to breathe healing on the wound. At length nature was exhausted by these fantastic creations, and Nigel slept, and slept soundly, until awakened in the morning by the sound of a well-known voice, which had often broken his slumbers about the same hour.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Marry come up, sir, with your gentle blood!
Here's a red stream beneath this coarse blue doublet
That warms the heart as kindly as if drawn
From the far source of old Assyrian kings,
Who first made mankind subject to their sway.

Old Play.

THE sounds to which we alluded in our last were no other than the grumbling tones of Richie Moniplies's voice.

This worthy, like some other persons who rank high in their own opinion, was very apt, when he could have no other auditor, to hold conversation with one who was sure to be a willing listener—I mean with himself. He was now brushing and arranging Lord Glenvarloch's clothes, with as much composure and quiet assiduity as if he had never been out of his service, and grumbling betwixt whiles to the following purpose:—"Umph—ay, time cloak and jerkin were through my hands—

I question if horse-hair has been passed over them since they and I last parted. The embroidery finely frayed too—and the gold buttons off the cloak—by my conscience, and as I am an honest man, there is a round dozen of them gane! This comes of Alsatian frolics—God keep us with his grace, and not give us over to our own devices! I see no sword—but that will be in respect of present circumstances.”

Nigel for some time could not help believing that he was still in a dream, so improbable did it seem that his domestic should have found him out, and obtained access to him in his present circumstances. Looking through the curtains, however, he became well assured of the fact, when he beheld the stiff and bony length of Richie, with a visage charged with nearly double its ordinary degree of importance, employed sedulously in brushing his master's cloak, and refreshing himself with whistling or humming, from interval to interval, some snatch of an old melancholy Scottish ballad-tune. Although sufficiently convinced of the identity of the party, Lord Glenvarloch could not help expressing his surprise in the superfluous question “In the name of Heaven, Richie, is this you?”

“And wha else suld it be, my lord?” answered Richie; “I dreamna that your lordship's levee in this place is like to be attended by ony that are not bounden thereto by duty.”

“I am rather surprised,” answered Nigel, “that it should be attended by any one at all—especially by you, Richie; for you know that we parted, and I thought you had reached Scotland long since.”

“I crave your lordship's pardon, but we have not parted yet, nor are soon like to do; for there gang twa folk's votes to the unmaking of a bargain, as to the making of ane. Though it was your lordship's pleasure so to conduct yourself that we were like to have parted, yet it was not, on reflexion, my will to be gone. To be plain, if your lordship does not ken when you have a good servant, I ken when I have a kind master; and, to say truth, you will be easier served now than ever, for there is not much chance of your getting out of bounds.”

“I am, indeed, bound over to good behaviour,” said Lord Glenvarloch, with a smile; “but I hope you will not take advantage of my situation to be too severe on my follies, Richie?”

“God forbid, my lord—God forbid,” replied Richie, with an expression betwixt a conceited consciousness of superior wisdom and real feeling—“especially in consideration of your lordship's having a due sense of them. I did, indeed, remonstrate, as was my humble duty—but I scorn to cast that up to your lordship now;—na, na, I am myself an erring creature—very conscious of some small weaknesses—there is no perfection in man.”

“But, Richie,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “although I am much obliged to you for your proffered service, it can be of little use to me here, and may be of prejudice to yourself.”

“Your lordship shall pardon me again,” said Richie, whom the relative situation of the parties had invested with ten times his ordinary dogmatism; “but as I will manage the matter, your lordship

shall be greatly benefited by my service, and I myself no whit prejudiced.”

“I see not how that can be, my friend,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “since even as to your pecuniary affairs”——

“Touching my pecuniars, my lord,” replied Richie, “I am indifferently weel provided; and, as it chances, my living here will be no burthen to your lordship, or distress to myself. Only I crave permission to annex certain conditions to my servitude with your lordship.”

“Annex what you will,” said Lord Glenvarloch, “for you are pretty sure to take your own way, whether you make any conditions or not. Since you will not leave me, which were, I think, your wisest course, you must, and I suppose will, serve me only on such terms as you like yourself.”

“All that I ask, my lord,” said Richie, gravely, and with a tone of great moderation, “is to have the uninterrupted command of my own motions, for certain important purposes which I have now in hand, always giving your lordship the solace of my company and attendance at such times as may be at once convenient for me, and necessary for your service.”

“Of which, I suppose, you constitute yourself sole judge,” replied Nigel, smiling.

“Unquestionably, my lord,” answered Richie, gravely; “for your lordship can only know what yourself want; whereas I, who see both sides of the picture, ken both what is the best for your affairs, and what is the most needful for my own.”

“Richie, my good friend,” said Nigel, “I fear this arrangement, which places the master much under the disposal of the servant, would scarce suit us, if we were both at large; but, a prisoner as I am, I may be as well at your disposal as I am at that of so many other persons; and so you may come and go as you list, for I suppose you will not take my advice, to return to your own country and leave me to my fate.”

“The de'il be in my feet if I do,” said Moniplies, —“I am not the lad to leave your lordship in foul weather, when I followed you and fed upon you through the whole summer day. And besides, there may be brave days behind, for a' that has come and gane yet; for

It's hame, and it's hame, and it's hame we fain would be,
Though the cloud is in the lift, and the wind is on the lea;
For the sun through the mirk blinks blithe on mine ee,
Says,—‘I'll shine on ye yet in your ain country.’”

Having sung this stanza in the manner of a ballad-singer, whose voice has been cracked by matching his wind-pipe against the bugle of the north-blast, Richie Moniplies aided Lord Glenvarloch to rise, attended his toilette with every possible mark of the most solemn and deferential respect, then waited upon him at his breakfast, and finally withdrew, pleading that he had business of importance, which would detain him for some hours.

Although Lord Glenvarloch necessarily expected to be occasionally annoyed by the self-conceit and dogmatism of Richie Moniplies's character, yet he could not but feel the greatest pleasure from the firm and devoted attachment which this faithful fol-

lower had displayed in the present instance, and indeed promised himself an alleviation of the ennui of his imprisonment, in having the advantage of his services. It was, therefore, with pleasure that he learned from the warder, that his servant's attendance would be allowed at all times when the general rules of the fortress permitted the entrance of strangers.

In the meanwhile, the magnanimous Richie Moniplies had already reached Tower Wharf. Here, after looking with contempt on several scullers by whom he was plied, and whose services he rejected with a wave of his hand, he called with dignity, "First oars!" and stirred into activity several lounging Tritons of the higher order, who had not, on his first appearance, thought it worth while to accost him with proffers of service. He now took possession of a wherry, folded his arms within his ample cloak, and, sitting down in the stern with an air of importance, commanded them to row to Whitehall-stairs. Having reached the palace in safety, he demanded to see Master Linklater, the under-clerk of his majesty's kitchen. The reply was, that he was not to be spoken withal, being then employed in cooking a mess of cock-a-leekie for the king's own mouth.

"Tell him," said Moniplies, "that it is a dear countryman of his, who seeks to converse with him on matter of high import."

"A dear countryman?" said Linklater, when this pressing message was delivered to him. "Well, let him come in and be d—d, that I should say sae! This now is some red-headed, long-legged gillie white-foot frae the West-port, that, hearing of my promotion, is come up to be a turn-broche, or deputy scullion, through my interest. It is a great hindrance to any man who would rise in the world, to have such friends to hang by his skirts, in hope of being towed up alongst with him.—Ha! Richie Moniplies, man, is it thou? And what has brought ye here? If they should ken thee for the loon that scared the horse the other day"——

"No more o' that, neighbour," said Richie,—"I am just here on the auld errand—I maun speak with the king."

"The king? Ye are red-wud," said Linklater; then shouted to his assistants in the kitchen, "Look to the broches, ye knaves—*pisces purga—Salsamenta fac macerentur pulchre*—I will make you understand Latin, ye knaves, as becomes the scullions of King James." Then in a cautious tone, to Richie's private ear, he continued, "Know ye not how ill your master came off the other day?—I can tell you that job made some folks shake for their office."

"Well, but, Laurie, ye maun befriend me this time, and get this wee bit siffication slipped into his majesty's ain most gracious hand. I promise you the contents will be most grateful to him."

"Richie," answered Linklater, "you have certainly sworn to say your prayers in the porter's lodge, with your back bare; and twa grooms with dog-whips, to cry amen to you."

"Na, na, Laurie, lad," said Richie, "I ken better what belangs to siffications than I did yon day; and ye will say that yoursell, if ye will but get that bit note to the king's hand."

"I will have neither hand nor foot in the matter,"

said the cautious clerk of the kitchen; "but there is his majesty's mess of cock-a-leekie just going to be served to him in his closet—I cannot prevent you from putting the letter between the gilt bowl and the platter; his sacred majesty will see it when he lifts the bowl, for he aye drinks out the broth."

"Enough said," replied Richie, and deposited the paper accordingly, just before the page entered to carry away the mess to his majesty.

"Aweel, aweel, neighbour," said Lawrence, when the mess was taken away, "if ye have done anything to bring yoursell to the withy, or the scourging post, it is your ain wilful deed."

"I will blame no other for it," said Richie; and with that undismayed pertinacity of conceit, which made a fundamental part of his character, he abode the issue, which was not long of arriving.

In a few minutes Maxwell himself arrived in the apartment, and demanded hastily who had placed a writing on the king's trencher. Linklater denied all knowledge of it; but Richie Moniplies, stepping boldly forth, pronounced the emphatical confession, "I am the man."

"Follow me, then," said Maxwell, after regarding him with a look of great curiosity.

They went up a private staircase,—even that private staircase, the privilege of which at court is accounted a nearer road to power than the *grandes entrées* themselves. Arriving in what Richie described as an "ill-redd-up" ante-room, the usher made a sign to him to stop, while he went into the king's closet. Their conference was short, and as Maxwell opened the door to retire, Richie heard the conclusion of it.

"Ye are sure he is not dangerous?—I was caught once.—Bide within call, but not nearer the door than within three geometrical cubits. If I speak loud, start to me like a falcon—If I speak loud, keep your lang lugs out of ear-shot—and now let him come in."

Richie passed forward at Maxwell's mute signal, and in a moment found himself in the presence of the king. Most men of Richie's birth and breeding, and many others, would have been abashed at finding themselves alone with their sovereign. But Richie Moniplies had an opinion of himself too high to be controled by any such ideas; and having made his stiff reverence, he arose once more into his perpendicular height, and stood before James as stiff as a hedge-stake.

"Have ye gotten them, man? have ye gotten them?" said the king, in a fluttered state, betwixt hope and eagerness, and some touch of suspicious fear. "Gie me them—gie me them—before ye speak a word, I charge you, on your allegiance."

Richie took a box from his bosom, and, stooping on one knee, presented it to his majesty, who hastily opened it, and having ascertained that it contained a certain carcanet of rubies, with which the reader was formerly made acquainted, he could not resist falling into a sort of rapture, kissing the gems, as if they had been capable of feeling, and repeating again and again, with childish delight, "*Onyx cum prole, silexque—Onyx cum prole!* Ah, my bright and bonnie sparklers, my heart louns light to see you again." He then turned to Richie, upon whose stoical countenance his majesty's de-

meanour had excited something like a grim smile, which James interrupted his rejoicing to reprehend, saying, "Take heed, sir, you are not to laugh at us—we are your anointed sovereign."

"God forbid that I should laugh!" said Richie, composing his countenance into its natural rigidity. "I did but smile, to bring my visage into coincidence and conformity with your majesty's physiognomy."

"Ye speak as a dutiful subject, and an honest man," said the king; "but what de'il's your name, man?"

"Even Richie Moniplies, the son of auld Mungo Moniplies, at the West-port of Edinburgh, who had the honour to supply your majesty's mother's royal table, as weel as your majesty's, with flesh and other viviers, when time was."

"Aha!" said the king, laughing, for he possessed, as a useful attribute of his situation, a tenacious memory, which recollected every one with whom he was brought into casual contact,—“Ye are the self-same traitor who had weel nigh coupit us endlang on the causey of our ain court-yard? but we stuck by our mare. *Equam memento rebus in arduis servare*. Weel, be not dismayed, Richie; for, as many men have turned traitors, it is but fair that a traitor, now and then, suld prove to be, *contra expectanda*, a true man. How cam ye by our jewels, man?—cam ye on the part of George Heriot?"

"In no sort," said Richie. "May it please your majesty, I come as Harry Wynd fought, utterly for my own hand, and on no man's errand; as, indeed, I call no one master, save Him that made me, your most gracious majesty who governs me, and the noble Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch, who maintained me as lang as he could maintain himself, poor nobleman!"

"Glenvarlochides again!" exclaimed the king; "by my honour, he lies in ambush for us at every corner.—Maxwell knocks at the door. It is George Heriot come to tell us he cannot find these jewels.—Get thee behind the arras, Richie—stand close, man—sneeze not—cough not—breathe not!—Jingling Geordie is so damnably ready with his gold-ends of wisdom, and sae accursedly backward with his gold-ends of siller, that, by our royal saul, we are glad to get a hair in his neck."

Richie got behind the arras, in obedience to the commands of the good-natured king, while the monarch, who never allowed his dignity to stand in the way of a frolic, having adjusted, with his own hand, the tapestry, so as to conceal the ambush, commanded Maxwell to tell him what was the matter without. Maxwell's reply was so low as to be lost by Richie Moniplies, the peculiarity of whose situation by no means abated his curiosity and desire to gratify it to the uttermost.

"Let Geordie Heriot come in," said the king; and, as Richie could observe through a slit in the tapestry, the honest citizen, if not actually agitated, was at least discomposed. The king, whose talent for wit, or humour, was precisely of a kind to be gratified by such a scene as ensued, received his homage with coldness, and began to talk to him with an air of serious dignity, very different from the usual indecorous levity of his behaviour. "Master

Heriot," he said, "if we aright remember, we opignorated in your hands certain jewels of the crown, for a certain sum of money—did we, or did we not?"

"My most gracious sovereign," said Heriot, "indisputably your majesty was pleased to do so."

"The property of which jewels and *cimelia* remained with us," continued the king, in the same solemn tone, "subject only to your claim of advance thereupon; which advance being repaid, gives us right to repossession of the thing opignorated, or pledged, or laid in wad. Voetius, Vinnius, Groenwigeneus, Pagenstecherus,—all who have treated *de Contractu Opignorationis, consentiunt in eundem*,—gree on the same point. The Roman law, the English common law, and the municipal law of our ain ancient kingdom of Scotland, though they split in mair particulars than I could desire, unite as strictly in this as the three strands of a twisted rope."

"May it please your majesty," replied Heriot, "it requires not so many learned authorities to prove to any honest man, that his interest in a pledge is determined when the money lent is restored."

"Weel, sir, I proffer restoration of the sum lent, and I demand to be repossessed of the jewels pledged with you. I gave ye a hint, brief while since, that this would be essential to my service, for, as approaching events are like to call us into public, it would seem strange if we did not appear with those ornaments, which are heir-looms of the crown, and the absence whereof is like to place us in contempt and suspicion with our liege subjects."

Master George Heriot seemed much moved by this address of his sovereign, and replied with emotion, "I call Heaven to witness, that I am totally harmless in this matter, and that I would willingly lose the sum advanced, so that I could restore those jewels, the absence of which your majesty so justly laments. Had the jewels remained with me, the account of them would be easily rendered; but your majesty will do me the justice to remember, that, by your express order, I transferred them to another person, who advanced a large sum, just about the time of my departure for Paris. The money was pressingly wanted, and no other means to come by it occurred to me. I told your majesty, when I brought the needful supply, that the man from whom the moneys were obtained, was of no good repute; and your most princely answer was, smelling to the gold—*Non olet*, it smells not of the means that have gotten it."

"Weel, man," said the king, "but what needs a' this din? If ye gave my jewels in pledge to such a one, suld ye not, as a liege subject, have taken care that the redemption was in our power? And are we to suffer the loss of our *cimelia* by your neglect, besides being exposed to the scorn and censure of our lieges, and of the foreign ambassadors?"

"My lord and liege king," said Heriot, "God knows, if my bearing blame or shame in this matter would keep it from your majesty, it were my duty to endure both, as a servant grateful for many benefits; but when your majesty considers the violent death of the man himself, the disappearance of his daughter, and of his wealth, I trust you will remember that I warned your majesty, in humble duty, of the possibility of such casualties, and prayed you

not to urge me to deal with him on your behalf."

"But you brought me nae better means," said the king—"Geordie, ye brought me nae better means. I was like a deserted man; what could I do but grip to the first siller that offered, as a drowning man grasps to the willow-wand that comes readiest?—And now, man, what for have ye not brought back the jewels? they are surely above ground, if ye wad make strict search."

"All strict search has been made, may it please your majesty," replied the citizen; "hue and cry has been sent out everywhere, and it has been found impossible to recover them."

"Difficult, ye mean, Geordie, not impossible," replied the king; "for that whilk is impossible, is either naturally so, *exempli gratia*, to make two into three; or morally so, as to make what is truth falsehood; but what is only difficult may come to pass, with assistance of wisdom and patience; as, for example, Jingling Geordie, look here!" And he displayed the recovered treasure to the eyes of the astonished jeweller, exclaiming, with great triumph, "What say ye to that, Jingler?—By my sceptre and crown, the man stares as if he took his native prince for a warlock! us, that are the very *malleus maleficarum*, the contunding and contritulating hammer of all witches, sorcerers, magicians, and the like; he thinks we are taking a touch of the black art ousells!—But gang thy way, honest Geordie; thou art a good plain man, but nane of the seven sages of Greece; gang thy way, and mind the soothfast word which you spoke, small time syne, that there is one in this land that comes near to Solomon, King of Israel, in all his gifts, except in his love to strange women, forbye the daughter of Pharaoh."

If Heriot was surprised at seeing the jewels so unexpectedly produced at the moment the king was upbraiding him for the loss of them, this allusion to the reflection which had escaped him while conversing with Lord Glenvarloch, altogether completed his astonishment; and the king was so delighted with the superiority which it gave him at the moment, that he rubbed his hands, chuckled, and, finally, his sense of dignity giving way to the full feeling of triumph, he threw himself into his easy-chair, and laughed with unconstrained violence till he lost his breath, and the tears ran plentifully down his cheeks as he strove to recover it. Meanwhile, the royal cachinnation was echoed out by a discordant and portentous laugh from behind the arras, like that of one who, little accustomed to give way to such emotions, feels himself at some particular impulse unable either to control or to modify his obstreperous mirth. Heriot turned his head with new surprise towards the place from which sounds so unfitting the presence of a monarch seemed to burst with such emphatic clamour.

The king too, somewhat sensible of the indecorum, rose up, wiped his eyes, and calling,—“Todlowrie, come out of your den,” he produced from behind the arras the length of Richie Moniplies, still laughing with as unrestrained mirth as ever did gossip at a country christening. “Whisht, man, whisht, man,” said the king; “ye needna nicher that gate, like a courser at a caup o’ corn, e’en though it was a pleasing jest, and our ain framing.

And yet to see Jingling Geordie, that hauds himself so much the wiser than other folks—to see him, ha! ha! ha!—in the vein of Euclio apud Plautum, distressing himself to recover what was lying at his elbow—

Perii, interii, occidi,—quo curram? quo non curram?—
Tene, tene—quem? quis? nescio—nihil video.

Ah! Geordie, your een are sharp enough to look after gowd and silver, gems, rubies, and the like of that, and yet ye kenna how to come by them when they are lost.—Ay, ay, look at them, man—look at them—they’re a’ right and tight, sound and round, not a doublet crept in amongst them.”

George Heriot, when his first surprise was over, was too old a courtier to interrupt the king’s imaginary triumph, although he darted a look of some displeasure at honest Richie, who still continued on what is usually termed the broad grin. He quietly examined the stones, and finding them all perfect, he honestly and sincerely congratulated his majesty on the recovery of a treasure which could not have been lost without some dishonour to the crown; and asked to whom he himself was to pay the sums for which they had been pledged, observing, that he had the money by him in readiness.

“Ye are in a deevil of a hurry, when there is paying in the case, Geordie,” said the king.—“What’s a’ the haste, man? The jewels were restored by an honest, kindly countryman of ours. There he stands, and wha kens if he wants the money on the nail, or if he might not be as weel pleased wi’ a bit rescript on our treasury some six months hence? Ye ken that our exchequer is even at a low ebb just now, and ye cry pay, pay, pay, as if we had all the mines of Ophir.”

“Please your majesty,” said Heriot, “if this man has the real right to these moneys, it is doubtless at his will to grant forbearance, if he will. But when I remember the guise in which I first saw him, with a tattered cloak and a broken head, I can hardly conceive it.—Are not you Richie Moniplies, with the king’s favour?”

“Even sae, Maister Heriot—of the ancient and honourable house of Castle Collop, near to the West-port of Edinburgh,” answered Richie.

“Why, please your majesty, he is a poor serving-man,” said Heriot. “This money can never be honestly at his disposal.”

“What for no?” said the king. “Wad ye have naeboddy spraickle up the brae but yoursell, Geordie? Your ain cloak was thin enough when ye cam here, though ye have lined it gay and weel. And for serving-men, there has mony a red-shank come over the Tweed wi’ his master’s wallet on his shoulders, that now rustles it wi’ his six followers behind him. There stands the man himsell; speer at him, Geordie.”

“His may not be the best authority in the case,” answered the cautious citizen.

“Tut, tut, man,” said the king, “ye are over scrupulous. The knave deer-stealers have an apt phrase, *Non est inquirendum unde venit* VENISON. He that brings the gudes hath surely a right to dispose of the gear.—Hark ye, friend, speak the truth, and shame the de’il. Have ye plenary powers to

dispose on the redemption-money, as to delay of payments, or the like, ay or no?"

"Full power, an it like your gracious majesty," answered Richie Moniplies; "and I am maist willing to subscribe to whatsoever may in any wise accommodate your majesty anent the redemption-money, trusting your majesty's grace will be kind to me in one sma' favour."

"Ay, man," said the king, "come ye to me there? I thought ye wad e'en be like the rest of them.—One would think our subjects' lives and goods were all our ain, and holden of us at our free will; but when we stand in need of ony matter of siller from them, which chances more frequently than we would it did, de'il a bodle is to be had, save on the auld terms of giff-gaff. It is just niffer for niffer.—Aweel, neighbour, what is it that ye want—some monopoly, I reckon? Or it may be a grant of kirk-lands and tiends, or a knighthood, or the like? Ye maun be reasonable, unless ye propose to advance more money for our present occasions."

"My liege," answered Richie Moniplies, "the owner of these moneys places them at your majesty's command, free of all pledge or usage, as long as it is your royal pleasure, providing your majesty will condescend to show some favour to the noble Lord Glenvarloch, presently prisoner in your royal Tower of London."

"How, man—how, man—how, man!" exclaimed the king, reddening and stammering, but with emotions more noble than those by which he was sometimes agitated—"What is that you dare to say to us?—Sell our justice!—sell our mercy!—and we a crowned king, sworn to do justice to our subjects in the gate, and responsible for our stewardship to Him that is over all kings?"—Here he reverently looked up, touched his bonnet, and continued, with some sharpness,—“We dare not traffic in such commodities, sir; and, but that ye are a poor ignorant creature, that have done us this day some not unpleasant service, we wad have a red iron driven through your tongue, *in terrorem* of others.—Awa with him, Geordie,—pay him plack and bawbee, out of our moneys in your hands, and let them care that come ahint."

Richie, who had counted with the utmost certainty upon the success of this master-stroke of policy, was like an architect whose whole scaffolding at once gives way under him. He caught, however, at what he thought might break his fall. "Not only the sums for which the jewels were pledged," he said, "but the double of it, if required, should be placed at his majesty's command, and even without hope or condition of repayment, if only"—

But the king did not allow him to complete the sentence, crying out, with greater vehemence than before, as if he dreaded the stability of his own good resolution,—“Awa wi' him—swith, awa wi' him! It is time he were gane, if he doubles his bode that gate. And, for your life, letna Steenie, or ony of them, hear a word from his mouth; for wha kens what trouble that might bring me into? *Ne inducas in tentationem—Vade retro, Sathanas.—Amen.*"

In obedience to the royal mandate, George Heriot hurried the abashed petitioner out of the presence, and out of the palace; and, when they were in the

palace-yard, the citizen, remembering with some resentment the airs of equality which Richie had assumed towards him in the commencement of the scene which had just taken place, could not forbear to retaliate, by congratulating him, with an ironical smile, on his favour at court, and his improved grace in presenting a supplication.

"Never fash your beard about that, Maister George Heriot," said Richie, totally undismayed; "but tell me when and where I am to sifflicate you for eight hundred pounds sterling, for which these jewels stood engaged."

"The instant that you bring with you the real owner of the money," replied Heriot; "whom it is important that I should see on more accounts than one."

"Then will I back to his majesty," said Richie Moniplies, stoutly, "and get either the money or the pledge back again. I am fully commissionate to act in that matter."

"It may be so, Richie," said the citizen, "and perchance it may *not* be so neither, for your tales are not all gospel; and therefore, be assured I will see that it is so, ere I pay you that large sum of money. I shall give you an acknowledgment for it, and I will keep it prestable at a moment's warning. But, my good Richard Moniplies, of Castle Collop, near the West-port of Edinburgh, in the meantime I am bound to return to his majesty on matters of weight." So speaking, and mounting the stair to re-enter the palace, he added, by way of summing up the whole,—“George Heriot is over old a cock to be caught with chaff."

Richie stood petrified when he beheld him re-enter the palace, and found himself, as he supposed, left in the lurch.—“Now, plague on ye,” he muttered, “for a cunning auld skin-flint! that, because ye are an honest man yoursell, forsooth, must needs deal with all the world as if they were knaves. But de'il be in me if ye beat me yet!—Gude guide us! yonder comes Laurie Linklater next, and he will be on me about the sifflication.—I winna stand him, by Saint Andrew!"

So saying, and changing the haughty stride with which he had that morning entered the precincts of the palace, into a skulking shamle, he retreated for his wherry, which was in attendance, with speed which, to use the approved phrase on such occasions, greatly resembled a flight.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Benedict. This looks not like a nuptial.

Much Ado about Nothing.

MASTER GEORGE HERIOT had no sooner returned to the king's apartment than James inquired at Maxwell if the Earl of Huntinglen was in attendance, and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, desired that he should be admitted. The old Scotch lord having made his reverence in the usual manner, the king extended his hand to be kissed, and then began to address him in a tone of grave sympathy.

"We told your lordship in our secret epistle of this morning, written with our ain hand, in testimony we have neither prætermitted nor forgotten

your faithful service, that we had that to communicate to you that would require both patience and fortitude to endure, and therefore exhorted you to peruse some of the most pithy passages of Seneca, and of Boethius *de Consolatione*, that the back may be, as we say, fitted for the burthen. This we commend to you from our ain experience.

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco,

sayeth Dido, and I might say, in my own person, *non ignarus*; but to change the gender would affect the prosody, whereof our southern subjects are tenacious. So, my Lord of Huntinglen, I trust you have acted by our advice, and studied patience before ye need it—*venienti occurrere morbo*—mix the medicament when the disease is coming on."

"May it please your majesty," answered Lord Huntinglen, "I am more of an old soldier than a scholar; and if my own rough nature will not bear me out in any calamity, I hope I shall have grace to try a text of Scripture to boot."

"Ay, man, are you there with your bears?" said the king; "the Bible, man (touching his cap), is, indeed, *principium et fons*—but it is a pity your lordship cannot peruse it in the original. For, although we did ourselves promote that work of translation—since ye may read at the beginning of every Bible that when some palpable clouds of darkness were thought like to have overshadowed the land, after the setting of that bright occidental star, Queen Elizabeth—yet our appearance, like that of the sun in his strength, instantly dispelled these surmised mists—I say, that although, as therein mentioned, we countenanced the preaching of the gospel, and especially the translation of the Scriptures out of the original sacred tongues; yet, nevertheless, we ourselves confess to have found a comfort in consulting them in the original Hebrew, whilk we do not perceive even in the Latin version of the Septuagint, much less in the English traduction."

"Please your majesty," said Lord Huntinglen, "if your majesty delays communicating the bad news with which your honoured letter threatens me until I am capable to read Hebrew, like your majesty, I fear I shall die in ignorance of the misfortune which hath befallen, or is about to befall, my house."

"You will learn it but too soon, my lord," replied the king; "I grieve to say it, but your son Dalgarno, whom I thought a very saint, as he was so much with Steenie and Baby Charles, hath turned out a very villain."

"Villain!" repeated Lord Huntinglen; and though he instantly checked himself, and added, "but it is your majesty speaks the word," the effect of his first tone made the king step back as if he had received a blow. He also recovered himself again, and said, in the pettish way which usually indicated his displeasure—"Yes, my lord, it was we that said it—*non surdo canis*—we are not deaf—we pray you not to raise your voice in speech with us—there is the bonnie memorial—read, and judge for yourself."

The king then thrust into the old nobleman's hand a paper, containing the story of the Lady Hermione, with the evidence by which it was supported, de-

tailed so briefly and clearly, that the infamy of Lord Dalgarno, the lover by whom she had been so shamefully deceived, seemed undeniable. But a father yields not up so easily the cause of his son.

"May it please your majesty," he said, "why was this tale not sooner told? This woman hath been here for years—wherefore was the claim on my son not made the instant she touched English ground?"

"Tell him how that came about, Geordie," said the king, addressing Heriot.

"I grieve to distress my Lord Huntinglen," said Heriot; "but I must speak the truth. For a long time the Lady Hermione could not brook the idea of making her situation public; and when her mind became changed in that particular, it was necessary to recover the evidence of the false marriage, and letters and papers concerning it, which, when she came to Paris, and just before I saw her, she had deposited with a correspondent of her father in that city. He became afterwards bankrupt, and in consequence of that misfortune the lady's papers passed into other hands, and it was only a few days since I traced and recovered them. Without these documents of evidence, it would have been imprudent for her to have preferred her complaint, favoured as Lord Dalgarno is by powerful friends."

"Ye are saucy to say sae," said the king; "I ken what ye mean well enough—ye think Steenie wad hae putten the weight of his foot into the scales of justice, and garr'd them whomle the bucket—ye forget, Geordie, wha it is whose hand uphauls them. And ye do poor Steenie the mair wrang, for he confessed it ance before us and our privy council, that Dalgarno would have put aff on him the puir simple bairn, making him trow that she was a light-o'-love; in whilk mind he remained assured even when he parted from her, albeit Steenie might hae weel thought ane of thae cattle wadna have resisted the like of him."

"The Lady Hermione," said George Heriot, "has always done the utmost justice to the conduct of the duke, who, although strongly possessed with prejudice against her character, yet scorned to avail himself of her distress, and, on the contrary, supplied her with the means of extricating herself from her difficulties."

"It was e'en like himsell—blessings on his bonnie face!" said the king; "and I believed this lady's tale the mair readily, my Lord Huntinglen, that she spake nae ill of Steenie—and, to make a lang tale short, my lord, it is the opinion of our council and ourself, as weel as of Baby Charles and Steenie, that your son maun amend his wrong by wedding this lady, or undergo such disgrace and discountenance as we can bestow."

The person to whom he spoke was incapable of answering him. He stood before the king motionless, and glaring with eyes of which even the lids seemed immovable, as if suddenly converted into an ancient statue of the times of chivalry, so instantly had his hard features and strong limbs been arrested into rigidity by the blow he had received—And in a second afterwards, like the same statue when the lightning breaks upon it, he sunk at once to the ground with a heavy groan. The king was in the

utmost alarm, called upon Heriot and Maxwell for help, and, presence of mind not being his forte, ran to and fro in his cabinet, exclaiming—"My ancient and beloved servant—who saved our anointed self! *Væ atque dolor!*—My Lord of Huntinglen, look up!—look up, man, and your son may marry the Queen of Sheba if he will."

By this time Maxwell and Heriot had raised the old nobleman and placed him on a chair, while the king, observing that he began to recover himself, continued his consolations more methodically.

"Haud up your head—haud up your head, and listen to your ain kind native prince. If there is shame, man, it comesna empty-handed—there is siller to gild it—a gude tocher, and no that bad a pedigree;—if she has been a loon, it was your son made her sae, and he can make her an honest woman again."

These suggestions, however reasonable in the common case, gave no comfort to Lord Huntinglen, if indeed he fully comprehended them; but the blubbing of his good-natured old master, which began to accompany and interrupt his royal speech, produced more rapid effect. The large tear gushed reluctantly from his eye as he kissed the withered hands, which the king weeping with less decorum and restraint, abandoned to him, first alternately and then both together, until the feelings of the man getting entirely the better of the sovereign's sense of dignity, he grasped and shook Lord Huntinglen's hands with the sympathy of an equal and a familiar friend.

"*Compone lacrymas*; be patient, man, be patient," said James—"the council, and Baby Charles, and Steenie, may a' gang to the deevil—he shall not marry her since it moves you so deeply."

"He *shall* marry her, by God!" answered the earl, drawing himself up, dashing the tear from his eyes, and endeavouring to recover his composure. "I pray your majesty's pardon, but he shall marry her, with her dishonour for her dowry, were she the veriest courtesan in all Spain!—If he gave his word, he shall make his word good, were it to the meanest creature that haunts the streets—he shall do it, or my own dagger shall take the life I gave him. If he could stoop to use so base a fraud, though to deceive infamy, let him wed infamy."

"No, no!" the monarch continued to insinuate, "things are not so bad as that—Steenie himself never thought of her being a street-walker even when he thought the worst of her."

"If it can at all console my Lord of Huntinglen," said the citizen, "I can assure him of this lady's good birth, and most fair and unspotted fame."

"I am sorry for it," said Lord Huntinglen—then interrupting himself, he said—"Heaven forgive me for being ungrateful for such comfort!—but I am well nigh sorry she should be as you represent her, so much better than the villain deserves. To be condemned to wed beauty and innocence and honest birth"—

"Ay, and wealth, my lord—wealth," insinuated the king, "is a better sentence than his perfidy has deserved."

"It is long," said the embittered father, "since I saw he was selfish and hard-hearted; but to be a

perjured liar!—I never dreaded that such a blot would have fallen on my race. I will never look on him again!"

"Hoot ay, my lord, hoot ay," said the king; "ye maun tak him to task roundly. I grant ye should speak more in the vein of Demea than Mitio, *vi nempe et via pervulgata patrum*; but as for not seeing him again, and he your only son, that is altogether out of reason. I tell ye, man (but I would not for a bodle that Baby Charles heard me), that he might gie the glaiks to half the lasses of Lonnun, ere I could find in my heart to speak such harsh words as you have said of this de'il of a Dalgarno of yours."

"May it please your majesty to permit me to retire," said Lord Huntinglen, "and dispose of the case according to your own royal sense of justice, for I desire no favour for him."

"Aweel, my lord, so be it; and if your lordship can think," added the monarch, "of anything in our power which might comfort you"—

"Your majesty's gracious sympathy," said Lord Huntinglen, "has already comforted me as far as earth can; the rest must be from the King of kings."

"To Him I commend you, my auld and faithful servant," said James, with emotion, as the earl withdrew from his presence. The king remained fixed in thought for some time, and then said to Heriot, "Jingling Geordie, ye ken all the privy doings of our court, and have dune so these thirty years, though, like a wise man, ye hear, and see, and say nothing. Now, there is a thing I fain wad ken in the way of philosophical inquiry—Did you ever hear of the umquhile Lady Huntinglen, the departed countess of this noble earl, ganging a wee bit gleed in her walk through the world? I mean in the way of slipping a foot, casting a leglen-girth, or the like, ye understand me?"

"On my word as an honest man," said George Heriot, somewhat surprised at the question, "I never heard her wronged by the slightest breath of suspicion. She was a worthy lady, very circumspect in her walk, and lived in great concord with her husband, save that the good countess was something of a puritan, and kept more company with ministers than was altogether agreeable to Lord Huntinglen, who is, as your majesty well knows, a man of the old rough world, that will drink and swear."

"O Geordie!" exclaimed the king, "these are auld-world frailties, of whilk we dare not pronounce even ourselves absolutely free. But the world grows worse from day to day, Geordie. The juveniles of this age may weel say with the poet—

*Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit,
Nos nequiores—*

This Dalgarno does not drink so much, ay, or swear so much, as his father; but he wenches, Geordie, and he breaks his word and oath baith. As to what ye say of the leddy and the ministers, we are a' fallible creatures, Geordie, priests and kings, as weel as others; and wha kens but what that may account for the difference between this Dalgarno and his father? The earl is the vera soul of honour, and cares nae mair for world's gear than a noble

hound for the quest of a foulmart; but as for his son, he was like to brazen us a' out—ourselves, Steenie, Baby Charles, and our council—till he heard of the tocher, and then, by my kingly crown, he lap like a cock at a grossart! These are discrepancies betwixt parent and son not to be accounted for naturally, according to Baptista Porta, Michael Scott *de secretis*, and others.—Ah, Jingling Geordie, if your clouting the cauldron, and jingling on pots, pans, and veshels of all manner of metal, hadna jingled a' your grammar out of your head, I could have touched on that matter to you at mair length."

Heriot was too plain-spoken to express much concern for the loss of his grammar-learning on this occasion; but after modestly hinting that he had seen many men who could not fill their father's bonnet, though no one had been suspected of wearing their father's night-cap, he inquired "whether Lord Dalgarno had consented to do the Lady Hermione justice."

"Troth, man, I have small doubt that he will," quoth the king; "I gave him the schedule of her worldly substance, which you delivered to us in the council, and we allowed him half an hour to chew the cud upon that. It is rare reading for bringing him to reason. I left Baby Charles and Steenie laying his duty before him; and if he can resist doing what *they* desire him, why, I wish he would teach *me* the gate of it. O Geordie, Jingling Geordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles laying down the guilt of dissimulation, and Steenie lecturing on the turpitude of incontinence!"

"I am afraid," said George Heriot, more hastily than prudently, "I might have thought of the old proverb of Satan reproving sin."

"De'il hae our saul, neighbour," said the king, reddening, "but ye are not blate! I gie ye license to speak freely, and, by our saul, ye do not let the privilege become lost *non utendo*—it will suffer no negative prescription in your hands. Is it fit, think ye, that Baby Charles should let his thoughts be publicly seen?—No—no—princes' thoughts are *arcana imperii*—*Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. Every liege subject is bound to speak the whole truth to the king, but there is nae reciprocity of obligation—and for Steenie having been whiles a dyke-louper at a time, is it for you, who are his goldsmith, and to whom, I doubt, he awes an uncomatable sum, to cast that up to him?"

Heriot did not feel himself called on to play the part of Zeno, and sacrifice himself for upholding the cause of moral truth; he did not desert it, however, by disavowing his words, but simply expressed sorrow for having offended his majesty, with which the placable king was sufficiently satisfied.

"And now, Geordie, man," quoth he, "we will to this culprit, and hear what he has to say for himself, for I will see the job cleared this blessed day. Ye maun come wi' me, for your evidence may be wanted."

The king led the way, accordingly, into a larger apartment, where the prince, the Duke of Buckingham, and one or two privy councillors, were seated at a table, before which stood Lord Dalgarno, in an attitude of as much elegant ease and indifference as

could be expressed, considering the stiff dress and manners of the times.

All rose and bowed reverently, while the king, to use a north-country word, expressive of his mode of locomotion, *toddled* to his chair or throne, making a sign to Heriot to stand behind him.

"We hope," said his majesty, "that Lord Da'garno stands prepared to do justice to this unfortunate lady, and to his own character and honour?"

"May I humbly inquire the penalty," said Lord Dalgarno, "in case I should unhappily find compliance with your majesty's demands impossible?"

"Banishment frae our court, my lord," said the king; "frae our court and our countenance."

"Unhappy exile that I may be!" said Lord Dalgarno, in a tone of subdued irony—"I will at least carry your majesty's picture with me, for I shall never see such another king."

"And banishment, my lord," said the prince, sternly, "from these our dominions."

"That must be by form of law, please your royal highness," said Dalgarno, with an affectation of deep respect; "and I have not heard that there is a statute, compelling us, under such penalty, to marry every woman we may play the fool with.—Perhaps his Grace of Buckingham can tell me?"

"You are a villain, Dalgarno," said the haughty and vehement favourite.

"Fie, my lord, fie!—to a prisoner, and in presence of your royal and paternal gossip!" said Lord Dalgarno. "But I will cut this deliberation short. I have looked over this schedule of the goods and effects of Erminia Pauletti, daughter of the late noble—yes, he is called the noble, or I read wrong—Giovanni Pauletti, of the House of Sansovino, in Genoa, and of the no less noble Lady Maud Olifaunt, of the House of Glenvarloch—Well, I declare that I was pre-contracted in Spain to this noble lady, and there has passed betwixt us some certain *prælibatio matrimonii*; and now, what more does this grave assembly require of me?"

"That you should repair the gross and infamous wrong you have done the lady, by marrying her within this hour," said the prince.

"O, may it please your royal highness," answered Dalgarno, "I have a trifling relationship with an old earl, who calls himself my father, who may claim some vote in the matter. Alas! every son is not blessed with an obedient parent." He hazarded a slight glance towards the throne, to give meaning to his last words.

"We have spoken ourselves with Lord Huntinglen," said the king, "and are authorized to consent in his name."

"I could never have expected this intervention of a *proxenata*, which the vulgar translate black-foot, of such eminent dignity," said Dalgarno, scarce concealing a sneer. "And my father hath consented? He was wont to say, ere we left Scotland, that the blood of Huntinglen and of Glenvarloch would not mingle, were they poured into the same basin. Perhaps he has a mind to try the experiment?"

"My lord," said James, "we will not be longer trifled with—Will you instantly, and take this lady to your wife, in our c"

"*Statim atque instanter*," answered Lord Dalgarno; "for, I perceive, by doing so, I shall obtain power to render great services to the commonwealth—I shall have acquired wealth to supply the wants of your majesty, and a fair wife to be at the command of his Grace of Buckingham."

The duke rose, passed to the end of the table where Lord Dalgarno was standing, and whispered in his ear, "You have placed a fair sister at my command ere now."

This taunt cut deep through Lord Dalgarno's assumed composure. He started as if an adder had stung him, but instantly composed himself, and fixing on the duke's still smiling countenance an eye which spoke unutterable hatred, he pointed the forefinger of his left hand to the hilt of his sword, but in a manner which could scarce be observed by any one save Buckingham. The duke gave him another smile of bitter scorn, and returned to his seat, in obedience to the commands of the king, who continued calling out, "Sit down, Steenie, sit down, I command ye—we will hae nae barns-breaking here."

"Your majesty need not fear my patience," said Lord Dalgarno; "and that I may keep it the better, I will not utter another word in this presence, save those enjoined to me in that happy portion of the Prayer-book, which begins with *Dearly Beloved*, and ends with *amazement*."

"You are a hardened villain, Dalgarno," said the king; "and were I the lass, by my father's saul, I would rather brook the stain of having been your concubine, than run the risk of becoming your wife. But she shall be under our special protection.—Come, my lords, we will ourselves see this blithesome bridal." He gave the signal by rising, and moved towards the door, followed by the train. Lord Dalgarno attended, speaking to none, and spoken to by no one, yet seeming as easy and dis-embarrassed in his gait and manner as if in reality a happy bridegroom.

They reached the chapel by a private entrance which communicated from the royal apartment. The Bishop of Winchester, in his pontifical dress, stood beside the altar; on the other side, supported by Monna Paula, the colourless, faded, half-lifeless form of Lady Hermione, or Erminia, Pauletti. Lord Dalgarno bowed profoundly to her, and the prince, observing the horror with which she regarded him, walked up, and said to her, with much dignity,—“Madam, ere you put yourself under the authority of this man, let me inform you, he hath in the fullest degree vindicated your honour, so far as concerns your former intercourse. It is for you to consider whether you will put your fortune and happiness into the hands of one who has shown himself unworthy of all trust.”

The lady, with much difficulty, found words to make reply. "I owe to his majesty's goodness," she said, "the care of providing me some reservation out of my own fortune, for my decent sustenance. The rest cannot be better disposed than in buying back the fair fame of which I am deprived, and the liberty of ending my life in peace and seclusion."

"The contract has been drawn up," said the

king, "under our own eye, specially discharging the *potestas maritalis*, and agreeing they shall live separate. So buckle them, my lord bishop, as fast as ye can, that they may sunder again the sooner."

The bishop accordingly opened his book and commenced the marriage-ceremony, under circumstances so novel and so inauspicious. The responses of the bride were only expressed by inclinations of the head and body; while those of the bridegroom were spoken boldly and distinctly, with a tone resembling levity, if not scorn. When it was concluded, Lord Dalgarno advanced as if to salute the bride, but seeing that she drew back in fear and abhorrence, he contented himself with making her a low bow. He then drew up his form to its height, and stretched himself as if examining the power of his limbs, but elegantly, and without any forcible change of attitude. "I could caper yet," he said, "though I am in fetters—but they are of gold, and lightly worn.—Well, I see all eyes look cold on me, and it is time I should withdraw. The sun shines elsewhere than in England.—But first I must ask how this fair Lady Dalgarno is to be bestowed. Methinks it is but decent I should know. Is she to be sent to the haram of my lord duke? Or is this worthy citizen, as before?"—

"Hold thy base ribald tongue," said his father, Lord Huntinglen, who had kept in the back-ground during the ceremony, and now stepping suddenly forward, caught the lady by the arm, and confronted her unworthy husband.—“The Lady Dalgarno,” he continued, “shall remain as a widow in my house. A widow I esteem her, as much as if the grave had closed over her dishonoured husband.”

Lord Dalgarno exhibited momentary symptoms of extreme confusion, and said, in a submissive tone, "If you, my lord, can wish me dead, I cannot, though your heir, return the compliment. Few of the first-born of Israel," he added, recovering himself from the single touch of emotion he had displayed, "can say so much with truth. But I will convince you ere I go, that I am a true descendant of a house famed for its memory of injuries."

"I marvel your majesty will listen to him longer," said Prince Charles. "Methinks we have heard enough of his daring insolence."

But James, who took the interest of a true gossip in such a scene as was now passing, could not bear to cut the controversy short, but imposed silence on his son, with "Whisht, Baby Charles—there is a good bairn, whisht!—I want to hear what the frontless loon can say."

"Only, sir," said Dalgarno, "that but for one single line in this schedule, all else that it contains could not have bribed me to take that woman's hand into mine."

"That line maun have been *summa totalis*," said the king.

"Not so, sire," replied Dalgarno. "The sum total might indeed have been an object for consideration even to a Scottish king, at no very distant period; but it would have had little charms for me, save that I see here an entry which gives me the power of vengeance over the family of Glenvarloch; and learn from it that yonder pale bride, when she

put the wedding-torch into my hand, gave me the power of burning her mother's house to ashes."

"How is that?" said the king. "What is he speaking about, Jingling Geordie?"

"This friendly citizen, my lord," said Lord Dalgarno, "hath expended a sum belonging to my lady, and now, I thank Heaven, to me, in acquiring a certain mortgage, or wadset, over the estate of Glenvarloch, which, if it be not redeemed before to-morrow at noon, will put me in possession of the fair demesnes of those who once called themselves our house's rivals."

"Can this be true?"

"It is even but too true, please your majesty," answered the citizen. "The Lady Hermione having advanced the money for the original creditor, I was obliged, in honour and honesty, to take the rights to her; and, doubtless, they pass to her husband."

"But the warrant, man," said the king—"the warrant on our exchequer—Couldna that supply the lad wi' the means of redemption?"

"Unhappily, my liege, he has lost it, or disposed of it—It is not to be found. He is the most unlucky youth!"

"This is a proper spot of work," said the king, beginning to amble about and play with the points of his doublet and hose, in expression of dismay. "We cannot aid him without paying our debts twice over, and we have, in the present state of our exchequer, scarce the means of paying them once."

"You have told me news," said Lord Dalgarno, "but I will take no advantage."

"Do not," said his father; "be a bold villain, since thou must be one, and seek revenge with arms, and not with the usurer's weapons."

"Pardon me, my lord," said Lord Dalgarno. "Pen and ink are now my surest means of vengeance; and more land is won by the lawyer with the ram-skin, than by the Andrea Ferrara with his sheep's-head handle. But, as I said before, I will take no advantages. I will wait in town to-morrow, near Covent Garden; if any one will pay the redemption money to my scrivener, with whom the deeds lie, the better for Lord Glenvarloch; if not, I will go forward on the next day, and travel with all dispatch to the north, to take possession."

"Take a father's malison with you, unhappy wretch!" said Lord Huntinglen.

"And a king's, who is *pater patriæ*," said James.

"I trust to bear both lightly," said Lord Dalgarno; and bowing around him, he withdrew; while all present, oppressed, and, as it were, overawed, by his determined effrontery, found they could draw breath more freely, when he at length relieved them of his society. Lord Huntinglen, applying himself to comfort his new daughter-in-law, withdrew with her also; and the king, with his privy council, whom he had not dismissed, again returned to his council-chamber, though the hour was unusually late. Heriot's attendance was still commanded, but for what reason was not explained to him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

— I'll play the eaves-dropper.

Richard III. Act V, Scene 3.

JAMES had no sooner resumed his seat at the council-board, than he began to hitch in his chair, cough, use his handkerchief, and make other intimations that he meditated a long speech. The council composed themselves to the beseeching degree of attention. Charles, as strict in his notions of decorum, as his father was indifferent to it, fixed himself in an attitude of rigid and respectful attention, while the haughty favourite, conscious of his power over both father and son, stretched himself more easily on his seat, and, in assuming an appearance of listening, seemed to pay a debt to ceremonial rather than to duty.

"I doubt not, my lords," said the monarch, "that some of you may be thinking the hour of refection is past, and that it is time to ask with the slave in the comedy—*Quid de symbolo?*—Nevertheless, to do justice and exercise judgment is our meat and drink; and now we are to pray your wisdom to consider the case of this unhappy youth, Lord Glenvarloch, and see, whether, consistently with our honour, anything can be done in his favour."

"I am surprised at your majesty's wisdom making the inquiry," said the duke; "it is plain this Dalgarno hath proved one of the most insolent villains on earth, and it must therefore be clear, that if Lord Glenvarloch had run him through the body, there would have been out of the world a knave who had lived in it too long. I think Lord Glenvarloch hath had much wrong; and I regret that, by the persuasions of this false fellow, I have myself had some hand in it."

"Ye speak like a child, Steenie—I mean my Lord of Buckingham," answered the king, "and as one that does not understand the logic of the schools; for an action may be inconsequential or even meritorious, *quoad hominem*, that is, as touching him upon whom it is acted; and yet most criminal, *quoad locum*, or considering the place *wherein* it is done, as a man may lawfully dance Chrichty Beardie or any other dance in a tavern, but not *inter parietes ecclesiæ*. So that, though it may have been a good deed to have stucked Lord Dalgarno, being such as he has shown himself, anywhere else, yet it fell under the plain statute, when violence was offered within the verge of the court. For, let me tell you, my lords, the statute against striking would be of small use in our court, if it could be eluded by justifying the person stricken to be a knave. It is much to be lamented that I ken nae court in Christendom where knaves are not to be found; and if men are to break the peace under pretence of beating them, why, it will rain Jeddart staves in our very ante-chamber."

"What your majesty says," replied Prince Charles, "is marked with your usual wisdom—the precincts of palaces must be sacred as well as the persons of kings, which are respected even in the most barbarous nations, as being one step only beneath their divinities. But your majesty's will

can control the severity of this and every other law, and it is in your power, on consideration of his case, to grant this rash young man a free pardon."

"*Rem acu tetigisti, Carole, mi puerule,*" answered the king; "and know, my lords, that we have, by a shrewd device and gift of our own, already sounded the very depth of this Lord Glenvarloch's disposition. I trow there be among you some that remember my handling in the curious case of my Lady Lake, and how I trimmed them about the story of hearkening behind the arras. Now this put me to cogitation, and I remembered me of having read that Dionysius, King of Syracuse, whom historians call *Τυραννος*, which signifieth not in the Greek tongue, as in ours, a truculent usurper, but a royal king who governs, it may be, something more strictly than we and other lawful monarchs, whom the ancients termed *Βασιλευς*—Now this Dionysius of Syracuse caused cunning workmen to build for himself a *lugg*—D'ye ken what that is, my lord bishop?"

"A cathedral, I presume to guess," answered the bishop.

"What the de'il, man—I crave your lordship's pardon for swearing—but it was no cathedral—only a lurking-place called the king's *lugg* or *ear*, where he could sit undescried, and hear the converse of his prisoners. Now, sirs, in imitation of this Dionysius, whom I took for my pattern, the rather that he was a great linguist and grammarian, and taught a school with good applause after his abdication (either he or his successor of the same name, it matters not whilk),—I have caused them to make a *lugg* up at the state prison of the tower yonder, more like a pulpit than a cathedral, my lord bishop—and communicating with the arras behind the lieutenant's chamber, where we may sit and privily hear the discourse of such prisoners as are pent up there for state offences, and so creep into the very secrets of our enemies."

The prince cast a glance towards the duke, expressive of great vexation and disgust. Buckingham shrugged his shoulders, but the motion was so slight as to be almost imperceptible.

"Weel, my lords, ye ken the fray at the hunting this morning—I shall not get out of the trembling exies until I have a sound night's sleep—just after that, they bring ye in a pretty page that had been found in the park. We were warned against examining him ourselves by the anxious care of those around us; nevertheless, holding our life ever at the service of these kingdoms, we commanded all to avoid the room, the rather that we suspected this boy to be a girl. What think ye, my lords?—few of you would have thought I had a hawk's eye for sic gear; but we thank God, that though we are old, we know so much of such toys as may beseem a man of decent gravity. Weel, my lords, we questioned this maiden in male attire ourselves, and I profess it was a very pretty interrogatory, and well followed. For, though she at first professed that she assumed this disguise in order to countenance the woman who should present us with the Lady Hermione's petition, for whom she professed entire affection; yet when we, suspecting *anguis in herba*, did put her to the very question, she was compelled

to own a virtuous attachment for Glenvarlochides, in such a pretty passion of shame and fear, that we had much ado to keep our own eyes from keeping company with hers in weeping. Also she laid before us the false practices of this Dalgarno towards Glenvarlochides, inveigling him into houses of ill resort, and giving him evil counsel under pretext of sincere friendship, whereby the inexperienced lad was led to do what was prejudicial to himself and offensive to us. But, however prettily she told her tale, we determined not altogether to trust to her narration, but rather to try the experiment whilk we had devised for such occasions. And having ourselves speedily passed from Greenwich to the Tower, we constituted ourselves eaves-dropper as it is called, to observe what should pass between Glenvarlochides and this page, whom we caused to be admitted to his apartment, well judging that if they were of counsel together to deceive us, it could not be but something of it would spunk out—And what think ye we saw, my lords?—Naething for you to sniggle and laugh at, Steenie—for I question if you could have played the temperate and christian-like part of this poor lad Glenvarloch. He might be a father of the church in comparison of you, man.—And then to try his patience yet farther, we loosed on him a courtier and a citizen, that is Sir Mungo Malagrowth and our servant George Heriot here, wha dang the poor lad about, and didna greatly spare our royal selves.—Ye mind, Geordie, what ye said about the wives and concubines? but I forgie ye, man—nae need of kneeling, I forgie ye—the readier that it regards ane particular, whilk, as it added not much to Solomon's credit, the lack of it cannot be said to impinge on ours. Aweel, my lords, for all temptation of sore distress and evil ensample, this poor lad never loosed his tongue on us to say one unbecoming word—which inclines us the rather, acting always by your wise advice, to treat this affair of the park as a thing done in the heat of blood, and under strong provocation, and therefore to confer our free pardon on Lord Glenvarloch."

"I am happy your gracious majesty," said the Duke of Buckingham, "has arrived at that conclusion, though I could never have guessed at the road by which you attained it."

"I trust," said Prince Charles, "that it is not a path which your majesty will think it consistent with your high dignity to tread frequently."

"Never while I live again, Baby Charles, that I give you my royal word on. They say that hearken-ers hear ill tales of themselves—by my saul, my very ears are tingling wi' that auld sorrow Sir Mungo's sarcasms. He called us close-fisted, Steenie—I am sure you can contradict that. But it is mere envy in the auld mutilated sinner, because he himself has neither a noble to hold in his loof, nor fingers to close on it if he had." Here the king lost recollection of Sir Mungo's irreverence in chuckling over his own wit, and only farther alluded to it by saying "We must give the old maunderer *bos in linguam*—something to stop his mouth, or he will rail at us from Dan to Beersheba.—And now, my lords, let our warrant of mercy to Lord Glenvarloch be presently expedited, and he put to his freedom; and as his estate is likely to go so sleeveless a gate, we

will consider what means of favour we can show him.—My lords, I wish you an appetite to an early supper—for our labours have approached that term.—Baby Charles and Steenie, you will remain till our couchee.—My lord bishop, you will be pleased to stay to bless our meat.—Geordie Heriot, a word with you apart.”

His majesty then drew the citizen into a corner, while the councillors, those excepted who had been commanded to remain, made their obeisance, and withdrew. “Geordie,” said the king, “my good and trusty servant”—Here he busied his fingers much with the points and ribbons of his dress,—“Ye see that we have granted, from our own natural sense of right and justice, that which yon lang-backed fallow, Moniplies I think they ca’ him, proffered to purchase from us with a mighty bribe; whilk we refused, as being a crowned king, who wad neither sell our justice nor our mercy for pecuniar consideration. Now, what think ye should be the upshot of this?”

“My Lord Glenvarloch’s freedom, and his restoration to your majesty’s favour,” said Heriot.

“I ken that,” said the king, peevishly. “Ye are very dull to-day. I mean what do you think this fallow Moniplies should think about the matter?”

“Surely that your majesty is a most good and gracious sovereign,” answered Heriot.

“We had need to be gude and gracious baith,” said the king, still more pettishly, “that have idiots about us that cannot understand what we mint at, unless we speak it out in braid Lowlands. See this chield Moniplies, sir, and tell him what we have done for Lord Glenvarloch, in whom he takes such part, out of our own gracious motion, though we refused to do it on any proffer of private advantage. Now, you may put it till him, as if of your own mind, whether it will be a gracious or a dutiful part in him, to press us for present payment of the two or three hundred miserable pounds for whilk we were obliged to opignorate our jewels? Indeed, mony men may think ye wad do the part of a good citizen, if you took it on yourself to refuse him payment, seeing he hath had what he professed to esteem full satisfaction, and considering, moreover, that it is evident he hath no pressing need of money, whereof we have much necessity.”

George Heriot sighed internally. “O my master,” thought he—“my dear master, is it then fated you are never to indulge any kingly or noble sentiment, without its being sullied by some afterthought of interested selfishness?”

The king troubled himself not about what he thought, but, taking him by the collar, said,—“Ye ken my meaning now, Jingler—awa wi’ ye. You are a wise man—manage it your ain gate—but forget not our present straits.” The citizen made his obeisance, and withdrew.

“And now, bairns,” said the king, “what do you look upon each other for—and what have you got to ask at your dear dad and gossip?”

“Only,” said the prince, “that it would please your majesty to command the lurking-place at the prison to be presently built up—the groans of a captive should not be brought in evidence against him.”

“What! build up my lugg, Baby Charles? And yet, better deaf than hear ill tales of one’s self. So let them build it up, hard and fast, without delay, the rather that my back is sair with sitting in it for a whole hour.—And now let us see what the cooks have been doing for us, bonnie bairns.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

To this brave man the knight repairs
For counsel in his law affairs;
And found him mounted in his pew,
With books and money placed for shew,
Like nest-eggs to make clients lay,
And for his false opinion pay.

Hudibras.

OUR reader may recollect a certain smooth-tongued, lank-haired, buckram-suited Scottish scrivener, who, in the early part of this history, appeared in the character of a protégé of George Heriot. It is to his house we are about to remove; but times have changed with him. The petty booth hath become a chamber of importance—the buckram suit is changed into black velvet; and although the wearer retains his puritanical humility and politeness to clients of consequence, he can now look others broad in the face, and treat them with a full allowance of superior opulence, and the insolence arising from it. It was but a short period that had achieved these alterations, nor was the party himself as yet entirely accustomed to them, but the change was becoming less embarrassing to him with every day’s practice. Among other acquisitions of wealth, you may see one of Davie Ramsay’s best time-pieces on the table, and his eye is frequently observing its revolutions, while a boy, whom he employs as a scribe, is occasionally sent out to compare its progress with the clock of Saint Dunstan.

The scrivener himself seemed considerably agitated. He took from a strong-box a bundle of parchments, and read passages of them with great attention; then began to soliloquize:—“There is no outlet which law can suggest—no back-door of evasion—none. If the lands of Glenvarloch are not redeemed before it rings noon, Lord Dalgarno has them a cheap pennyworth. Strange, that he should have been at last able to set his patron at defiance, and achieve for himself the fair estate, with the prospect of which he so long flattered the powerful Buckingham! Might not Andrew Skurliewhitter nick him as neatly? He hath been my patron—true—not more than Buckingham was his; and he can be so no more, for he departs presently for Scotland. I am glad of it—I hate him, and I fear him. He knows too many of my secrets—I know too many of his. But, no—no—no—I need never attempt it, there are no means of overreaching him.—Well, Willie, what o’clock?”

“Ele’en hours just chappit, sir.”

“Go to your desk without, child,” said the scrivener. “What to do next—I shall lose the old earl’s fair business, and, what is worse, his son’s foul practice. Old Heriot looks too close into business to permit me more than the paltry and ordinary dues. The Whitefriars business was profitable,

but it has become unsafe ever since—pah!—what brought that in my head just now? I can hardly hold my pen. If men should see me in this way!—Willie!—(calling aloud to the boy)—a cup of distilled waters.—Soh!—now I could face the devil.”

He spoke the last words aloud and close by the door of the apartment, which was suddenly opened by Richie Moniplies, followed by two gentlemen, and attended by two porters bearing money-bags. “If ye can face the deevil, Maister Skurliewhitter,” said Richie, “ye will be the less likely to turn your back on a sack or twa o’ siller, which I have ta’en the freedom to bring you. Sathanas and Mammon are near a-kin.” The porters, at the same time, ranged their load on the floor.

“I—I,”—stammered the surprised scrivener—“I cannot guess what you mean, sir.”

“Only that I have brought you the redemption-money on the part of Lord Glenvarloch, in discharge of a certain mortgage over his family inheritance. And here, in good time, comes Master Reginald Lowestoffe, and another honourable gentleman of the Temple, to be witnesses to the transaction.”

“I—I incline to think,” said the scrivener, “that the term is expired.”

“You will pardon us, Master Scrivener,” said Lowestoffe. “You will not baffle us—it wants three-quarters of noon by every clock in the city.”

“I must have time, gentlemen,” said Andrew, “to examine the gold by tale and weight.”

“Do so at your leisure, Master Scrivener,” replied Lowestoffe again. “We have already seen the contents of each sack told and weighed, and we have put our seals on them. There they stand in a row, twenty in number, each containing three hundred yellow-hammers—we are witnesses to the lawful tender.”

“Gentlemen,” said the scrivener, “this security now belongs to a mighty lord. I pray you, abate your haste, and let me send for Lord Dalgarno,—or rather, I will run for him myself.”

So saying, he took up his hat; but Lowestoffe called out,—“Friend Moniplies, keep the door fast, an thou be’st a man! he seeks but to put off the time.—In plain terms, Andrew, you may send for the devil, if you will, who is the mightiest lord of my acquaintance, but from hence you stir not till you have answered our proposition, by rejecting or accepting the redemption-money fairly tendered—there it lies—take it, or leave it, as you will. I have skill enough to know that the law is mightier than any lord in Britain—I have learned so much at the Temple, if I have learned nothing else. And see that you trifle not with it, lest it make your long ears an inch shorter, Master Skurliewhitter.”

“Nay, gentlemen, if you threaten me,” said the scrivener, “I cannot resist compulsion.”

“No threats—no threats at all, my little Andrew,” said Lowestoffe; “a little friendly advice only—forget not, honest Andrew, I have seen you in Alsatia.”

Without answering a single word, the scrivener sat down, and drew in proper form a full receipt for the money proffered.

“I take it on your report, Master Lowestoffe,” he said; “I hope you will remember I have insisted

neither upon weight nor tale—I have been civil—if there is deficiency I shall come to loss.”

“Fillip his nose with a gold piece, Richie,” quoth the Templar. “Take up the papers, and now wend we merrily to dine thou wot’st where.”

“If I might chuse,” said Richie, “it should not be at yonder roguish ordinary; but as it is your pleasure, gentlemen, the treat shall be given where-soever you will have it.”

“At the ordinary,” said the one Templar.

“At Beaujeu’s,” said the other; “it is the only house in London for neat wines, nimble drawers, choice dishes, and”—

“And high charges,” quoth Richie Moniplies. “But, as I said before, gentlemen, ye have a right to command me in this matter, having so frankly rendered me your service in this small matter of business, without other stipulation than that of a slight banquet.”

The latter part of this discourse passed in the street, where, immediately afterwards, they met Lord Dalgarno. He appeared in haste, touched his hat slightly to Master Lowestoffe, who returned his reverence with the same negligence, and walked slowly on with his companion, while Lord Dalgarno stopped Richie Moniplies with a commanding sign, which the instinct of education compelled Moniplies, though indignant, to obey.

“Whom do you now follow, sirrah?” demanded the noble.

“Whosoever goeth before me, my lord,” answered Moniplies.

“No sauciness, you knave—I desire to know if you still serve Nigel Olifaunt?” said Dalgarno.

“I am friend to the noble Lord Glenvarloch,” answered Moniplies, with dignity.

“True,” replied Lord Dalgarno, “that noble lord has sunk to seek friends among lackeys—Nevertheless, if he be of the same mind as when we last met, thou mayest show him, that, on to-morrow, at four afternoon, I shall pass northward by Enfield Chase—I will be slenderly attended, as I design to send my train through Barnet. It is my purpose to ride an easy pace through the forest, and to linger a while by Camlet Moat—he knows the place; and if he be ought but an Alsatian bully, will think it fitter for some purposes than the park. He is, I understand, at liberty, or shortly to be so. If he fail me at the place nominated, he must seek me in Scotland, where he will find me possessed of his father’s estate and lands.”

“Humph!” muttered Richie; “there go twa words to that bargain.”

He even meditated a joke on the means which he was conscious he possessed of baffling Lord Dalgarno’s expectations; but there was something of keen and dangerous excitement in the eyes of the young nobleman, that his discretion for once ruled his wit, and he only answered—

“God grant your lordship may well brook your new conquest—when you get it. I shall do your errand to my lord—whilk is to say,” he added internally, “he shall never hear a word of it from Richie. I am not the lad to put him in such hazard.”

Lord Dalgarno looked at him sharply for a moment, as if to penetrate the meaning of the dry

ironical tone, which, in spite of Richie's awe, mingled with his answer, and then waved his hand in signal he should pass on. He himself walked slowly till the trio were out of sight, then turned back with hasty steps to the door of the scrivener, which he had passed in his progress, knocked, and was admitted.

Lord Dalgarno found the man of law with the money-bags still standing before him; and it escaped not his penetrating glance, that Skurliewhitter was disconcerted and alarmed at his approach.

"How now, man," he said; "what, hast thou not a word of oily compliment to me on my happy marriage?—not a word of most philosophical consolation on my disgrace at court?—Or has my mien, as a wittol and discarded favourite, the properties of the Gorgon's head, the *turbatae Palladis arma*, as majesty might say?"

"My lord, I am glad—my lord, I am sorry,"—answered the trembling scrivener, who, aware of the vivacity of Lord Dalgarno's temper, dreaded the consequence of the communication he had to make to him.

"Glad and sorry!" answered Lord Dalgarno. "That is blowing hot and cold, with a witness. Hark ye, you picture of petty-larceny personified—if you are sorry I am a cuckold, remember I am only mine own, you knave—there is too little blood in her cheeks to have sent her astray elsewhere. Well, I will bear mine antlered honours as I may—gold shall gild them; and for my disgrace, revenge shall sweeten it. Ay, revenge—and there strikes the happy hour!"

The hour of noon was accordingly heard to peal from Saint Dunstan's. "Well banged, brave hammers!" said Lord Dalgarno, in triumph.—"The estate and lands of Glenvarloch are crushed beneath these clanging blows. If my steel to-morrow prove but as true as your iron maces to-day, the poor landless lord will little miss what your peal hath cut him out from.—The papers—the papers, thou varlet! I am to-morrow northward, ho! At four, afternoon, I am bound to be at Camlet Moat, in Enfield Chase. To-night most of my retinue set forward. The papers!—Come, dispatch."

"My lord, the—the papers of the Glenvarloch mortgage—I—I have them not."

"Have them not!" echoed Lord Dalgarno,— "Hast thou sent them to my lodging, thou varlet! Did I not say I was coming hither?—What mean you by pointing to that money? What villany have you done for it? It is too large to be come honestly by."

"Your lordship knows best," answered the scrivener, in great perturbation. "The gold is your own. It is—it is"—

"Not the redemption-money of the Glenvarloch estate!" said Dalgarno. "Dare not say it is, or I will, upon the spot, divorce your pettifogging soul from your carrion carcase!" So saying, he seized the scrivener by the collar, and shook him so vehemently, that he tore it from the cassock.

"My lord, I must call for help," said the trembling caitiff, who felt at that moment all the bitterness of the mortal agony—"It was the law's act, not mine. What could I do?"

VOL. III.

"Doest ask?—why, thou sniveling dribblet of damnation, were all thy oaths, tricks, and lies spent? or do you hold yourself too good to utter them in my service? Thou shouldst have lied, cozened, out-sworn truth itself, rather than stood betwixt me and my revenge! But mark me," he continued; "I know more of your pranks than would hang thee. A line from me to the attorney-general, and thou art sped."

"What would you have me to do, my lord?" said the scrivener. "All that art and law can accomplish, I will try."

"Ah, do so, or pity of your life!" said the lord; "and remember I never fail my word. Then keep that accursed gold," he continued. "Or, stay, I will not trust you—send me this gold home presently to my lodging. I will still forward to Scotland, and it shall go hard but that I hold out Glenvarloch Castle against the owner, by means of his own ammunition. Thou art ready to serve me?" The scrivener professed the most implicit obedience.

"Then remember, the hour was past ere payment was tendered—and see thou hast witnesses of trusty memory to prove that point."

"Tush, my lord, I will do more," said Andrew, reviving—"I will prove that Lord Glenvarloch's friends threatened, swaggered, and drew swords on me.—Did your lordship think I was ungrateful enough to have suffered them to prejudice your lordship, save that they had bare swords at my throat?"

"Enough said," replied Dalgarno; "you are perfect—mind that you continue so, as you would avoid my fury. I leave my page below—get porters, and let them follow me instantly with the gold."

So saying, Lord Dalgarno left the scrivener's habitation.

Skurliewhitter, having dispatched his boy to get porters of trust for transporting the money, remained alone and in dismay, meditating by what means he could shake himself free of the vindictive and ferocious nobleman, who possessed at once a dangerous knowledge of his character, and the power of exposing him, where exposure would be ruin. He had indeed acquiesced in the plan, rapidly sketched, for obtaining possession of the ransomed estate, but his experience foresaw that this would be impossible; while, on the other hand, he could not anticipate the various consequences of Lord Dalgarno's resentment, without fears, from which his sordid soul recoiled. To be in the power, and subject both to the humours and the extortions of a spendthrift young lord, just when his industry had shaped out the means of fortune,—it was the most cruel trick which fate could have played the incipient usurer.

While the scrivener was in this fit of anxious anticipation, one knocked at the door of the apartment; and, being desired to enter, appeared in the coarse riding-cloak of uncut Wiltshire cloth, fastened by a broad leather belt and brass buckle, which was then generally worn by graziers and countrymen. Skurliewhitter, believing he saw in his visitor a country client who might prove profitable, had opened his mouth to request him to be seated, when the stranger, throwing back his frieze hood which he had thrown

over his face, showed the scrivener features well imprinted in his recollection, but which he never saw without a disposition to faint.

"Is it you?" he said, faintly, as the stranger replaced the hood which concealed his features.

"Who else should it be?" said his visitor.

"Thou son of parchment, got betwixt the ink-horn
And the stuff'd process-bag—that mayest call
The pen thy father, and the ink thy mother,
The wax thy brother, and the sand thy sister,
And the good pillory thy cousin allied—
Rise, and do reverence unto me, thy better."

"Not yet down to the country," said the scrivener, "after every warning? Do not think your grazier's cloak will bear you out, captain—no, nor your scraps of stage-plays."

"Why, what would you have me to do?" said the captain—"Would you have me starve? If I am to fly, you must eke my wings with a few feathers. You can spare them, I think."

"You had means already—you have had ten pieces—What is become of them?"

"Gone," answered Captain Colepepper—"Gone, no matter where—I had a mind to bite, and I was bitten, that's all—I think my hand shook at the thought of last night's work, for I trowled the doctors like a very baby."

"And you have lost all, then?—Well, take this and be gone," said the scrivener.

"What, two poor smelts! Marry, plague of your bounty!—But remember, you are as deep in as I."

"Not so, by Heaven!" answered the scrivener; "I only thought of easing the old man of some papers and a trifle of his gold, and you took his life."

"Were he living," answered Colepepper, "he would rather have lost it than his money.—But that is not the question, Master Skurliewhitter—you undid the private bolts of the window when you visited him about some affairs on the day ere he died—so satisfy yourself, that, if I am taken, I will not swing alone.—Pity Jack Hempsfield is dead; it spoils the old catch,

And three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men are we,
As ever did sing three parts in a string,
All under the triple tree."

"For God's sake speak lower," said the scrivener; "is this a place or time to make your midnight catches heard?—But how much will serve your turn? I tell you I am but ill provided."

"You tell me a lie, then," said the bully—"a most palpable and gross lie.—How much, d'ye say, will serve my turn? Why, one of these bags will do for the present."

"I swear to you that these bags of money are not at my disposal."

"Not honestly, perhaps," said the captain, "but that makes little difference betwixt us."

"I swear to you," continued the scrivener, "they are in no way at my disposal—they have been delivered to me by tale—I am to pay them over to Lord Dalgarno, whose boy waits for them, and I could not skelder one piece out of them, without risk of hue and cry."

"Can you not put off the delivery?" said the

bravo, his huge hand still fumbling with one of the bags, as if his fingers longed to close on it.

"Impossible," said the scrivener; "he sets forward to Scotland to-morrow."

"Ay!" said the bully, after a moment's thought—"Travels he the north road with such a charge?"

"He is well accompanied," added the scrivener; "but yet"—

"But yet—but what?" said the bravo.

"Nay, I meant nothing," said the scrivener.

"Thou didst—thou hadst the wind of some good thing," replied Colepepper; "I saw thee pause like a setting-dog. Thou wilt say as little, and make as sure a sign, as a well-bred spaniel."

"All I meant to say, captain, was, that his servants go by Barnet, and he himself, with his page, go through Enfield Chase; and he spoke to me yesterday of riding a soft pace."

"Aha!—Comest thou to me there, my boy?"

"And of resting"—continued the scrivener,—
"resting a space at Camlet Moat."

"Why, this is better than cock-fighting!" said the captain.

"I see not how it can advantage you, captain," said the scrivener. "But, however, they cannot ride fast, for his page rides the sumpter-horse, which carries all that weight (pointing to the money on the table). Lord Dalgarno looks sharp to the world's gear."

"That horse will be obliged to those who may ease him of his burthen," said the bravo; "for, egad, he may be met with.—He hath still that page—that same Lutin—that goblin? Well, the boy hath set game for me ere now. I will be revenged too, for I owe him a grudge for an old score at the ordinary. Let me see—Black Feltham, and Dick Shakebag—we shall want a fourth—I love to make sure, and the booty will stand parting, besides what I can bucket them out of. Well, scrivener, lend me two pieces. Bravely done—nobly imparted. Give ye god-den." And wrapping his disguise closer around him, away he went.

When he had left the room, the scrivener wrung his hands, and exclaimed, "More blood—more blood! I thought to have had done with it, but this time there was no fault with me—none—and then I shall have all the advantage. If this ruffian falls, there is truce with his tugs at my purse-strings; and if Lord Dalgarno dies—as is most likely, for, though as much afraid of cold steel as a debtor of a dun, this fellow is a deadly shot from behind a bush,—then am I in a thousand ways safe—safe—safe."

We willingly drop the curtain over him and his reflections.

CHAPTER XXXV.

We are not worst at once—the course of evil
Begins so slowly, and from such slight source,
An infant's hand might stem its breach with clay;
But let the stream get deeper, and philosophy—
Ay, and religion too,—shall strive in vain
To turn the headlong torrent.

Old Play.

THE Templars had been regaled by our friend Richie Moniplies in a private chamber at Beaujeu's,

where he might be considered as good company ; for he had exchanged his serving-man's cloak and jerkin for a grave yet handsome suit of clothes, in the fashion of the times, but such as might have suited an older man than himself. He had positively declined presenting himself at the ordinary, a point to which his companions were very desirous to have brought him ; for it will be easily believed that such wags as Lowestoffe and his companion were not indisposed to a little merriment at the expense of the raw and pedantic Scotsman, besides the chance of easing him of a few pieces, of which he appeared to have acquired considerable command. But not even a succession of measures of sparkling sack, in which the little brilliant atoms circulated like motes in the sun's rays, had the least effect on Richie's sense of decorum. He retained the gravity of a judge, even while he drank like a fish, partly from his own natural inclination to good liquor, partly in the way of good fellowship towards his guests. When the wine began to make some innovation on their heads, Master Lowestoffe, tired, perhaps, of the humours of Richie, who began to become yet more stoically contradictory and dogmatical than even in the earlier part of the entertainment, proposed to his friend to break up their debauch and join the gamesters.

The drawer was called accordingly, and Richie discharged the reckoning of the party, with a generous remuneration to the attendants, which was received with cap and knee, and many assurances of—"Kindly welcome, gentlemen."

"I grieve we should part so soon, gentlemen," said Richie to his companions,—“and I would you had cracked another quart ere you went, or staid to take some slight matter of supper, and a glass of rhenish. I thank you, however, for having graced my poor collation thus far ; and I commend you to fortune, in your own courses, for the ordinary neither was, is, nor shall be, an element of mine."

"Fare thee well, then," said Lowestoffe, "most sapient and sententious Master Moniplies. May you soon have another mortgage to redeem, and may I be there to witness it ; and may you play the good fellow as heartily as you have done this day."

"Nay, gentlemen, it is merely of your grace to say so—but, if you would but hear me speak a few words of admonition respecting this wicked ordinary"—

"Reserve the lesson, most honourable Richie," said Lowestoffe, "until I have lost all my money," showing, at the same time, a purse indifferently well provided, "and then the lecture is like to have some weight."

"And keep my share of it, Richie," said the other Templar, showing an almost empty purse, in his turn, "till this be full again, and then I will promise to hear you with some patience."

"Ay, ay, gallants," said Richie, "the full and the empty gang a' ae gate, and that is a grey one—but the time will come."

"Nay, it is come already," said Lowestoffe ; "they have set out the hazard table. Since you will peremptorily not go with us, why, farewell, Richie."

"And farewell, gentlemen," said Richie, and left the house, into which they returned.

Moniplies was not many steps from the door, when

a person, whom, lost in his reflections on gaming, or-
dinaries, and the manners of the age, he had not observed, and who had been as negligent on his part, ran full against him ; and when Richie desired to know whether he meant "ony incivility," replied by a curse on Scotland, and all that belonged to it. A less round reflection on his country would, at any time, have provoked Richie, but more especially when he had a double quart of canary and better in his pate. He was about to give a very rough answer, and to second his word by action, when a closer view of his antagonist changed his purpose.

"You are the vera lad in the warld," said Richie, "whom I most wished to meet."

"And you," answered the stranger, "or any of your beggarly countrymen, are the last sight I should ever wish to see. You Scots are ever fair and false, and an honest man cannot thrive within eye-shot of you."

"As to our poverty, friend," replied Richie, "that is as Heaven pleases ; but touching our falset, I'll prove to you that a Scotsman bears as leal and true a heart to his friend as ever beat in English doublet."

"I care not whether he does or not," said the gallant. "Let me go—why keep you hold of my cloak ? Let me go, or I will thrust you into the kennel."

"I believe I could forgie ye, for you did me a good turn once, in plucking me out of it," said the Scot.

"Beshrew my fingers, then, if they did so," replied the stranger. "I would your whole country lay there, along with you ; and Heaven's curse blight the hand that helped to raise them ! Why do you stop my way ?" he added fiercely.

"Because it is a bad one, Maister Jenkin," said Richie. "Nay, never start about it, man—you see you are known. Alack-a-day ! that an honest man's son should live to start at hearing himself called by his own name !" Jenkin struck his brow violently with his clenched fist.

"Come, come," said Richie, "this passion availeth nothing. Tell me what gate go you ?"

"To the devil," answered Jin Vin.

"That is a black gate, if you speak according to the letter," answered Richie ; "but if metaphorically, there are worse places in this great city than the Devil Tavern ; and I care not if I go thither with you, and bestow a pottle of burned sack on you—it will correct the crudities of my stomach, and form a gentle preparative for the leg of a cold pullet."

"I pray you in good fashion, to let me go," said Jenkin. "You may mean me kindly, and I wish you to have no wrong at my hand ; but I am in the humour to be dangerous to myself, or any one."

"I will abide the risk," said the Scot, "if you will but come with me ; and here is a place convenient, a howff nearer than the Devil, whilk is but an ill-omened drouthy name for a tavern. This, other of the Saint Andrews is a quiet place, where I have ta'en my whetter now and then, when I lodged in the neighbourhood of the Temple with Lord Glenvarloch.—What the de'il's the matter wi' the man, garr'd him gie sic a spang as that, and almaist brought himself and me on the causeway ?"

"Do not name that false Scot's name to me," said

Jin Vin, "if you would not have me go mad!—I was happy before I saw him—he has been the cause of all the ill that has befallen me—he has made a knave and a madman of me!"

"If you are a knave," said Richie, "you have met an officer—if you are daft, you have met a keeper; but a gentle officer and a kind keeper. Look you, my gude friend, there has been twenty things said about this same lord, in which there is no more truth than in the leasings of Mahound. The warst they can say of him is, that he is not always so amenable to good advice as I would pray him, you, and every young man to be. Come wi' me—just come ye wi' me; and, if a little spell of siller and a great deal of excellent counsel can relieve your occasions, all I can say is, you have had the luck to meet one capable of giving you both, and maist willing to bestow them."

The pertinacity of the Scot prevailed over the sullenness of Vincent, who was indeed in a state of agitation and incapacity to think for himself, which led him to yield the more readily to the suggestions of any other. He suffered himself to be dragged into the small tavern which Richie recommended, and where they soon found themselves seated in a snug niche, with a reeking pottle of burnt sack, and a paper of sugar betwixt them. Pipes and tobacco were also provided, but were used only by Richie, who had adopted the custom of late, as adding considerably to the gravity and importance of his manner, and affording, as it were, a bland and pleasant accompaniment to the words of wisdom which flowed from his tongue. After they had filled their glasses, and drunk them in silence, Richie repeated the question, whither his guest was going when they met so fortunately.

"I told you," said Jenkin, "I was going to destruction—I mean to the gaming-house. I am resolved to hazard these two or three pieces, to get as much as will pay for a passage with Captain Sharker, whose ship lies at Gravesend, bound for America—and so eastward, ho!—I met one devil in the way already, who would have tempted me from my purpose, but I spurned him from me—you may be another for what I know.—What degree of damnation do you propose for me (he added, wildly), and what is the price of it?"

"I would have you to know," answered Richie, "that I deal in no such commodities, whether as buyer or seller. But if you will tell me honestly the cause of your distress, I will do what is in my power to help you out of it,—not being, however, prodigal of promises, until I know the case; as a learned physician only gives advice when he has observed the diagnostics."

"No one has anything to do with my affairs," said the poor lad; and folding his arms on the table, he laid his head down on them, with the sullen dejection of the over-burthened lama when it throws itself down to die in desperation.

Richie Monplies, like most folks who have a good opinion of themselves, was fond of the task of consolation, which at once displayed his superiority (for the consoler is always, for the time at least, superior to the afflicted person), and indulged his love of talking. He inflicted on the poor penitent a harangue of

pitiless length, stuffed full of the usual topics of the mutability of human affairs—the eminent advantages of patience under affliction—the folly of grieving for what hath no remedy—the necessity of taking more care for the future, and some gentle rebukes on account of the past, which acid he threw in to assist in subduing the patient's obstinacy, as Hannibal used vinegar in cutting his way through rocks. It was not in human nature to endure this flood of commonplace eloquence in silence; and Jin Vin, whether desirous of stopping the flow of words crammed thus into his ear "against the stomach of his sense," or whether confiding in Richie's protestations of friendship, which the wretched, says Fielding, are ever so ready to believe, or whether merely to give his sorrows vent in words, raised his head, and turning his red and swollen eyes to Richie—

"Cock's-bones, man, only hold thy tongue, and thou shalt know all about it,—and then all I ask of thee is to shake hands and part.—This Margaret Ramsay,—you have seen her, man?"

"Once," said Richie, "once, at Maister George Heriot's in Lombard-street—I was in the room when they dined."

"Ay, you helped to shift their trenchers, I remember," said Jin Vin. "Well, that same pretty girl—and I will uphold her the prettiest betwixt Paul's and the Bar—she is to be wedded to your Lord Glenvarloch, with a pestilence on him!"

"That is impossible," said Richie; "it is raving nonsense, man—they make April gouks of you cockneys every month in the year—The Lord Glenvarloch marry the daughter of a Lonnon mechanic! I would as soon believe the great Prester John would marry the daughter of a Jew packman."

"Hark ye, brother," said Jin Vin, "I will allow no one to speak disregardfully of the city, for all I am in trouble."

"I crave your pardon, man—I meant no offence," said Richie; "but as to the marriage, it is a thing simply impossible."

"It is a thing that will take place though, for the duke and the prince, and all of them, have a finger in it; and especially the old fool of a king, that makes her out to be some great woman in her own country, as all the Scots pretend to be, you know."

"Maister Vincent, but that you are under affliction," said the consoler, offended in his turn, "I would hear no national reflections."

The afflicted youth apologized in his turn, but asserted, "It was true that the king said Peg-a-Ramsay was some far-off sort of noblewoman; and that he had taken a great interest in the match, and had run about like an old gander, cackling about Peggie ever since he had seen her in hose and doublet—and no wonder," added poor Vin, with a deep sigh.

"This may be all true," said Richie, "though it sounds strange in my ears; but, man, you should not speak evil of dignities—Curse not the king, Jenkin; not even in thy bed-chamber—stone walls have ears—no one has a right to know that better than I."

"I do not curse the foolish old man," said Jenkin; "but I would have them carry things a peg lower.—If they were to see on a plain field thirty thousand such pikes as I have seen in the artillery gardens, it

would not be their long-haired courtiers would help them, I trow."

"Hout tout, man," said Richie, "mind where the Stuarts come frae, and never think they would want spears or claymores either; but leaving sic matters, whilk are perilous to speak on, I say once more, what is your concern in all this matter?"

"What is it?" said Jenkin; "why, have I not fixed on Peg-a-Ramsay to be my true love from the day I came to her old father's shop? and have I not carried her pattens and her chopines for three years, and borne her prayer-book to church, and brushed the cushion for her to kneel down upon, and did she ever say me nay?"

"I see no cause she had," said Richie, "if the like of such small services were all that ye proffered. Ah, man! there are few—very few, either of fools or of wise men, ken how to guide a woman."

"Why, did I not serve her at the risk of my freedom, and very nigh at the risk of my neck? Did she not—no, it was not her neither, but that accursed beldam whom she caused work upon me—persuade me like a fool to turn myself into a waterman to help my lord, and a plague to him, down to Scotland; and instead of going peaceably down to the ship at Gravesend, did not he rant and bully, and show his pistols, and make me land him at Greenwich, where he played some swaggering pranks, that helped both him and me into the Tower?"

"Aha!" said Richie, throwing more than his usual wisdom into his looks; "so you were the green-jacketed waterman that rowed Lord Glenvarloch down the river?"

"The more fool I, that did not souse him in the Thames," said Jenkin; "and I was the lad that would not confess one word of who or what I was, though they threatened to make me hug the Duke of Exeter's daughter."

"Wha is she, man?" said Richie; "she must be an ill-fashioned piece, if you're so much afraid of her, and she come of such high kin."

"I mean the rack—the rack, man—Where were you bred that never heard of the Duke of Exeter's daughter?" said Jenkin; "but all the dukes and duchesses in England could have got nothing out of me—so the truth came out some other way, and I was set free.—Home I ran, thinking myself one of the cleverest and happiest fellows in the ward. And she—she—she wanted to pay me with *money* for all my true service! and she spoke so sweetly and so coldly at the same time, I wished myself in the deepest dungeon of the Tower—I wish they had racked me to death before I heard this Scotchman was to chouse me out of my sweetheart!"

"But are ye sure ye have lost her?" said Richie; "it sounds strange in my ears that my Lord Glenvarloch should marry the daughter of a dealer, though there are uncouth marriages made in London, I'll allow that."

"Why, I tell you, this lord was no sooner clear of the Tower, than he and Master George Heriot comes to make proposals for her, with the king's assent and what not; and fine fair-day prospects of court favour for this lord, for he hath not an acre of land."

"Well, and what said the auld watchmaker?" said Richie; "was he not, as might weel beseem him, ready to loup out of his skin-case for very joy?"

"He multiplied six figures progressively, and reported the product—then gave his consent."

"And what did you do?"

"I took the streets," said the poor lad, "with a burning heart and a blood-shot eye—and where did I first find myself, but with that beldam, Mother Suddlechops—and what did she propose to me, but to take the road?"

"Take the road, man? in what sense?" said Richie.

"Even as a clerk to Saint Nicholas—as a highwayman, like Pains and Peto, and the good fellows in the play—and who think you was to be my captain?—for she had the whole out ere I could speak to her—I fancy she took silence for consent, and thought me damned too unutterably to have one thought left that savoured of redemption—who was to be my captain, but the knave that you saw me cudgel at the ordinary, when you waited on Lord Glenvarloch, a cowardly, sharking, thievish bully about town here, whom they call Colepepper."

"Colepepper—umph—I know somewhat of that smaik," said Richie; "ken ye by ony chance where he may be heard of, Maister Jenkin?—ye wad do me a sincere service to tell me."

"Why, he lives something obscurely, on account of suspicion of some villany—I believe that horrid murder in Whitefriars, or some such matter. But I might have heard all about him from Dame Suddlechops, for she spoke of my meeting him at Enfield Chase, with some other good fellows, to do a robbery on some one that goes northward with a store of treasure."

"And you did not agree to this fine project?" said Moniplies.

"I cursed her for a hag, and came away about my business," answered Jenkin.

"Ay, and what said she to that, man? That would startle her," said Richie.

"Not a whit. She laughed, and said she was in jest," answered Jenkin; "but I know the she-devil's jest from her earnest too well to be taken in that way. But she knows I would never betray her."

"Betray her! No," replied Richie; "but are ye in any shape bound to this birkie Peppercull, or Colepepper, or whatever they call him, that ye suld let him do a robbery on the honest gentleman that is traveling to the north, and may be a kindly Scot, for what we know?"

"Ay—going home with a load of English money," said Jenkin. "But be he who he will, they may rob the whole world an' they list, for I am robbed and ruined."

Richie filled up his friend's cup to the brim, and insisted that he should drink what he called "clean caup out." "This love," he said, "is but a bairnly matter for a brisk young fellow like yourself, Master Jenkin. And if ye must needs have a whimsy, though I think it would be safer to venture on a staid womanly body, why, here be as bonnie lasses in London as this Peg-a-Ramsay. Ye need not sigh sae deeply, for it is very true—there is as good fish

in the sea as ever came out of it. Now wherefore should you, who are as brisk and trig a young fellow of your inches, as the sun needs to shine on—wherefore need you sit moping this way, and not try some bold way to better your fortune?"

"I tell you, Master Moniplies," said Jenkin, "I am as poor as any Scot among you—I have broke my indenture, and I think of running my country."

"A-well-a-day!" said Richie; "but that maunna be, man—I ken weel, by sad experience, that poor-tith takes away pith, and the man sits full still that has a rent in his breeks. But courage, man; you have served me heretofore, and I will serve you now. If you will but bring me to speech of this same captain, it shall be the best day's work you ever did."

"I guess where you are, Master Richard—you would save your countryman's long purse," said Jenkin. "I cannot see how that should advantage me, but I reck not if I should bear a hand. I hate that braggart, that bloody-minded cowardly bully. If you can get me mounted, I care not if I show you where the dame told me I should meet him—but you must stand to the risk, for though he is coward himself, I know he will have more than one stout fellow with him."

"We'll have a warrant, man," said Richie, "and the hue and cry, to boot."

"We will have no such thing," said Jenkin, "if I am to go with you. I am not the lad to betray any one to the harman-beck. You must do it by manhood, if I am to go with you. I am sworn to cutter's law, and will sell no man's blood."

"Aweel," said Richie, "a wilful man must have his way; ye must think that I was born and bred where cracked crowns were plentier than whole ones. Besides, I have two noble friends here, Master Lowestoffe of the Temple, and his cousin Master Ringwood, that will blithely be of so gallant a party."

"Lowestoffe and Ringwood!" said Jenkin; "they are both brave gallants—they will be sure company. Know you where they are to be found?"

"Ay, marry do I," replied Richie. "They are fast at the cards and dice, till the sma' hours, I warrant them."

"They are gentlemen of trust and honour," said Jenkin, "and, if they advise it, I will try the adventure. Go, try if you can bring them hither, since you have so much to say with them. We must not be seen abroad together. I know not how it is, Master Moniplies," continued he, as his countenance brightened up, and while, in his turn, he filled the cups, "but I feel my heart something lighter since I have thought of this matter."

"This it is to have counsellors, Maister Jenkin; and truly I hope to hear you say that your heart is as light as a laverock's, and that before you are many days aulder. Never smile and shake your head, but mind what I tell you—and bide here in the meanwhile, till I go to seek these gallants. I warrant you, cart-ropes would not hold them back from such a ploy as I shall propose to them."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The thieves have bound the true men—Now, could thou and I rob the thieves, and go merrily to London.

Henry IV. Part I.

THE sun was high upon the glades of Enfield Chase, and the deer, with which it then abounded, were seen sporting in picturesque groups among the ancient oaks with which the forest abounded, when a cavalier, and a lady on foot, although in riding apparel, sauntered slowly up one of the long alleys which were cut through the park for the convenience of the hunters. Their only attendant was a page, who, riding a Spanish jennet, which seemed to bear a heavy cloak-bag, followed them at a respectful distance. The female, attired in all the fantastic finery of the period, with more than the usual quantity of bugles, flounces, and trimmings, and holding her fan of ostrich feathers in one hand, and her riding-mask of black velvet in the other, seemed anxious, by all the little coquetry practised on such occasions, to secure the notice of her companion, who sometimes heard her prattle without seeming to attend to it, and at other times interrupted his train of graver reflections, to reply to her.

"Nay, but, my lord—my lord, you walk so fast, you will leave me behind you.—Nay, I will have hold of your arm, but how to manage with my mask and my fan. Why would you not let me bring my waiting-gentlewoman to follow us, and hold my things? But see, I will put my fan in my girdle, soh!—and now that I have a hand to hold you with, you shall not run away from me."

"Come on, then," answered the gallant, "and let us walk apace, since you would not be persuaded to stay with your gentlewoman, as you call her, and with the rest of the baggage.—You may perhaps see that, though, you will not like to see."

She took hold of his arm accordingly; but as he continued to walk at the same pace, she shortly let go her hold, exclaiming that he had hurt her hand. The cavalier stopped and looked at the pretty hand and arm which she showed him, with exclamations against his cruelty. "I dare say," she said, baring her wrist and a part of her arm, "it is all black and blue to the very elbow."

"I dare say you are a little fool," said the cavalier, carelessly kissing the aggrieved arm; "it is only a pretty incarnate which sets off the blue veins."

"Nay, my lord, now it is you are silly," answered the dame; "but I am glad I can make you speak and laugh on any terms this morning. I am sure, if I did insist on following you into the forest, it was all for the sake of diverting you. I am better company than your page, I trow.—And now, tell me, these pretty things with horns, be they not deer?"

"Even such they be, Nelly," answered her neglectful attendant.

"And what can the great folks do with so many of them forsooth?"

"They send them to the city, Nell, where wise men make venison pasties of their flesh, and wear their horns for trophies," answered Lord Dalgarno, whom our reader has alerady recognized.

"Nay, now you laugh at me, my lord," answered his companion; "but I know all about venison, whatsoever you may think. I always tasted it once a-year when we dined with Mr Deputy," she continued, sadly, as a sense of her degradation stole across a mind bewildered with vanity and folly, "though he would not speak to me now, if we met together in the narrowest lane in the ward."

"I warrant he would not," said Lord Dalgarno, "because thou, Nell, wouldst dash him with a single look; for I trust thou hast more spirit than to throw away words on such a fellow as he."

"Who, I?" said Dame Nelly. "Nay, I scorn the proud princex too much for that. Do you know, he made all the folks in the ward stand cap in hand to him, my poor old John Christie and all?" Here her recollection began to overflow at her eyes.

"A plague on your whimpering," said Dalgarno, somewhat harshly.—"Nay, never look pale for the matter, Nell. I am not angry with you, you simple fool. But what would you have me think, when you are eternally looking back upon your dungeon yonder by the river, which smelt of pitch and old cheese worse than a Welchman does of onions, and all this when I am taking you down to a castle as fine as is in fairy-land!"

"Shall we be there to-night, my lord?"—said Nelly, drying her tears.

"To-night, Nelly?—no, nor this night fortnight."

"Now, the lord be with us, and keep us!—But shall we not go by sea, my lord?—I thought everybody came from Scotland by sea. I am sure Lord Glenvarloch and Richie Moniplies came up by sea."

"There is a wide difference between coming up and going down, Nelly," answered Lord Dalgarno.

"And so there is, for certain," said his simple companion. "But yet I think I heard people speaking of going down to Scotland by sea, as well as coming up. Are you well avised of the way?—Do you think it possible we can go by land, my sweet lord?"

"It is but trying, my sweet lady," said Lord Dalgarno. "Men say England and Scotland are in the same island, so one would hope there may be some road betwixt them by land."

"I shall never be able to ride so far," said the lady.

"We will have your saddle stuffed softer," said the lord. "I tell you that you shall mew your city slough, and change from the caterpillar of a paltry lane into the butterfly of a prince's garden. You shall have as many tires as there are hours in the day—as many handmaidens as there are days in the week—as many menials as there are weeks in the year—and you shall ride a hunting and hawking with a lord, instead of waiting upon an old ship-chandler, who could do nothing but hawk and spit."

"Ay, but will you make me your lady?" said Dame Nelly.

"Ay, surely—what else?" replied the lord—"My lady-love."

"Ay, but I mean your lady-wife," said Nelly.

"Truly, Nell, in that I cannot promise to oblige you. A lady-wife," continued Dalgarno, "is a very different thing from a lady-love."

"I heard from Mrs Suddlechops, whom you

lodged me with since I left poor old John Christie, that Lord Glenvarloch is to marry David Ramsay the clockmaker's daughter."

"There is much betwixt the cup and the lip, Nelly. I wear something about me may break the bands of that hopeful alliance, before the day is much older," answered Lord Dalgarno.

"Well, but my father was as good a man as old Davie Ramsay, and as well to pass in the world, my lord; and, therefore, why should you not marry me? You have done me harm enough, I trow—wherefore should you not do me this justice?"

"For two good reasons, Nelly. Fate put a husband on you, and the king passed a wife upon me," answered Lord Dalgarno.

"Ay, my lord," said Nelly, "but they remain in England, and we go to Scotland."

"Thy argument is better than thou art aware of," said Lord Dalgarno. "I have heard Scottish lawyers say the matrimonial tie may be unclasped in our country by the gentle hand of the ordinary course of law, whereas in England it can only be burst by an act of parliament. Well, Nelly, we will look into that matter; and whether we get married again or no, we will at least do our best to get unmarried."

"Shall we indeed, my honey-sweet lord? and then I will think less about John Christie, for he will marry again, I warrant you, for he is well to pass! and I would be glad to think he had somebody to take care of him, as I used to do, poor loving old man! He was a kind man, though he was a score of years older than I; and I hope and pray he will never let a young lord cross his honest threshold again."

Here the dame was once more much inclined to give way to a passion of tears; but Lord Dalgarno conjured down the emotion, by saying, with some asperity, "I am weary of these April passions, my pretty mistress, and I think you will do well to preserve your tears for some more pressing occasion. Who knows what turn of fortune may in a few minutes call for more of them than you can render?"

"Goodness, my lord! what mean you by such expressions? John Christie (the kind heart!) used to keep no secrets from me, and I hope your lordship will not hide your counsel from me?"

"Sit down beside me on this bank," said the nobleman; "I am bound to remain here for a short space, and if you can be but silent, I should like to spend a part of it in considering how far I can, on the present occasion, follow the respectable example which you recommend to me."

The place at which he stopped was at that time little more than a mound, partly surrounded by a ditch, from which it derived the name of Camlet Moat. A few hewn stones there were, which had escaped the fate of many others, which had been used in building different lodges in the forest for the royal keepers. These vestiges, just sufficient to show that "here in former times, the hand of man had been," marked the ruins of the abode of a once illustrious but long-forgotten family, the Mandevilles, Earls of Essex, to whom Enfield Chase, and the extensive domains adjacent, had belonged in elder days. A wild woodland prospect led the eye at various points through broad and seemingly inter-

minable alleys, which, meeting at this point as at a common centre, diverged from each other as they receded, and had, therefore, been selected by Lord Dalgarno as the rendezvous for the combat, which, through the medium of Richie Moniplies, he had offered to his injured friend Lord Glenvarloch.

"He will surely come," he said to himself; "cowardice was not wont to be his fault—at least he was bold enough in the park.—Perhaps yonder churl may not have carried my message? But no—he is a sturdy knave—one of those would prize his master's honour above their life.—Look to the pal-frey, Lutin, and see thou let him not loose, and cast thy falcon glance down every avenue to mark if any one comes.—Buckingham has undergone my challenge, but the proud minion pleads the king's paltry commands for refusing to answer me. If I can baffle this Glenvarloch, or slay him—if I can spoil him of his honour or his life, I shall go down to Scotland with credit sufficient to gild over past mischances. I know my dear countrymen—they never quarrel with any one who brings them home either gold or martial glory."

As he thus reflected, and called to mind the disgrace which he had suffered, as well as the causes he imagined for hating Lord Glenvarloch, his countenance altered under the influence of his contending emotions, to the terror of Nelly, who, sitting unnoticed at his feet, and looking anxiously in his face, beheld the cheek kindle, the mouth become compressed, the eye dilated, and the whole countenance express the desperate and deadly resolution of one who awaits an instant and decisive encounter with a mortal enemy. The loneliness of the place, the scenery so different from that to which alone she had been accustomed, the dark and sombre air which crept so suddenly over the countenance of her seducer, his command imposing silence upon her, and the apparent strangeness of his conduct in idling away so much time without any obvious cause, when a journey of such length lay before them, brought strange thoughts into her weak brain. She had read of women, seduced from their matrimonial duties by sorcerers allied to the hellish powers, nay, by the father of evil himself, who, after conveying his victim into some desert remote from human kind, exchanged the pleasing shape in which he gained her affections, for all his natural horrors. She chased this wild idea away as it crowded itself upon her weak and bewildered imagination; but she might have lived to see it realized allegorically, if not literally, but for the accident which presently followed.

The page, whose eyes were remarkably acute, at length called out to his master, pointing with his finger at the same time down one of the alleys, that horsemen were advancing in that direction. Lord Dalgarno started up, and shading his eyes with his hand, gazed eagerly down the alley; when, at the same instant, he received a shot, which, grazing his hand, passed right through his brain, and laid him a lifeless corpse at the feet, or rather across the lap, of the unfortunate victim of his profligacy. The countenance, whose varied expression she had been watching for the last five minutes, was convulsed for an instant, and then stiffened into rigidity for ever.

Three ruffians rushed from the brake from which the shot had been fired, ere the smoke was dispersed. One, with many imprecations, seized on the page; another on the female, upon whose cries he strove by the most violent threats to impose silence; whilst the third began to undo the burthen of the page's horse. But an instant rescue prevented their availing themselves of the advantage they had obtained.

It may easily be supposed that Richie Moniplies, having secured the assistance of the two Templars, ready enough to join in anything which promised a fray, with Jin Vin to act as their guide, had set off, gallantly mounted and well-armed, under the belief that they would reach Camlet Moat before the robbers, and apprehend them in the fact. They had not calculated that, according to the custom of robbers in other countries, but contrary to that of the English highwaymen of those days, they meant to insure robbery by previous murder. An accident also happened to delay them a little while on the road. In riding through one of the glades of the forest, they found a man dismounted and sitting under a tree, groaning with such bitterness of spirit, that Lowestoffe could not forbear asking if he was hurt. In answer, he said he was an unhappy man in pursuit of his wife, who had been carried off by a villain; and as he raised his countenance, the eyes of Richie, to his great astonishment, encountered the visage of John Christie.

"For the Almighty's sake, help me, Master Moniplies!" he said; "I have learned my wife is but a short mile before, with that black villain Lord Dalgarno."

"Have him forward by all means," said Lowestoffe; "a second Orpheus seeking his Eurydice!—Have him forward—we will save Lord Dalgarno's purse, and ease him of his mistress—Have him with us, were it but for the variety of the adventure. I owe his lordship a grudge for rooking me. We have ten minutes good."

But it is dangerous to calculate closely in matters of life and death. In all probability the minute or two which was lost in mounting John Christie behind one of their party, might have saved Lord Dalgarno from his fate. Thus his criminal amour became the indirect cause of his losing his life; and thus "our pleasant vices are made the whips to scourge us."

The riders arrived on the field at full gallop the moment after the shot was fired; and Richie, who had his own reasons for attaching himself to Colepepper, who was bustling to untie the portmanteau from the page's saddle, pushed against him with such violence as to overthrow him, his own horse at the same time stumbling and dismounting his rider, who was none of the first equestrians. The undaunted Richie immediately arose, however, and grappled with the ruffian with such good will, that though a strong fellow, and though a coward now rendered desperate, he got him under, wrenched a long knife from his hand, dealt him a desperate stab with his own weapon, and leaped on his feet; and, as the wounded man struggled to follow his example, he struck him upon the head with the butt-end of a musketoon, which last blow proved fatal.

"Bravo, Richie!" cried Lowestoffe, who had himself engaged at sword-point with one of the ruf-

fians, and soon put him to flight,—“Bravo! why, man, there lies Sin, struck down like an ox, and Iniquity’s throat cut like a calf.”

“I know not why you should upbraid me with my up-bringing, Master Lowestoffe,” answered Richie, with great composure; “but I can tell you, the shambles is not a bad place for training one to this work.”

The other Templar now shouted loudly to them, —“If ye be men, come hither—here lies Lord Dalgarno, murdered!”

Lowestoffe and Richard ran to the spot, and the page took the opportunity, finding himself now neglected on all hands, to ride off in a different direction; and neither he, nor the considerable sum with which his horse was burthened, were ever heard of from that moment.

The third ruffian had not waited the attack of the Templar and Jin Vin, the latter of whom had put down old Christie from behind him that he might ride the lighter; and the whole five now stood gazing with horror on the bloody corpse of the young nobleman, and the wild sorrow of the female, who tore her hair and shrieked in the most disconsolate manner, until her agony was at once checked, or rather received a new direction, by the sudden and unexpected appearance of her husband, who, fixing on her a cold and severe look, said, in a tone suited to his manner,—“Ay, woman! thou takest on sadly for the loss of thy paramour.”—Then, looking on the bloody corpse of him from whom he had received so deep an injury, he repeated the solemn words of Scripture,—“Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it.”—I, whom thou hast injured, will be first to render thee the decent offices due to the dead.”

So saying, he covered the dead body with his cloak, and then looking on it for a moment, seemed to reflect on what he had next to perform. As the eye of the injured man slowly passed from the body of the seducer to the partner and victim of his crime, who had sunk down to his feet, which she clasped, without venturing to look up, his features, naturally coarse and saturnine, assumed a dignity of expression which overawed the young Templars, and repulsed the officious forwardness of Richie Moniplies, who was at first eager to have thrust in his advice and opinion. “Kneel not to me, woman,” he said, “but kneel to the God thou hast offended, more than thou couldst offend such another worm as thyself. How often have I told thee, when thou wert at the gayest and the lightest, that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall! Vanity brought folly, and folly brought sin, and sin hath brought death, his original companion. Thou must needs leave duty, and decency, and domestic love, to revel it gaily with the wild and with the wicked; and there thou liest, like a crushed worm, writhing beside the lifeless body of thy paramour. Thou hast done me much wrong—dishonoured me among friends—driven credit from my house, and peace from my fire-side—But thou wert my first and only love, and I will not see thee an utter cast away, if it lies with me to prevent it.—Gentlemen, I render ye such thanks as a broken-hearted man can give.—Richard, commend me to your honourable mas-

VOL. III.

ter.—I added gall to the bitterness of his affliction, but I was deluded.—Rise up, woman, and follow me.”

He raised her up by the arm, while, with streaming eyes, and bitter sobs, she endeavoured to express her penitence. She kept her hands spread over her face, yet suffered him to lead her away; and it was only as they turned around a brake which concealed the scene they had left, that she turned back, and casting one wild and hurried glance towards the corpse of Dalgarno, uttered a shriek, and, clinging to her husband’s arm, exclaimed wildly,—“Save me—save me! They have murdered him!”

Lowestoffe was much moved by what he had witnessed; but he was ashamed, as a town-gallant, of his own unfashionable emotion, and did a force to his feelings when he exclaimed,—“Ay, let them go—the kind-hearted, believing, forgiving husband—the liberal, accommodating spouse. O what a generous creature is your true London husband!—Horns hath he, but, tame as a fatted ox, he goreth not. I should like to see her when she has exchanged her mask and riding-beaver for her peaked hat and muffler. We will visit them at Paul’s Wharf, coz—it will be a convenient acquaintance.”

“You had better think of catching the gipsey thief, Lutin,” said Richie Moniplies; “for, by my faith, he is off with his master’s baggage and the siller.”

A keeper, with his assistants, and several other persons, had now come to the spot, and made hue and cry after Lutin, but in vain. To their custody the Templars surrendered the dead bodies, and after going through some formal investigation, they returned, with Richard and Vincent, to London, where they received great applause for their gallantry. Vincent’s errors were easily expiated, in consideration of his having been the means of breaking up this band of villains; and there is some reason to think, that what would have diminished the credit of the action in other instances, rather added to it in the actual circumstances, namely, that they came too late to save Lord Dalgarno.

George Heriot, who suspected how matters stood with Vincent, requested and obtained permission from his master to send the poor young fellow on an important piece of business to Paris. We are unable to trace his fate farther, but believe it was prosperous, and that he entered into an advantageous partnership with his fellow-apprentice, upon old Davie Ramsay retiring from business, in consequence of his daughter’s marriage. That eminent antiquary, Dr Dryasdust, is possessed of an antique watch, with a silver dial-plate, and a piece of catgut instead of a chain, which bears the names of Vincent and Tunstall.

Master Lowestoffe failed not to vindicate his character as a man of gaiety, by inquiring after John Christie and Dame Nelly; but greatly to his surprise (indeed to his loss, for he had wagered ten pieces that he would domesticate himself in the family), he found the good-will, as it was called, of the shop, was sold, the stock auctioned, and the late proprietor and his wife gone, no one knew whither. The prevailing belief was, that they had emigrated to one of the new settlements in America.

Lady Dalgarno received the news of her unworthy

husband's death with a variety of emotions, among which, horror that he should have been cut off in the middle career of his profligacy, was the most prominent. The incident greatly deepened her melancholy, and injured her health, already shaken by previous circumstances. Repossessed of her own fortune by her husband's death, she was anxious to do justice to Lord Glenvarloch, by treating for the recovery of the mortgage. But the scrivener, having taken fright at the late events, had left the city and absconded, so that it was impossible to discover into whose hands the papers had now passed. Richard Moniplies was silent, for his own reasons; the Templars, who had witnessed the transaction, kept the secret at his request, and it was universally believed that the scrivener had carried off the writings along with him. We may here observe, that fears similar to those of the scrivener freed London for ever from the presence of Dame Suddlechops, who ended her career in the *Rasp-haus* (viz. Bridewell) of Amsterdam.

The stout old Lord Huntinglen, with a haughty carriage and unmoistened eye, accompanied the funeral procession of his only son to its last abode; and perhaps the only tear which fell at length upon the coffin, was given less to the fate of the individual, than to the extinction of the last male of his ancient race.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Jaques. There is sure another flood towards, and all these couples are coming to the ark.—Here comes a pair of very strange beasts.

As You Like It.

THE fashion of such narratives as the present, changes like other earthly things. Time was that the tale-teller was obliged to wind up his story by a circumstantial description of the wedding, bedding, and throwing the stocking, as the grand catastrophe to which, through so many circumstances of doubt and difficulty, he had at length happily conducted his hero and heroine. Not a circumstance was then omitted, from the manly ardour of the bridegroom, and the modest blushes of the bride, to the parson's new surplice, and the silk tabinet mantua of the bride's-maid. But such descriptions are now discarded, for the same reason, I suppose, that public marriages are no longer fashionable, and that, instead of calling together their friends to a feast and a dance, the happy couple elope in a solitary post-chaise, as secretly as if they meant to go to Gretna-Green, or to do worse. I am not ungrateful for a change which saves an author the trouble of attempting in vain to give a new colour to the commonplace description of such matters; but, notwithstanding, I find myself forced upon it in the present instance, as circumstances sometimes compel a stranger to make use of an old road which has been for some time shut up. The experienced reader may have already remarked, that the last chapter was employed in sweeping out of the way all the unnecessary and less interesting characters, that I might clear the floor for a blithe bridal.

In truth, it would be unpardonable to pass over

slightly what so deeply interested our principal personage, King James. That learned and good-humoured monarch made no great figure in the politics of Europe; but then, to make amends, he was prodigiously busy, when he could find a fair opportunity, of intermeddling with the private affairs of his loving subjects, and the approaching marriage of Lord Glenvarloch was matter of great interest to him. He had been much struck (that is, for him, who was not very accessible to such emotions) with the beauty and embarrassment of the pretty Peg-a-Ramsay, as he called her, when he first saw her, and he glorified himself greatly on the acuteness which he had displayed in detecting her disguise, and in carrying through the whole inquiry which took place in consequence of it.

He laboured for several weeks, while the courtship was in progress, with his own royal eyes, so as well nigh to wear out, he declared, a pair of her father's best barnacles, in searching through old books and documents, for the purpose of establishing the bride's pretensions to a noble, though remote descent, and thereby remove the only objection which envy might conceive against the match. In his own opinion, at least, he was eminently successful; for, when Sir Mungo Malagrowth one day, in the presence-chamber, took upon him to grieve bitterly for the bride's lack of pedigree, the monarch cut him short with, "Ye may save your grief for your ain next occasions, Sir Mungo; for by our royal saul, we will uphold her father, Davie Ramsay, to be a gentleman of nine descents, whase great gudesire came of the auld martial stock of the house of Dalwolson, than whom better men never did, and better never will, draw sword for king and country. Heard ye never of Sir William Ramsay of Dalwolson, man, of whom John Fordoun saith,—'he was *bellicosissimus, nobilissimus*?'—His castle stands to witness for itself, not three miles from Dalkeith, man, and within a mile of Bannock-rigg. Davie Ramsay came of that auld and honoured stock, and I trust he hath not derogated from his ancestors by his present craft. They all wrought wi' steel, man; only the auld knights drilled holes wi' their swords in their enemies' corslets, and he saws nicks in his brass wheels. And I hope it is as honourable to give eyes to the blind, as to slash them out of the head of those that see, and to show us how to value our time as it passes, as to fling it away in drinking, brawling, spear-splintering, and such-like unchristian doings. And you maun understand, that Davie Ramsay is no mechanic, but follows a liberal art, which approacheth almost to the act of creating a living being, seeing it may be said of a watch, as Claudius saith of the sphere of Archimedes, the Syracusian—

*Inclusus variis famulatur spiritus astris.
Et vivum certis motibus urget opus."*

"Your majesty had best give auld Davie a coat-of-arms, as well as a pedigree," said Sir Mungo.

"It's done, or ye bade, Sir Mungo," said the king; "and I trust we, who are the fountain of all earthly honour, are free to spirt a few drops of it on one so near our person, without offence to the Knight of Castle Girnigo. We have already spoken with

the learned men of the Heralds' College, and we propose to grant him an augmented coat-of-arms, being his paternal coat, charged with the crown-wheel of a watch in chief, for a difference; and we propose to add Time and Eternity for supporters, as soon as the Garter King-at-Arms shall be able to devise how Eternity is to be represented."

"I would make him twice as muckle as Time,"* said Archie Armstrong, the court fool, who chanced to be present when the king stated this dilemma.

"Peace, man—ye shall be whippet," said the king, in return for this hint; "and you, my liege subjects of England, may weel take a hint from what we have said, and not be in such a hurry to laugh at our Scottish pedigrees, though they be somewhat long derived, and difficult to be deduced. Ye see that a man of right gentle blood may, for a season, lay by his gentry, and yet ken whare to find it, when he has occasion for it. It would be as unseemly for a packman, or pedlar, as ye call a traveling-merchant, whilk is a trade to which our native subjects of Scotland are specially addicted, to be blazing his genealogy in the faces of those to whom he sells a bawbee's worth of ribbon, as it would be to him to have a beaver on his head, and a rapier by his side, when the pack was on his shoulders. Na, na—he hings his sword on the cleek, lays his beaver on the shelf, puts his pedigree into his pocket, and gangs as doucelly and cannily about his peddling craft as if his blood was nae better than ditch-water; but let our pedlar be transformed, as I have kenned it happen mair than ance, into a bien thriving merchant, then ye shall have a transformation, my lords,

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas—

Out he pulls his pedigree, on he buckles his sword, gives his beaver a brush, and cocks it in the face of all creation. We mention these things at the mair length, because we would have you all to know, that it is not without due consideration of the circumstances of all parties, that we design, in a small and private way, to honour with our own royal presence the marriage of Lord Glenvarloch with Margaret Ramsay, daughter and heiress of David Ramsay, our horologer, and a cadet only thrice removed from the ancient house of Dalwolsley. We are grieved we cannot have the presence of the noble chief of that house at the ceremony; but where there is honour to be won abroad, the Lord Dalwolsley is seldom to be found at home. *Sic fuit, est, et erit.*—Jingling Geordie, as ye stand to the cost of the marriage-feast, we look for good cheer."

Heriot bowed, as in duty bound. In fact, the king, who was a great politician about trifles, had manœuvred greatly on this occasion, and had contrived to get the prince and Buckingham dispatched on an expedition to Newmarket, in order that he might find an opportunity in their absence of indulging himself in his own gossiping, *coshering* habits, which were distasteful to Charles, whose temper inclined to formality, and with which even the

favourite, of late, had not thought it worth while to seem to sympathize. When the levee was dismissed, Sir Mungo Malagrowthier seized upon the worthy citizen in the court-yard of the palace, and detained him, in spite of all his efforts, for the purpose of subjecting him to the following scrutiny:—

"This is a sair job on you, Master George—the king must have had little consideration—this will cost you a bonny penny, this wedding-dinner?"

"It will not break me, Sir Mungo," answered Heriot; "the king hath a right to see the table which his bounty hath supplied for years well covered for a single day."

"Vera true, vera true—we'll have a' to pay, I doubt, less or mair—a sort of penny-wedding it will prove, where all men contribute to the young folks' maintenance, that they may not have just four bare legs in a bed thegither. What do you purpose to give, Master George?—we begin with the city when money is in question."

"Only a trifle, Sir Mungo—I give my god-daughter the marriage-ring; I bought it in Italy—it belonged to Cosmo de Medici. The bride will not need my help—she has an estate which belonged to her maternal grandfather."

"The auld soap-boiler," said Sir Mungo; "it will need some of his suds to scour the blot out of the Glenvarloch shield—I have heard that estate was no great things."

"It is as good as some posts at court, Sir Mungo, which are coveted by persons of high quality," replied George Heriot.

"Court favour, said ye? Court favour, Master Heriot?" replied Sir Mungo, chusing then to use his malady of misapprehension; "Moonshine in water, poor thing, if that is all she is to be tochered with—I am truly solicitous about them."

"I will let you into a secret which will relieve your tender anxiety. The dowager Lady Dalgarno gives a competent fortune to the bride, and settles the rest of her estate upon her nephew the bridegroom."

"Ay, say ye sae!" said Sir Mungo, "just to show her regard to her husband that is in the tomb—lucky that her nephew did not send him there; it was a strange story that death of poor Lord Dalgarno—some folks think the poor gentleman had much wrong. Little good comes of marrying the daughter of the house you are at feud with; indeed, it was less poor Dalgarno's fault, than theirs that forced the match on him; but I am glad the young folks are to have something to live on, come how it like, whether by charity or inheritance. But if the Lady Dalgarno were to sell all she has, even to her very wylie-coat, she canna gie them back the fair Castle of Glenvarloch—that is lost and gane—lost and gane."

"It is but too true," said George Heriot; "we cannot discover what has become of the villain Andrew Skurliewhitter, or what Lord Dalgarno has done with the mortgage."

"Assigned it away to some one, that his wife might not get it after he was gane; it would have disturbed him in his grave, to think Glenvarloch should get that land back again," said Sir Mungo; "depend on it, he will have ta'en sure measures to

*Chaucer says, there is nothing new but what it has been old. The reader has here the original of an anecdote which has since been fathered on a Scottish chief of our own time

keep that noble lordship out of her grips, or her ne-voy's either."

"Indeed it is but too probable, Sir Mungo," said Master Heriot; "but, as I am obliged to go and look after many things in consequence of this ceremony, I must leave you to comfort yourself with the reflection."

"The bride-day, you say, is to be on the thirtieth of the instant month?" said Sir Mungo, holloing after the citizen; "I will be with you in the hour of cause."

"The king invites the guests," said George Heriot, without turning back.

"The base-born, ill-bred mechanic!" soliloquized Sir Mungo, "if it were not the odd score of pounds he lent me last week, I would teach him how to bear himself to a man of quality. But I will be at the bridal banquet in spite of him."

Sir Mungo contrived to get invited, or commanded, to attend on the bridal accordingly, at which there were but few persons present; for James, on such occasions, preferred a snug privacy, which gave him liberty to lay aside the encumbrance, as he felt it to be, of his regal dignity. The company was very small, and, indeed, there were at least two persons absent whose presence might have been expected. The first of these was the Lady Dalgarno, the state of whose health, as well as the recent death of her husband, precluded her attendance on the ceremony. The other absentee was Richie Moniplies, whose conduct for some time past had been extremely mysterious. Regulating his attendance on Lord Glenvarloch entirely according to his own will and pleasure, he had, ever since the rencounter in Enfield Chase, appeared regularly at his bed-side in the morning, to assist him to dress, and at his wardrobe in the evening. The rest of the day he disposed of at his own pleasure, without control from his lord, who had now a complete establishment of attendants. Yet he was somewhat curious to know how the fellow disposed of so much of his time; but on this subject Richie showed no desire to be communicative.

On the morning of the bridal day, Richie was particularly attentive in doing all a valet-de-chambre could, so as to set off to advantage the very handsome figure of his master; and when he had arranged his dress with the utmost exactness, and put to his long curled locks what he called "the finishing touch of the redding-kaim," he gravely kneeled down, kissed his hand, and bade him farewell, saying that he humbly craved leave to discharge himself of his lordship's service.

"Why, what humour is this?" said Lord Glenvarloch; "if you mean to discharge yourself of my service, Richie, I suppose you intend to enter my wife's?"

"I wish her good ladyship that shall soon be, and your good lordship, the blessings of as good a servant as myself, in Heaven's good time," said Richie; "but fate hath so ordained it, that I can henceforth only be your servant in the way of friendly courtesy."

"Well, Richie," said the young lord, "if you are tired of service, we will seek some better provision for you; but you will wait on me to the church, and partake of the bridal dinner?"

"Under favour, my lord," answered Richie, "I must remind you of our covenant, having presently some pressing business of mine own, whilk will detain me during the ceremony; but I will not fail to prie Master George's good cheer, in respect he has made very costly fare, whilk it would be unthankful not to partake of."

"Do as you list," answered Lord Glenvarloch; and having bestowed a passing thought on the whimsical and pragmatical disposition of his follower, he dismissed the subject for others better suited to the day.

The reader must fancy the scattered flowers which strewed the path of the happy couple to church—the loud music which accompanied the procession—the marriage service performed by a bishop—the king, who met them at Saint Paul's, giving away the bride,—to the great relief of her father, who had thus time, during the ceremony, to calculate the just quotient to be laid on the pinion of report in a time-piece which he was then putting together.

When the ceremony was finished, the company was transported in the royal carriages to George Heriot's, where a splendid collation was provided for the marriage-guests in the Foljambe apartments. The king no sooner found himself in this snug retreat, than, casting from him his sword and belt with such haste as if it burnt his fingers, and flinging his plumed hat on the table, as who should say, Lie there, authority! he swallowed a hearty cup of wine to the happiness of the married couple, and began to amble about the room, mumping, laughing, and cracking jests, neither the wittiest nor the most delicate, but accompanied and applauded by shouts of his own mirth, in order to encourage that of the company. Whilst his majesty was in the midst of this gay humour, and a call to the banquet was anxiously expected, a servant whispered Master Heriot forth of the apartment. When he re-entered, he walked up to the king, and, in his turn, whispered something, at which James started.

"He is not wanting his siller?" said the king, shortly and sharply.

"By no means, my liege. It is a subject he is quite indifferent upon, so long as it can pleasure your majesty."

"Body of us, man!" said the king, "it is the speech of a true man and a loving subject, and we will grace him accordingly. Swith, man! have him—*pandite fores*. Moniplies!—They should have called the chield Monypennies, though I sall warrant you English think we have not such a name in Scotland."

"It is an ancient and honourable stock, the Monypennies," said Sir Mungo Malagrowth; "the only loss is, there are sae few of the name."

"The family seems to increase among your countrymen, Sir Mungo," said Master Lowestoffe, whom Lord Glenvarloch had invited to be present, "since his majesty's happy accession brought so many of you here."

"Right, sir—right," said Sir Mungo, nodding and looking at George Heriot; "there have some of us been the better of that great blessing to the English nation."

As he spoke, the door flew open, and in entered,

to the astonishment of Lord Glenvarloch, his late serving-man Richie Moniplies, now sumptuously, nay, gorgeously, attired in a superb brocaded suit, and leading in his hand the tall, thin, withered form of Martha Trapbois, arrayed in a complete dress of black velvet, which suited so strangely with the pallid and severe melancholy of her countenance, that the king himself exclaimed, in some perturbation, "What the de'il has the fallow brought us here? Body of us! it is a corpse that has run off with the mort-cloth!"

"May I sifflicate your majesty to be gracious unto her?" said Richie; "being that she is, in respect of this morning's wark, my ain wedded wife, Mrs Martha Moniplies by name."

"Saul of our body, man! but she looks wondrous grim," answered King James. "Art thou sure she has not been in her time maid of honour to Queen Mary, our cousin, of red-hot memory?"

"I am sure, an it like your majesty, that she has brought me fifty thousand pounds of good siller, and better; and that has enabled me to pleasure your majesty and other folks."

"Ye need have said naething about that, man," said the king; "we ken our obligations in that sma' matter, and we are glad this rudas spouse of thine hath bestowed her treasure on ane wha kens to put it to the profit of his king and country.—But whare the de'il did ye come by her, man?"

"In the auld Scottish fashion, my liege. She is the captive of my bow and my spear," answered Moniplies. "There was a convention that she should wed me when I avenged her father's death—so I slew, and took possession."

"It is the daughter of old Trapbois, who has been missed so long," said Lowestoffe.—"Where the devil could you mew her up so closely, friend Richie?"

"Master Richard, if it be your will," answered Richie; "or Master Richard Moniplies, if you like it better. For mewing of her up, I found her a shelter, in all honour and safety, under the roof of an honest countryman of my own—and for secrecy, it was a point of prudence, when wantons like you were abroad, Master Lowestoffe."

There was a laugh at Richie's magnanimous reply, on the part of every one but his bride, who made to him a signal of impatience, and said, with her usual brevity and sternness,—*"Peace—peace. I pray you, peace. Let us do that which we came for."* So saying, she took out a bundle of parchments, and delivering them to lord Glenvarloch, she said aloud,—*"I take this royal presence, and all here to witness, that I restore the ransomed lordship of Glenvarloch to the right owner, as free as ever it was held by any of his ancestors."*

"I witnessed the redemption of the mortgage," said Lowestoffe; "but I little dreamt by whom it had been redeemed."

"No need ye should," said Richie; "there would have been small wisdom in crying roast-meat."

"Peace," said his bride, "once more.—This paper," she continued, delivering another to Lord Glenvarloch, "is also your property—take it, but spare me the question how it came into my custody."

The king had bustled forward beside Lord Glen-

varloch, and fixing an eager eye on the writing, exclaimed—"Body of ourselves, it is our royal sign-manual for the money which was so long out of sight!—How came you by it, Mistress Bride?"

"It is a secret," said Martha, drily.

"A secret which my tongue shall never utter," said Richie, resolutely, "unless the king commands me on my allegiance."

"I do—I do command you," said James, trembling and stammering with the impatient curiosity of a gossip; while Sir Mungo, with more malicious anxiety to get at the bottom of the mystery, stooped his long thin form forward like a bent fishing-rod, raised his thin grey locks from his ear, and curved his hand behind it to collect every vibration of the expected intelligence.—Martha in the meantime frowned most ominously on Richie, who went on undauntedly to inform the king, "that his deceased father-in-law, a good careful man in the main, had a touch of worldly wisdom about him, that at times marred the uprightness of his walk; he liked to dabble among his neighbour's gear, and some of it would at times stick to his fingers in the handling."

"For shame, man, for shame," said Martha; "since the infamy of the deed must be told, be it at least briefly.—Yes, my lord," she added, addressing Glenvarloch, "the piece of gold was not the sole bait which brought the miserable old man to your chamber that dreadful night—his object, and he accomplished it, was to purloin this paper. The wretched scrivener was with him that morning, and I doubt not, urged the doting old man to this villany, to prevent the ransom of your estate. If there was a yet more powerful agent at the bottom of the conspiracy, God forgive it to him at this moment, for he is now where the crime must be answered!"

"Amen!" said Lord Glenvarloch, and it was echoed by all present.

"For my father," continued she, with her stern features twitched by an involuntary and convulsive movement, "his guilt and folly cost him his life; for my belief is constant, that the wretch who counseled him that morning to purloin the paper, left open the window for the entrance of the murderers."

Everybody was silent for an instant; the king was first to speak, commanding search instantly to be made for the guilty scrivener. "*I, lictor,*" he concluded, "*colliga manus—caput obnubito—infelici suspendite arbori.*"

Lowestoffe answered with due respect, that the scrivener had absconded at the time of Lord Dalgarno's murder, and had not been heard of since.

"Let him be sought for," said the king. "And now let us change the discourse—these stories make one's very blood grow, and are altogether unfit for bridal festivity. *Hymen, O Hymenee!*" added he, snapping his fingers; "Lord Glenvarloch, what say you to Mistress Moniplies, this bonny bride, that has brought you back your father's estate on your bridal day?"

"Let him say nothing, my liege," said Martha, "it will best suit his feelings and mine."

"There is redemption-money, at the least, to be repaid," said Lord Glenvarloch; "in that I cannot remain debtor."

"We will speak of it hereafter," said Martha; "*my debtor you cannot be.*" And she shut her mouth as if determined to say nothing more on the subject. Sir Mungo, however, resolved not to part with the topic, and availing himself of the freedom of the moment, said to Richie—"A queer story that of your father-in-law, honest man; methinks your bride thanked you little for ripping it up."

"I make it a rule, Sir Mungo," replied Richie, "always to speak any evil I know about my family myself, having observed, that if I do not, it is sure to be told by ither folks."

"But, Richie," said Sir Mungo, "it seems to me that this bride of yours is like to be master and mair in the conjugal state."

"If she abides by words, Sir Mungo, I thank Heaven I can be as deaf as any one; and if she comes to dunts, I have a hand to paik her with."

"Weel said, Richie, again," said the king; "you have gotten it on baith haffits, Sir Mungo.—Troth, Mistress Bride, for a fule, your gudeman has a pretty turn of wit."

"There are fools, sire," replied she, "who have wit, and fools who have courage, and are great fools

notwithstanding—I chose this man because he was my protector when I was desolate, and neither for his wit nor his wisdom. He is truly honest, and has a heart and hand that make amends for some folly. Since I was condemned to seek a protector through the world, which is to me a wilderness, I may thank God that I have come by no worse."

"And that is sae sensibly said," replied the king, "that, by my saul, I'll try whether I canna make him better. Kneel down, Richie—somebody lend me a rapier—yours, Mr Langstaff (that's a brave name for a lawyer)—ye need not flash it out that gate, Templar fashion, as if ye were about to pink a bailiff!"

He took the drawn sword, and with averted eyes, for it was a sight he loved not to look on, endeavoured to lay it on Richie's shoulder, but nearly stuck it into his eye. Richie, starting back, attempted to rise, but was held down by Lowestoffe, while Sir Mungo, guiding the royal weapon, the honour-bestowing blow was given and received: "*Surge, carnifex—*Rise up, Sir Richard Moniplies, of Castle Collop!—And, my lords and lieges, let us all to our dinner, for the cock-a-leekie is cooling."

Quentin Durward.

La guerre est ma patrie,
Mon harnois ma maison ;
Et, en toute saison,
Combattre c'est ma vie.

INTRODUCTION.

And one who hath had losses—go to.

Much Ado about Nothing.

WHEN honest Dogberry sums up and recites all the claims which he had to respectability, and which, as he opined, ought to have exempted him from the injurious appellation conferred on him by Master Gentleman Conrade, it is remarkable that he lays not more emphasis even upon his double gown (a matter of some importance in a certain cidevant capital which I wot of), or upon his being “a pretty piece of flesh as any in Messina,” or even upon the conclusive argument of his being “a rich fellow enough,” than upon his being *one that hath had losses*.

Indeed, I have always observed your children of prosperity, whether by way of hiding their full glow of splendour from those whom fortune has treated more harshly, or whether that to have risen in spite of calamity is as honourable to their fortune as it is to a fortress to have undergone a siege,—however this be, I have observed that such persons never fail to entertain you with an account of the damage they sustain by the hardness of the times. You seldom dine at a well-supplied table, but what the intervals between the champagne, the burgundy, and the hock, are filled, if your entertainer be a moneyed man, with the fall of interest and the difficulty of finding investments for cash, which is therefore lying idle on his hands; or, if he be a landed proprietor, with a woful detail of arrears and diminished rents. This hath its effects. The guests sigh and shake their heads in cadence with their landlord, look on the sideboard loaded with plate, sip once more the rich wines which flow around them in quick circulation, and think of the genuine benevolence, which, thus stinted of its means, still lavishes all that it yet possesses on hospitality; and, what is yet more flattering, on the wealth, which, undiminished by these losses, still continues, like the inexhaustible hoard of the generous Aboulcasem, to sustain, without impoverishment, such copious evacuations.

This querulous humour, however, hath its limits, like to the conning of grievances, which all valetudinarians know is a most fascinating pastime, so long as there is nothing to complain of but chronic complaints. But I never heard a man whose credit was actually verging to decay talk of the diminution of his funds; and my kind and intelligent physician assures me, that it is a rare thing with those afflicted with a good sound fever, or any such active disorder, which

With mortal crisis doth portend
His life to appropinque an end,

to make their agonies the subject of amusing conversation.

Having deeply considered all these things, I am no longer able to disguise from my readers, that I am neither so unpopular nor so low in fortune, as not to have my share in the distresses which at present afflict the moneyed and landed interest of these realms. Your authors who live upon a mutton-chop may rejoice that it has fallen to three-pence per pound, and, if they have children, gratulate themselves that the peck-loaf may be had for six-pence; but we who belong to the tribe which are ruined by peace and plenty—we who have lands and beeves, and sell what these poor gleaners must buy—we are driven to despair by the very events which would make all Grub-street illuminate all its attics, if Grub-street could spare candle-ends for the purpose. I therefore put in my proud claim to share in the distresses which only affect the wealthy; and write myself down, with Dogberry, “a rich fellow enough,” but still “one who hath had losses.”

With the same generous spirit of emulation, I have had lately recourse to the universal remedy for the impecuniosity of which I complain—a brief residence in a southern climate, by which I have not only saved many cart-loads of coals, but have also had the pleasure to excite general sympathy for my decayed circumstances among those, who, if my revenue had continued to be spent among them, would have cared little if I had been hanged. Thus, while I drink my *vin ordinaire*, my brewer finds the sale of his small-beer diminished—while I discuss my flask of *cinq francs*, my modicum of port hangs on my wine-merchant's hands—while my *côtelette à la Maintenon* is smoking on my plate, the mighty sirloin hangs on its peg in the shop of my blue-aproned friend in the village. Whatever, in short, I spend here, is missed at home; and the few sous gained by the *garçon perruquier*, nay, the very crust I give to his little bare-bottomed, red-eyed poodle, are *autant perdu* to my old friend the barber, and honest Trusty, the mastiff-dog in the yard. So that I have the happiness of knowing at every turn, that my absence is both missed and moaned by those who would care little were I in my coffin, were they sure of the custom of my executors. From this charge of self-seeking and indifference, however, I solemnly except Trusty, the yard-dog, whose courtesies towards me, I have reason to think, were of a more disinterested character than those of any other person who assisted me to consume the bounty of the public.

Alas! the advantage of exciting such general sympathies at home cannot be secured without incurring considerable personal inconvenience. “If thou wishest me to weep, thou must first shed tears

thymself," says Horace; and, truly, I could sometimes cry myself at the exchange I have made of the domestic comforts which custom had rendered necessities, for the foreign substitutes which caprice and love of change have rendered fashionable. I cannot but confess with shame, that my home-bred stomach longs for the genuine steak, after the fashion of Dolly's, hot from the gridiron, brown without, and scarlet when the knife is applied; and all the delicacies of Véry's *carte*, with his thousand various orthographies of *bifticks de mouton*, do not supply the vacancy. Then my mother's son cannot delight in thin potations; and, in these days, when malt is had for nothing, I am convinced that a double *straick* of John Barleycorn must have converted "the poor domestic creature, small-beer," into a liquor twenty times more generous than the acid unsubstantial tippie, which here bears the honoured name of wine, though, in substance and qualities, much similar to your Seine water. Their higher wines, indeed, are well enough—there is nothing to except against in their *château-margaut*, or sillery; yet I cannot but remember the generous qualities of my sound old oporto. Nay, down to the *garçon* and his poodle, though they are both amusing animals, and play ten thousand monkey-tricks which are diverting enough, yet there was more sound humour in the wink with which our old village Packwood used to communicate the news of the morning, than all Antoine's gambols could have expressed in a week, and more of human and dog-like sympathy in the wag of old Trusty's tail, than if his rival, Toutou, had stood on his hind-legs for a twelvemonth.

These signs of repentance come perhaps a little late, and I own (for I must be entirely candid with my dear friend the Public), that they have been somewhat matured, by the perversion of my niece Christy to the ancient popish faith by a certain whacking priest in our neighbourhood, and the marriage of my aunt Dorothy to a *demi-solde* captain of horse, a *ci-devant* member of the Legion of Honour, and who would, he assures us, have been a field-marshal by this time, had our old friend Buonaparte continued to live and to triumph. For the matter of Christy, I must own her head had been so fairly turned at Edinburgh with five routs a-night, that, though I somewhat distrusted the means and medium of her conversion, I was at the same time glad to see that she took a serious thought of any kind;—besides, there was little loss in the matter, for the convent took her off my hands for a very reasonable pension. But aunt Dorothy's marriage on earth was a very different matter from Christian's celestial espousals. In the first place, there were two thousand three-per-cents as much lost to my family as if the sponge had been drawn over the national slate—for who the deuce could have thought aunt Dorothy would have married? Above all, who would have thought a woman of fifty years' experience would have married a French anatomy, his lower branch of limbs corresponding with the upper branch, as if one pair of half-extended compasses had been placed perpendicularly upon the top of another, while the space on which the hinges revolved quite sufficed to represent the body? All the rest was moustache, pelisse, and calico trowser. She might

have commanded a Polk of real Cossacks in 1815, for half the wealth which she surrendered to this military scarecrow. However, there is no more to be said upon the matter, especially as she had come the length of quoting Rousseau for sentiment—and so let that pass.

Having thus expectorated my bile against a land, which is, notwithstanding, a very merry land, and which I cannot blame, because I sought it, and it did not seek me, I come to the more immediate purpose of this Introduction, and which, my dearest Public, if I do not reckon too much on the continuance of your favours (though, to say truth, consistency and uniformity of taste are scarce to be reckoned upon by those who court your good graces), may perhaps go far to make me amends for the loss and damage I have sustained by bringing aunt Dorothy to the country of thick calves, slender ankles, black moustaches, bodiless limbs (I assure you the fellow is, as my friend Lord L—— said, a complete gilet-pie, all legs and wings), and fine sentiments. If she had taken from the half-pay list, a ranting Highlandman, ay, or a dashing son of Erin, I would never have mentioned the subject; but as the affair has happened, it is scarce possible not to resent such a gratuitous plundering of her own lawful heirs and executors. But, "be hushed my dark spirit," and let us invite our dear Public to a more pleasing theme to us, a more interesting one to others.

By dint of drinking acid tiff, as above mentioned, and smoking segars, in which I am no novice, my public are to be informed, that I gradually drank and smoked myself into a certain degree of acquaintance with *un homme comme il faut*, one of the few fine old specimens of nobility who are still to be found in France; who, like mutilated statues of an antiquated and obsolete worship, still command a certain portion of awe and estimation in the eyes even of those by whom neither one nor other were voluntarily rendered.

On visiting the coffee-house of the village, I was, at first, struck with the singular dignity and gravity of this gentleman's manners, his sedulous attachment to shoes and stockings, in contempt of half-boots and pantaloons, the *croix de Saint Louis* at his button-hole, and a small white cockade in the loop of his old-fashioned *schaker*. There was something interesting in his whole appearance; and besides, his gravity among the lively group around him, seemed, like the shade of a tree in the glare of a sunny landscape, more interesting from its rarity. I made such advances towards acquaintance as the circumstances of the place, and the manners of the country, authorized—that is to say, I drew near him, smoked my segar by calm and intermitted puffs, which were scarcely visible, and asked him those few questions which good breeding everywhere, but more especially in France, permits strangers to put, without hazarding the imputation of impertinence. The Marquis de Hautlieu, for such was his rank, was as short and sententious as French politeness permitted—he answered every question, but proposed nothing, and encouraged no farther inquiry.

The truth was, that, not very accessible to foreigners of any nation, or even to strangers among

his own countrymen, the marquis was peculiarly shy towards the English. A remnant of ancient national prejudice might dictate this feeling; or it might arise from his idea that they are a haughty, purse-proud people, to whom rank, united with straitened circumstances, affords as much a subject for scorn as for pity; or finally, when he reflected on certain recent events, he might perhaps feel mortified, as a Frenchman, even for those successes which had restored his master to the throne, and himself to a diminished property and dilapidated château. His dislike, however, never assumed a more active form than that of alienation from English society. When the affairs of strangers required the interposition of his influence in their behalf, it was uniformly granted with the courtesy of a French gentleman, who knew what is due to himself and to national hospitality.

At length, by some chance, the marquis made the discovery, that the new frequenter of his ordinary was a native of Scotland, a circumstance which told mightily in my favour. Some of his own ancestors, he informed me, had been of Scottish origin, and he believed his house had still some relations in what he was pleased to call the province of Hanguisse, in that country. The connexion had been acknowledged early in the last century on both sides, and he had once almost determined, during his exile (for it may be supposed that the marquis had joined the ranks of Conde, and shared all the misfortunes and distresses of emigration), to claim the acquaintance and protection of his Scottish friends. But, after all, he said, he cared not to present himself before them in circumstances which could do them but small credit, and which they might think entailed some little burthen, perhaps even some little disgrace; so that he thought it best to trust in Providence, and do the best he could for his own support. What that was I never could learn; but I am sure it inferred nothing which could be discreditable to the excellent old man, who held fast his opinions and his loyalty, through good and bad repute, till time restored him, aged, indigent, and broken-spirited, to the country which he had left in the prime of youth and health, and in a tone of high resentment, which promised speedy vengeance upon those who expelled him. I might have laughed at some points of the marquis's character, at his prejudices, particularly, both of birth and politics, if I had known him under more prosperous circumstances; but, situated as he was, even if they had not been fair and honest prejudices, turning on no base or interested motive, one must have respected him, as we respect the confessor or the martyr of a religion which is not entirely our own.

By degrees we became good friends, drank our coffee, smoked our segar, and took our *bavaroise* together, for more than six weeks, with little interruption from avocations on either side. Having, with some difficulty, got the key-note of his inquiries concerning Scotland, by a fortunate conjecture that the province of Hanguisse could only be our shire of Angus, I was enabled to answer the most of his queries concerning his allies there in a manner more or less satisfactory, and was much surprised to find the marquis much better acquainted with the genealogy of some of the distinguished families in that

county, than I could possibly have expected.

On his part, his satisfaction at our intercourse was so great, that he at length wound himself to such a pitch of resolution, as to invite me to dine at the Château de Hautlieu, well deserving the name, as occupying a commanding eminence on the banks of the Loire. This building lay about three miles from the town at which I had settled my temporary establishment; and when I first beheld it, I could easily forgive the mortified feelings which the owner testified, at receiving a guest in the asylum which he had formed out of the ruins of the palace of his fathers. He gradually, with much gaiety, which yet evidently covered a deeper feeling, prepared me for the sort of place I was about to visit; and for this he had full opportunity whilst he drove me in his little cabriolet, drawn by a large, heavy, Norman horse, towards the ancient building.

Its remains run along a beautiful terrace overhanging the river Loire, which had been formerly laid out with a succession of flights of steps, highly ornamented with statues, rock-work, and other artificial embellishments, descending from one terrace to another, until the very verge of the river was attained. All this architectural decoration, with its accompanying parterres of rich flowers and exotic shrubs, had, many years since, given place to the more profitable scene of the vine-dresser's labours; yet the remains, too massive to be destroyed, are still visible, and, with the various artificial slopes and levels of the high bank, bear perfect evidence how completely art had been here employed to decorate nature.

Few of these scenes are now left in perfection, for the fickleness of fashion has accomplished in England the total change which devastation and popular fury have produced in the French pleasure-grounds. For my part, I am contented to subscribe to the opinion of the best qualified judge of our time,* who thinks we have carried to an extreme our taste for simplicity, and that the neighbourhood of a stately mansion requires some more ornate embellishments than can be derived from the meagre accompaniments of grass and gravel. A highly romantic situation may be degraded, perhaps, by an attempt at such artificial ornaments; but then, in by far the greater number of sites, the intervention of more architectural decoration than is now in use, seems necessary to redeem the naked tameness of a large house, placed by itself in the midst of a lawn, where it looks as much unconnected with all around, as if it had walked out of town upon an airing.

How the taste came to change so suddenly and absolutely, is rather a singular circumstance, unless we explain it on the same principle on which the three friends of the Father in Molière's comedy recommended a cure for the melancholy of his daughter—that he should furnish her apartments, viz. with paintings—with tapestry—or with china, according to the different commodities in which

* See Price's Essay on the Picturesque, in many passages; but I would particularize the beautiful and highly poetical account which he gives of his own feelings, on destroying, at the dictate of an improver, an ancient sequestered garden, with its yew hedges, ornamented iron gates, and secluded wilderness.

each of them was a dealer. Tried by this scale, we may perhaps discover, that, of old, the architect laid out the garden and the pleasure-grounds in the neighbourhood of the mansion, and, naturally enough, displayed his own art there in statues and vases, and paved terraces and flights of steps, with ornamented balustrades; while the gardener, subordinate in rank, endeavoured to make the vegetable kingdom correspond to the prevailing taste, and cut his evergreens into verdant walls, with towers and battlements, and his detached trees into a resemblance of statuary. But the wheel has since revolved, so as to place the landscape-gardener, as he is called, upon almost a level with the architect; and hence a liberal and somewhat violent use is made of spade and pick-axe, and a converting the ostentatious labours of the architect into a *ferme ornée* as little different from the simplicity of nature, as displayed in the surrounding country, as the comforts of convenient and cleanly walks, imperiously demanded in the vicinage of a gentleman's residence, can possibly admit.

To return from this digression, which has given the marquis's cabriolet (its activity greatly retarded by the downward propensities of Jean Roast-beef, which I suppose the Norman horse cursed as heartily as his countrymen of old time execrated the stolid obesity of a Saxon slave) time to ascend the hill by a winding causeway now much broken, we came in sight of a long range of roofless buildings, connected with the western extremity of the castle, which was totally ruinous. "I should apologize," he said, "to you, as an Englishman, for the taste of my ancestors in connecting that row of stables with the architecture of the château. I know in your country it is usual to remove them to some distance; but my family had an hereditary pride in horses, and were fond of visiting them more frequently than would have been convenient if they had been kept at a greater distance. Before the Revolution, I had thirty fine horses in that ruinous line of buildings!"

This recollection of past magnificence escaped from him accidentally, for he was generally sparing in alluding to his former opulence. It was quietly said, without any affectation either of the importance attached to early wealth, or as demanding sympathy for its having passed away. It awakened unpleasing reflections, however, and we were both silent, till, from a partially repaired corner of what had been a porter's lodge, a lively French *paysanne*, with eyes as black as jet, and as brilliant as diamonds, came out with a smile, which showed a set of teeth that duchesses might have envied, and took the reins of the little carriage.

"Madelon must be groom to-day," said the marquis, after graciously nodding in return for her deep reverence to monsieur, "for her husband is gone to market; and for La Jeunesse, he is almost distracted with his various occupations. Madelon," he continued, as we walked forward under the entrance-arch, crowned with the mutilated armorial bearings of former lords, now half-obsured by moss and rye-grass, not to mention the vagrant branches of some unpruned shrubs,—“Madelon,” he continued, “was my wife's god-daughter, and was educated to be fille-de-chambre to my daughter.”

This little passing intimation, that he was a widowed husband and childless father, increased my respect for the unfortunate gentleman, to whom every particular attached to his present situation brought doubtless its own share of food for melancholy reflection. He proceeded, after the pause of an instant, with something of a gayer tone.—“You will be entertained with my poor La Jeunesse,” he said, “who, by the way, is ten years older than I am—(the marquis is above sixty)—he reminds me of the player in the *Roman Comique*, who acted a whole play in his own proper person—he insists on being maître d'hôtel, maître de cuisine, valet-de-chambre, a whole suite of attendants in his own poor individuality. He sometimes reminds me of a character in the *Bridle of Lammermore*, which you must have read, as it is the work of one of your *gens de lettres, qu'on appelle, je crois, le Chevalier Scott*.”

“I presume you mean Sir Walter?”

“Yes—the same—the same,” said the marquis.

We were now led away from more painful recollections; for I had to put my French friend right in two particulars. In the first I prevailed with difficulty; for the marquis, though he disliked the English, yet, having been three months in London, piqued himself in understanding the most intricate difficulties of our language, and appealed to every dictionary, from Florio downwards, that *la Bride* must mean the Bridle. Nay, so sceptical was he on this point of philology, when I ventured to hint that there was nothing about a bridle in the whole story, that he, with great composure, and little knowing to whom he spoke, laid the whole blame of that inconsistency on the unfortunate author. I had next the common candour to inform my friend, upon grounds which no one could know so well as myself, that my distinguished literary countryman, of whom I shall always speak with the respect his talents deserve, was not responsible for the slight works which the humour of the public had too generously, as well as too rashly, ascribed to him. Surprised by the impulse of the moment, I might even have gone farther, and clenched the negative by positive evidence, owning to my entertainer that no one else could possibly have written these works, since I myself was the author, when I was saved from so rash a commitment of myself by the calm reply of the marquis, that he was glad to hear these sort of trifles were not written by a person of condition. “We read them,” he said, “as we listen to the pleasantries of a comedian, or our ancestors to those of a professed family-jester, with a good deal of amusement, which, however, we should be sorry to derive from the mouth of one who has better claims to our society.”

I was completely recalled to my constitutional caution by this declaration; and became so much afraid of committing myself, that I did not even venture to explain to my aristocratic friend, that the gentleman whom he had named owed his advancement, for aught I had ever heard, to certain works of his, which may, without injury, be compared to romances in rhyme.

The truth is, that, amongst some other unjust

prejudices, at which I have already hinted, the marquis had contracted a horror, mingled with contempt, for almost every species of author-craft, slighter than that which compounds a folio volume of law or of divinity, and looked upon the author of a romance, novel, fugitive poem, or periodical piece of criticism, as men do on a venomous reptile, with fear at once and with loathing. The abuse of the press, he contended, especially in its lighter departments, had poisoned the whole morality of Europe, and was gradually once more regaining an influence which had been silenced amidst the voice of war. All writers, except those of the largest and heaviest calibre, he conceived to be devoted to this evil cause, from Rousseau and Voltaire down to Pigault le Brun and the author of the Scotch Novels; and although he admitted he read them *pour passer le temps*, yet, like Pistol eating his leek, it was not without execrating the tendency, as he devoured the story of the work with which he was engaged.

Observing this peculiarity, I backed out of the candid confession which my vanity had meditated, and engaged the marquis in farther remarks on the mansion of his ancestors. "There," he said, "was the theatre where my father used to procure an order for the special attendance of some of the principal actors of the Comédie Française, when the king and Madame Pompadour more than once visited him at this place;—yonder, more to the centre, was the baron's hall, where his feudal jurisdiction was exercised when criminals were to be tried by the seigneur or his bailiff; for we had, like your old Scotch nobles, the right of pit and gallows, or *fossa cum furca*, as the civilians term it;—beneath that lies the question-chamber, or apartment for torture; and, truly, I am sorry a right so liable to abuse should have been lodged in the hands of any living creature. But," he added, with a feeling of dignity derived even from the atrocities which his ancestors had committed beneath the grated windows to which he pointed, "such is the effect of superstition, that, to this day, the peasants dare not approach the dungeons, in which, it is said, the wrath of my ancestors had perpetrated, in former times, much cruelty."

As we approached the window, while I expressed some curiosity to see this abode of terror, there arose from its subterranean abyss a shrill shout of laughter, which we easily detected as produced by a group of playful children, who had made the neglected vaults a theatre, for a joyous romp at Colin Maillard.

The marquis was somewhat disappointed, and had recourse to his *tabatière*; but, recovering in a moment, observed, these were Madelon's children, and familiar with the supposed terrors of the subterranean recesses. "Besides," he added, "to speak the truth, these poor children have been born after the period of supposed illumination, which dispelled our superstition and our religion at once; and this bids me to remind you, that it is a *jour maigre*. The curé of the parish is my only guest, besides yourself, and I would not voluntarily offend his opinions. "Besides," he continued, more manfully, and throwing off his restraint, "adversity has taught me other

thoughts on these subjects than those which prosperity dictated; and I thank God I am not ashamed to avow, that I follow the observances of my church."

I hastened to answer, that, though they might differ from those of my own, I had every possible respect for the religious rules of every christian community, sensible that we addressed the same Deity, on the same grand principle of salvation, though with different forms; which variety of worship, had it pleased the Almighty not to permit, our observances would have been as distinctly prescribed to us as they are laid down under the Mosaic law.

The marquis was no shaker of hands, but upon the present occasion he grasped mine, and shook it kindly—the only mode of acquiescence in my sentiments which perhaps a zealous catholic could, or ought, consistently to have given upon such an occasion.

This circumstance of explanation and remark, with others which arose out of the view of the extensive ruins, occupied us during two or three turns upon the long terrace, and a seat of about a quarter of an hour's endurance in a vaulted pavilion of free-stone, decorated with the marquis's armorial bearings, the roof of which, though disjointed in some of its groind-arches, was still solid and entire. "Here," said he, resuming the tone of a former part of his conversation, "I love to sit, either at noon, when the alcove affords me shelter from the heat, or in the evening, when the sun's beams are dying on the broad face of the Loire—here, in the words of your great poet, whom, Frenchman as I am, I am more intimately acquainted with than most Englishmen, I love to rest myself,

Showing the code of sweet and bitter fancy."

Against this various reading of a well-known passage in Shakspeare I took care to offer no protest; for I suspect Shakspeare would have suffered in the opinion of so delicate a judge as the marquis, had I proved his having written "chewing the cud," according to all other authorities. Besides, I had had enough of our former dispute, having been long convinced (though not till ten years after I left Edinburgh College) that the pith of conversation does not consist in exhibiting your own superior knowledge on matters of small consequence, but in enlarging, improving, and correcting the information you possess by the authority of others. I therefore let the marquis *show* his *code* at his pleasure, and was rewarded by his entering into a learned and well-informed disquisition on the florid style of architecture introduced into France during the seventeenth century. He pointed out its merits and its defects with considerable taste; and having touched on topics similar to those which I have formerly digressed upon, he made an appeal of a different kind in their favour, founded upon the associations with which they were combined.—"Who," he said, "would willingly destroy the terraces of the château of Sully, since we cannot tread them without recalling the image of that statesman, alike distinguished for severe integrity and for strong and unerring sagacity of mind? Were they

an inch less broad, a ton's weight less massive, or were they deprived of their formality by the slightest inflexions—could we suppose them to remain the scene of his patriotic musings? Would an ordinary root-house be a fit scene for the duke occupying an arm-chair, and his duchess a *tabouret*—teaching from thence lessons of courage and fidelity to his sons—of modesty and submission to his daughters—of rigid morality to both; while the circle of young noblesse listened with ears attentive and eyes modestly fixed on the ground, in a standing posture, neither replying nor sitting down without the express command of their prince and parent? No, monsieur," he said, with enthusiasm; "destroy the princely pavilion in which this edifying family-scene was represented, and you remove from the mind the *vraisemblance*, the veracity of the whole representation. Or can your mind suppose this distinguished peer and patriot walking in a *jardin anglais*? Why, you might as well fancy him dressed with a blue frock and white waistcoat, instead of his Henri Quatre coat and *chapeau à plumes*. Consider how he could have moved in the tortuous maze of what you have called a *ferme ornée*, with his usual attendants of two files of Swiss guards preceding, and the same number following him. To recal his figure, with his beard, *haut de chausses à canon*, united to his doublet by ten thousand *aiguillettes* and knots of ribbon, you could not, supposing him in a modern *jardin anglais*, distinguish the picture in your imagination from the sketch of some mad old man, who has adopted the humour of dressing like his great-great-grandfather, and whom a party of gendarmes was conducting to the *Maison des Fous*. But look on the long and magnificent terrace—if it yet exists—which the loyal and exalted Sully was wont to make the scene of his solitary walk twice a-day, while he pondered over the patriotic schemes which he nourished for advancing the glory of France; or, at a later and more sorrowful period of life, brooded over the memory of his murdered master, and the fate of his distracted country;—throw into that noble back-ground of arcades, vases, images, urns, and whatever could express the vicinity of a ducal palace, and the landscape becomes consistent at once. The *factionnaires*, with their harquebusses ported, placed at the extremities of the long and level walk, intimate the presence of the feudal prince; while the same is more clearly shown by the guard of honour which precede and follow him, their halberds carried upright, their mien martial and stately, as if in the presence of an enemy, yet moved, as it were, with the same soul as their princely superior—teaching their steps to attend upon his, marching as he marches, halting as he halts, accommodating their pace even to the slight irregularities of pause and advance dictated by the fluctuations of his reverie, and wheeling, with military precision, before and behind him, who seems the centre and animating principle of their armed files, as the heart gives life and energy to the human body. Or, if you smile," added the marquis, looking doubtfully on my countenance, "at a promenade so inconsistent with the light freedom of modern manners, could you bring your mind to demolish that

other terrace trod by the fascinating Marchioness de Sévigné, with which are united so many recollections connected with passages in her enchanting letters?"

A little tired of this disquisition, which the marquis certainly dwelt upon to exalt the natural beauties of his own terrace, which, diapidated as it was, required no such formal recommendation, I informed my friend, that I had just received from England a journal of a tour made in the south of France by a young Oxonian friend of mine, a poet, a draughtsman, and a scholar,—in which he gives such an animated and interesting description of the Château-Grignan, the dwelling of Madame de Sévigné's beloved daughter, and frequently the place of her own residence, that no one who ever read the book would be within forty miles of the same, without going a pilgrimage to the spot. The marquis smiled, seemed very much pleased, and asked the title at length of the work in question; and writing down to my dictation, "An Itinerary of Provence and the Rhone, made during the year 1819; by John Hughes, A. M., of Oriel College, Oxford,"—observed, he could now purchase no books for the château, but would recommend that the *Itinéraire* should be commissioned for the library to which he was *abonné* in the neighbouring town. "And here," he said, "comes the curé, to save us farther disquisition; and I see La Jeunesse gliding round the old portico on the terrace, with the purpose of ringing the dinner-bell—a most unnecessary ceremony for assembling three persons, but which it would break the old man's heart to forego. Take no notice of him at present, as he wishes to perform the duties of the inferior departments incognito; when the bell has ceased to sound, he will blaze forth on us in the character of major-domo."

As the marquis spoke, we were advanced towards the eastern extremity of the château, which was the only part of the edifice that remained still habitable.

"The *Bande Noire*," said the marquis, "when they pulled the rest of the house to pieces, for the sake of the lead, timber, and other materials, have, in their ravages, done me the undesigned favour to reduce it to dimensions better fitting the circumstances of the owner. There is enough of the leaf left for the caterpillar to coil up his chrysalis in, and what needs he care what reptiles have devoured the rest of the bush?"

As he spoke thus, we reached the door, at which La Jeunesse appeared, with an air at once of prompt service and deep respect, and a countenance, which, though puckered by a thousand wrinkles, was ready to answer the first good-natured word of his master with a smile, which showed his white set of teeth firm and fair, in despite of age and suffering. His clean silk stockings, washed till their tint had become yellowish—his cue tied with a rosette—the thin grey curl on either side of his lank cheek—the pearl-coloured coat, without a collar—the *solitaire*, the *jabot*, the ruffles at the wrist, and the *chapeau-bras*—all announced that La Jeunesse considered the arrival of a guest at the château as an unusual event, which was to be met with a corresponding display of magnificence and parade on his part.

As I looked at the faithful though fantastic follower

of his master, who doubtless inherited his prejudices as well as his cast-clothes, I could not but own, in my own mind, the resemblance pointed out by the marquis betwixt him and my own Caleb, the trusty squire of the Master of Ravenswood. But a Frenchman, a jack-of-all-trades by nature, can, with much more ease and suppleness, address himself to a variety of services, and suffice in his own person to discharge them all, than is possible for the formality and slowness of a Scotchman. Superior to Caleb in dexterity, though not in zeal, La Jeunesse seemed to multiply himself with the necessities of the occasion, and discharged his several tasks with such promptitude and assiduity, that farther attendance than his was neither missed nor wished for.

The dinner, in particular, was exquisite. The soup, although bearing the term of *maigre*, which Englishmen use in scorn, was most delicately flavoured, and the matelote of pike and eels reconciled me, though a Scotchman, to the latter. There was even a petit plat of *bouilli* for the heretic, so exquisitely dressed as to retain all the juices, and, at the same time, rendered so thoroughly tender, that nothing could be more delicate. The *potage*, with another small dish or two, were equally well arranged. But what the old maître d'hôtel valued himself upon as something superb, smiling with self-satisfaction, and in enjoyment of my surprise, as he placed it on the table, was an immense *assiette* of spinage, not smoothed into a uniform surface, as by our uninaugurated cooks upon your side of the water, but swelling into hills, and declining into vales, over which swept a gallant stag, pursued by a pack of hounds in full cry, and a noble field of horsemen with bugle-horns, and whips held upright, and brandished after the manner of broad-swords—hounds, huntsman, and stag, being all very artificially cut out of toasted bread. Enjoying the praises which I failed not to bestow on this *chef-d'œuvre*, the old man acknowledged it had cost the best part of two days to bring it to perfection; and added, giving honour where honour was due, that an idea so brilliant was not entirely his own, but that monsieur himself had taken the trouble to give him several valuable hints, and even condescended to assist in the execution of some of the most capital figures. The marquis blushed a little at this eclatissement, which he might probably have wished to suppress, but acknowledged he had wished to surprise me with a scene from the popular poem of my country, Miladi Lac. I answered, that so splendid a cortège much more resembled a grand chasse of Louis Quatorze than of a poor king of Scotland, and that the *paysage* was rather like Fontainebleau than the wilds of Callender. He bowed graciously in answer to this compliment, and acknowledged that recollections of the costume of the old French court, when in its splendour, might have misled his imagination—and so the conversation passed on to other matters.

Our dessert was exquisite—the cheese, the fruits, the sallad, the olives, the *cerneaux*, and the delicious white wine, each in their way were *impayables*; and the good marquis, with an air of great satisfaction, observed, that his guest did sin-

cere homage to their merits. "After all," he said, "and yet it is but confessing a foolish weakness—but, after all, I cannot but rejoice in feeling myself equal to offering a stranger a sort of hospitality which seems pleasing to him. Believe me, it is not entirely out of pride that we *pauvres revenans* live so very retired, and avoid the duties of hospitality. It is true, that too many of us wander about the halls of our fathers, rather like ghosts of their deceased proprietors, than like living men restored to their own possessions—yet it is rather on your account, than to spare our own feelings, that we do not cultivate the society of our foreign visitors. We have an idea that your opulent nation is particularly attached to *faste*, and to *grande chère*—to your ease and enjoyment of every kind; and the means of entertainment left to us are, in most cases, so limited, that we feel ourselves totally precluded from such expense and ostentation. No one wishes to offer his best where he has reason to think it will not give pleasure; and as many of you publish your journals, Monsieur le Marquis would not probably be much gratified, by seeing the poor dinner which he was able to present to Milor Anglais put upon permanent record."

I interrupted the marquis, that were I to wish an account of my entertainment published, it would be only in order to preserve the memory of the very best dinner I ever had eaten in my life. He bowed in return, and presumed "that I either differed much from the national taste, or the accounts of it were greatly exaggerated. He was particularly obliged to me for showing the value of the possessions which remained to him. The useful," he said, "had no doubt survived the sumptuous at Hautlieu, as elsewhere. Grottos, statues, curious conservatories of exotics, temple and tower, had gone to the ground; but the vineyard, the potager, the orchard, the *étang*, still existed; and once more he expressed himself happy to find, that their combined productions could make what even a Briton accepted as a tolerable meal. "I only hope," he continued, "that you will convince me your compliments are sincere, by accepting the hospitality of the Château de Hautlieu as often as better engagements will permit during your stay in this neighbourhood."

I readily promised to accept an invitation offered with such grace, as to make the guest appear the person conferring the obligation.

The conversation then changed to the history of the château and its vicinity—a subject which was strong ground to the marquis, though he was no great antiquary, and even no very profound historian, where these topics were out of question. The curé, however, chanced to be both, and withal a very conversable pleasing man, with an air of *prévenance*, and ready civility of communication, which I have found a leading characteristic of the catholic clergy, whenever they are well-informed or otherwise. It was from him that I learned there still existed the remnant of a fine library in the Château de Hautlieu. The marquis shrugged his shoulders as the curé gave me this intimation, looked to the one side and the other, and displayed the same sort of petty embarrassment which he had been unable to suppress when La Jeunesse blabbed something

of his interference with the arrangements of the *cuisine*. "I should be happy to show the books," he said, "but they are in such a wild condition, so dismantled, that I am ashamed to show them to any one."

"Forgive me, my dear sir," said the curé, "you know you permitted the great English bibliomaniac, Dr Dibdin, to consult your curious relics, and you know how highly he spoke of them."

"What could I do, my dear friend?" said the marquis; "the good doctor had heard some exaggerated account of these remnants of what was once a library—he had stationed himself in the *auberge* below, determined to carry his point, or die under the walls. I even heard of his taking the altitude of the turret, in order to provide scaling-ladders. You would not have had me reduce a respectable divine, though of another church, to such an act of desperation? I could not have answered it in conscience."

"But you know, besides, Monsieur le Marquis," continued the curé, "that Dr Dibdin was so much grieved at the dilapidation your library had sustained, that he avowedly envied the powers of our church, so much did he long to launch an anathema at the heads of the perpetrators."

"His resentment was in proportion to his disappointment, I suppose," said our entertainer.

"Not so," said the curé; "for he was so enthusiastic on the value of what remains, that I am convinced that nothing but your positive request to the contrary prevented the Château of Hautlieu occupying at least twenty pages in that splendid work of which he sent us a copy, and which will remain a lasting monument of his zeal and erudition."

"Dr Dibdin is extremely polite," said the marquis; "and when we have had our coffee—here it comes—we will go to the turret; and I hope, as monsieur has not despised my poor fare, so he will pardon the state of my confused library, while I shall be equally happy if it can afford anything which can give him amusement. Indeed," he added, "were it otherwise, you, my good father, have every right over books, which, without your intervention, would never have returned to the owner."

Although this additional act of courtesy was evidently wrested by the importunity of the curé from his reluctant friend, whose desire to conceal the nakedness of the land, and the extent of his losses, seemed always to struggle with his disposition to be obliging, I could not help accepting an offer, which, in strict politeness, I ought perhaps to have refused. But then the remains of a collection of such curiosity as had given to our bibliomaniacal doctor the desire of leading the forlorn hope in an escalade—it would have been a desperate act of self-denial to have declined an opportunity of seeing it. La Jeunesse brought coffee, such as we only taste on the continent, upon a salver, covered with a napkin, that it might be *censé* for silver: and *chasse-café* from Martinique on a small waiter, which was certainly so. Our repast thus finished, the marquis led me, up an *escalier dérobé*, into a very large and well-proportioned saloon, of nearly one hundred feet in length; but so waste and dilapidated, that I kept my

eyes on the ground lest my kind entertainer should feel himself called upon to apologize for tattered pictures and torn tapestry; and, worse than both, for casements that had yielded, in one or two instances, to the boisterous blast.

"We have contrived to make the turret something more habitable," said the marquis, as he moved hastily through this chamber of desolation. "This," he said, "was the picture-gallery in former times, and in the boudoir beyond, which we now occupy as a book-closet, were preserved some curious cabinet paintings, whose small size required that they should be viewed nearly."

As he spoke, he held aside a portion of the tapestry I have mentioned, and we entered the room of which he spoke.

It was octangular, corresponding to the external shape of the turret whose interior it occupied. Four of the sides had latticed windows, commanding each, from a different point, the most beautiful prospect over the majestic Loire, and the adjacent country through which it winded; and the casements were filled with stained glass, through two of which streamed the lustre of the setting sun, showing a brilliant assemblage of religious emblems and armorial bearings, which it was scarce possible to look at with an undazzled eye; but the other two windows, from which the sun-beams had passed away, could be closely examined, and plainly showed that the lattices were glazed with stained glass, which did not belong to them originally, but, as I afterwards learned, to the profaned and desecrated chapel of the castle. It had been the amusement of the marquis, for several months, to accomplish this *rifacimento*, with the assistance of the curate and the all-capable La Jeunesse; and though they had only patched together fragments, which were in many places very minute, yet the stained glass, till examined very closely, and with the eye of an antiquary, produced, on the whole, a very pleasing effect.

The sides of the apartment, not occupied by the lattices, were (excepting the space for the small door) fitted up with presses and shelves, some of walnut-tree, curiously carved, and brought to a dark colour by time, nearly resembling that of a ripe chesnut, and partly of common deal, employed to repair and supply the deficiencies occasioned by violence and devastation. On these shelves were deposited the wrecks, or rather the precious relics, of a most splendid library.

The marquis's father had been a man of information, and his grandfather was famous, even in the court of Louis XIV., where literature was in some degree considered as the fashion, for the extent of his acquirements. Those two proprietors, opulent in their fortunes, and liberal in the indulgence of their taste, had made such additions to a curious old Gothic library, which had descended from their ancestors, that there were few collections in France which could be compared to that of Hautlieu. It had been completely dispersed, in consequence of an ill-judged attempt of the present marquis, in 1790, to defend his château against a revolutionary mob. Luckily, the curé, who, by his charitable and moderate conduct, and his evangelical virtues, possessed much interest among the neighbouring pea-

santry, prevailed on many of them to buy, for the petty sum of a few sous, and sometimes at the vulgar rate of a glass of brandy, volumes which had cost large sums, but which were carried off in mere spite by the ruffians who pillaged the castle. He himself also had purchased as many of the books as his funds could possibly reach, and to his care it was owing that they were restored to the turret in which I found them. It was no wonder, therefore, that the good curé had some pride and pleasure in showing the collection to strangers.

In spite of odd volumes, imperfections, and all the other mortifications which an amateur encounters in looking through an ill-kept library, there were many articles in that of Hautlieu calculated, as Bayes says, "to elevate and surprise" the bibliomaniac. There were,

The small rare volume, dark with tarnish'd gold,

as Dr Ferriar feelingly sings—curious and richly painted missals, manuscripts of 1380, 1320, and even earlier, and works in Gothic type, printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But of these I intend to give a more detailed account, should the marquis grant his permission.

In the meantime, it is sufficient to say, that, delighted with the day I had spent at Hautlieu, I frequently repeated my visit, and that the key of the octangular tower was always at my command. In those hours I became deeply enamoured of a part of French history, which, although most important to that of Europe at large, and illustrated by an inimitable old historian, I had never sufficiently studied. At the same time, to gratify the feelings of my excellent host, I occupied myself occasionally with some family memorials, which had fortunately been preserved, and which contained some curious particulars respecting the connexion with Scotland, which first found me favour in the eyes of the Marquis de Hautlieu.

I pondered on these things, *more meo*, until my return to Britain, to beef and sea-coal fires, a change of residence which took place since I drew up these Gallic reminiscences. At length, the result of my meditations took the form of which my readers, if not startled by this preface, will presently be enabled to judge. Should the public receive it with favour, I will not regret having been for a short time an absentee.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONTRAST.

Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

Hamlet.

THE latter part of the fifteenth century prepared a train of future events, that ended by raising France to that state of formidable power, which has ever since been, from time to time, the principal object of jealousy to the other European nations. Before that period, she had to struggle for her very exist-

ence with the English, already possessed of her fairest provinces; while the utmost exertions of her king, and the gallantry of her natives, could scarce protect the remainder from a foreign yoke. Neither was this her sole danger. The princes who possessed the grand fiefs of the crown, and in particular, the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne, had come to wear their feudal bonds so lightly, that they had no scruple in lifting the standard against their liege and sovereign lord, the King of France, on the slightest pretences. When at peace, they reigned as absolute princes in their own provinces; and the house of Burgundy, possessed of the district so called, together with the fairest and richest part of Flanders, was of itself so wealthy, and so powerful, as to yield nothing to the crown, either in splendour or in strength.

In imitation of the grand feudatories, each inferior vassal of the crown assumed as much independence as his distance from the sovereign power, the extent of his fief, or the strength of his residence, enabled him to maintain; and these petty tyrants, no longer amenable to the exercise of the law, perpetrated with impunity the wildest excesses of fantastic oppression and cruelty. In Auvergne alone, a report was made of more than three hundred of these independent nobles, to whom incest, murder, and rapine, were the most ordinary and familiar actions.

Besides these evils, another, springing out of the long-continued wars betwixt the French and English, added no small misery to this distracted kingdom. Numerous bodies of soldiers, collected into bands, under officers chosen by themselves, from among the bravest and most successful adventurers, had been formed in various part of France out of the refuse of all other countries. These hireling combatants sold their swords for a time to the best bidder; and, where such offer was wanting, they made war on their own account, seizing castles and towers, which they used as the places of their retreat,—making prisoners, and ransoming them,—exact- ing tribute from the open villages and the country around them,—and acquiring, by every species of rapine, the appropriate epithets of *Tondeurs* and *Écorcheurs*, that is, *Clippers* and *Flayers*.

In the midst of the horrors and miseries arising from so distracted a state of public affairs, reckless and profuse expense distinguished the courts of the lesser nobles, as well as of the superior princes; and their dependents, in imitation, expended in rude, but magnificent display, the wealth which they extorted from the people. A tone of romantic and chivalrous gallantry (which, however, was often disgraced by unbounded license) characterized the intercourse between the sexes; and the language of knight-errantry was yet used, and its observances followed, though the pure spirit of honourable love, and benevolent enterprise, which it inculcates, had ceased to qualify and atone for its extravagancies. The jousts and tournaments, the entertainments and revels, which each petty court displayed, invited to France every wandering adventurer; and it was seldom that, when arrived there, he failed to employ his rash courage, and headlong spirit of enterprise, in actions for which his happier native country afforded no free stage.

At this period, and as if to save this fair realm from the various woes with which it was menaced, the tottering throne was ascended by Louis XI., whose character, evil as it was in itself, met, combated, and in a great degree neutralized, the mischiefs of the time— as poisons of opposing qualities are said, in ancient books of medicine, to have the power of counteracting each other.

Brave enough for every useful and political purpose, Louis had not a spark of that romantic valour, or of the pride connected with, and arising out of it, which fought on for the point of honour, when the point of utility had been long gained. Calm, crafty, and profoundly attentive to his own interest, he made every sacrifice, both of pride and passion, which could interfere with it. He was careful in disguising his real sentiments and purposes from all who approached him, and frequently used the expressions, "that the king knew not how to reign, who knew not how to dissemble; and that, for himself, if he thought his very cap knew his secrets, he would throw it into the fire." No man of his own, or of any other time, better understood how to avail himself of the frailties of others, and when to avoid giving any advantage by the untimely indulgence of his own.

He was by nature vindictive and cruel, even to the extent of finding pleasure in the frequent executions which he commanded. But, as no touch of mercy ever induced him to spare, when he could with safety condemn, so no sentiment of vengeance ever stimulated him to a premature violence. He seldom sprung on his prey till it was fairly within his grasp, and till all chance of rescue was in vain; and his movements were so studiously disguised, that his success was generally what first announced to the world what object he had been manœuvring to attain.

In like manner, the avarice of Louis gave way to apparent profusion, when it was necessary to bribe the favourite or minister of a rival prince for averting any impending attack, or to break up any alliance confederated against him. He was fond of license and pleasure; but neither beauty nor the chase, though both were ruling passions, ever withdrew him from the most regular attendance to public business and the affairs of his kingdom. His knowledge of mankind was profound, and he had sought it in the private walks of life, in which he often personally mingled; and, though personally proud and haughty, he hesitated not, with an inattention to the arbitrary divisions of society, which was then thought something portentously unnatural, to raise from the lowest rank men whom he employed on the most important duties, and knew so well how to chuse them, that he was rarely disappointed in their qualities.

Yet there were contradictions in the nature of this artful and able monarch; for humanity is never uniform. Himself the most false and insincere of mankind, some of the greatest errors of his life arose from too rash a confidence in the honour and integrity of others. When these errors took place, they seem to have arisen from an over-refined system of policy, which induced Louis to assume the appearance of undoubting confidence in those whom it was

his object to overreach; for, in his general conduct he was as jealous and suspicious as any tyrant who ever lived.

Two other points may be noticed, to complete the sketch of this formidable character, who rose among the rude chivalrous sovereigns of the period to the rank of a keeper among wild beasts, who, by superior wisdom and policy, by distribution of food, and some discipline by blows, comes finally to predominate over those, who, if unsubjected by his arts, would by main strength have torn him to pieces.

The first of these attributes was Louis's excessive superstition, a plague with which Heaven often afflicts those who refuse to listen to the dictates of religion. The remorse arising from his evil actions, Louis never endeavoured to appease by any relaxation in his Machiavellian stratagems, but laboured, in vain, to soothe and silence that painful feeling by superstitious observances, severe penance, and profuse gifts to the ecclesiastics. The second property, with which the first is sometimes found strangely united, was a disposition to low pleasures and obscure debauchery. The wisest, or at least the most crafty sovereign of his time, he was fond of ordinary life, and, being himself a man of wit, enjoyed the jests and repartees of social conversation more than could have been expected from other points of his character. He even mingled in the comic adventures of obscure intrigue, with a freedom scarce consistent with the habitual and guarded jealousy of his character; and was so fond of this species of humble gallantry, that he caused a number of its gay and licentious anecdotes to be enrolled in a collection well known to book-collectors, in whose eyes (and the work is unfit for any other) the *right* edition is very precious.

By means of this monarch's powerful and prudent, though most unamiable character, it pleased Heaven, who works by the tempest as well as by the soft small rain, to restore to the great French nation the benefits of civil government, which, at the time of his accession, they had nearly lost altogether.

Ere he succeeded to the crown, Louis had given evidence of his vices rather than of his talents. His first wife, Margaret of Scotland, was "done to death by slanderous tongues" in her husband's court, where, without his encouragement, no word had been breathed against that amiable and injured princess. He had been an ungrateful and a rebellious son, at one time conspiring to seize his father's person, and at another, levying open war against him. For the first offence, he was banished to his appanage of Dauphiné, which he governed with much sagacity—for the second, he was driven into absolute exile, and forced to throw himself on the mercy, and almost the charity, of the Duke of Burgundy and his son, where he enjoyed hospitality, afterwards indifferently requited, until the death of his father in 1461.

In the very outset of his reign, Louis was almost overpowered by a league formed against him by the great vassals of France, with the Duke of Burgundy, or rather his son, the Count de Charolois, at its head. They levied a powerful army, blockaded Paris, fought a battle of doubtful event under its very walls,

and put the French monarchy on the brink of actual destruction. It usually happens in such cases, that the most sagacious general of the two gains the real fruit, though perhaps not the martial fame, of the disputed field. Louis, who had shown great personal bravery during the battle of Montlhery, was able, by his prudence, to avail himself of its undecided event, as if it had been a victory on his side. He temporized until the enemy had broken up their leaguer, and showed so much dexterity in sowing jealousies among those great powers, that their alliance "for the public weal," as they termed it, but, in reality, for the overthrow of all but the external appearance of the French monarchy, broke to pieces, and was never again renewed in a manner so formidable. From this period, for several years, Louis, relieved of all danger from England, by the Civil Wars of York and Lancaster, was engaged, like an unfeeling but able physician, in curing the wounds of the body politic, or rather in stopping, now by gentle remedies, now by the use of fire and steel, the progress of those mortal gangrenes with which it was then infected. The *brigandage* of the Free Companies, and the unpunished oppressions of the nobility, he laboured to lessen, since he could not actually stop them; and gradually, by dint of unrelaxed attention, he gained some addition to his own regal authority, or effected some diminution of those by whom it was counter-balanced.

Still the King of France was surrounded by doubt and danger. The members of the league "for the public weal," though not in unison, were in existence, and that scotched snake might reunite and become dangerous again. But a worse danger was the increasing power of the Duke of Burgundy, then one of the greatest princes of Europe, and little diminished in rank by the very precarious dependence of his duchy upon the crown of France.

Charles, surnamed the Bold, or rather the Audacious, for his courage was allied to rashness and frenzy, then wore the ducal coronet of Burgundy, which he burned to convert into a royal and independent regal crown. The character of this duke was in every respect the direct contrast to that of Louis XI.

The former was calm, deliberate, and crafty, never prosecuting a desperate enterprise, and never abandoning a probable one, however distant the prospect of success. The genius of the duke was entirely different. He rushed on danger because he loved it, and on difficulties because he despised them. As Louis never sacrificed his interest to his passion, so Charles, on the other hand, never sacrificed his passion, or even his humour, to any other considerations. Notwithstanding the near relationship that existed between them, and the support which the duke and his father had afforded to Louis in his exile when dauphin, there was mutual contempt and hatred betwixt them. The Duke of Burgundy despised the cautious policy of the king, and imputed to the faintness of his courage, that he sought by leagues, purchases, and other indirect means, those advantages, which, in his place, he would have snatched with an armed hand; and he hated him, not only for the ingratitude he had manifested for former kindnesses, and for personal

injuries and imputations which the ambassadors of Louis had cast upon him, when his father was yet alive, but also, and especially, because of the support which he afforded in secret to the discontented citizens of Ghent, Liege, and other great towns in Flanders. These turbulent cities, jealous of their privileges, and proud of their wealth, frequently were in a state of insurrection against their liege lords the Dukes of Burgundy, and never failed to find underhand countenance at the court of Louis, who embraced every opportunity of fomenting disturbance within the dominions of his overgrown vassal.

The contempt and hatred of the duke were retaliated by Louis with equal energy, though he used a thicker veil to conceal his sentiments. It was impossible for a man of his profound sagacity not to despise the stubborn obstinacy which never resigned its purpose, however fatal perseverance might prove, and the headlong impetuosity, which commenced its career without allowing a moment's consideration for the obstacles to be encountered. Yet the king hated Charles even more than he contemned him, and his scorn and hatred were the more intense, that they were mingled with fear; for he knew that the onset of the mad bull, to whom he likened the Duke of Burgundy, must ever be formidable, though the animal makes it with shut eyes. It was not alone the wealth of the Burgundian provinces, the discipline of the warlike inhabitants, and the mass of their crowded population, which the king dreaded, for the personal qualities of their leader had also much in them that was dangerous. The very soul of bravery, which he pushed to the verge of rashness, and beyond it—profuse in expenditure—splendid in his court, his person, and his retinue, in all which he displayed the hereditary magnificence of the house of Burgundy, Charles the Bold drew into his service almost all the fiery spirits of the age whose temper was congenial; and Louis saw too clearly what might be attempted and executed by such a train of desperate resolute, following a leader of a character as ungovernable as their own.

There was yet another circumstance which increased the animosity of Louis towards his overgrown vassal; for he owed him favours which he never meant to repay, and was under the frequent necessity of temporizing with him, and even of enduring bursts of petulant insolence, injurious to the regal dignity, without being able to treat him as other than his "fair cousin of Burgundy."

It was about the year 1468, when their feuds were at the highest, though a dubious and hollow truce, as frequently happened, existed for the time betwixt them, that the present narrative opens. The person first introduced on the stage will be found indeed to be of a rank and circumstance, which one would have thought scarce needed illustration from a dissertation on the relative position of two great princes; but the passions of the great, their quarrels, and their reconciliations, involve the fortunes of all who approach them; and it will be found, on proceeding farther in our story, that this preliminary chapter is necessary for comprehending the adventures of the individual whom we are about to describe.

CHAPTER II.

THE WANDERER.

Why then the world is my oyster, which I with sword will open.

Ancient Pistol.

It was upon a delicious summer morning, before the sun had assumed its scorching power, and while the dews yet cooled and perfumed the air, that a youth, coming from the north-eastward, approached the ford of a small river, or rather a large brook, tributary to the Cher, near to the royal Castle of Plessis, whose dark and multiplied battlements rose in the back-ground over the extensive forest with which they were surrounded. These woodlands comprised a noble chase, or royal park, fenced by an enclosure, termed in the latin of the middle ages, *Plexitium*, which gives the name of Plessis to so many villages in France. The castle and village of which we particularly speak, was called Plessis-les-Tours, to distinguish it from others of the same name, and was built about two miles to the southward of the fair town of that name, the capital of ancient Touraine, whose rich plain has been termed the Garden of France.

On the bank of the above-mentioned brook, opposite to that which the traveller was approaching, two men, who appeared in deep conversation, seemed, from time to time, to watch his motions; for as their station was much more elevated, they could remark him at considerable distance.

The age of the young traveller might be about nineteen, or betwixt that and twenty, and his face and person, which were very prepossessing, did not, however, belong to the country in which he was now a sojourner. His short grey cloak and hose were rather of Flemish than of French fashion, while the smart blue bonnet, with a single sprig of holly and an eagle's feather, was already recognized as the Scottish head-gear. His dress was very neat, and arranged with the precision of a youth conscious of possessing a fine person. He had at his back a satchell, which seemed to contain a few necessaries, a hawking gauntlet on his left hand, though he carried no bird, and in his right a stout hunter's pole. Over his left shoulder hung an embroidered scarf which sustained a small pouch of scarlet velvet, such as was then used by fowlers of distinction to carry their hawks' food, and other matters belonging to that much-admired sport. This was crossed by another shoulder-belt, which sustained a hunting-knife, or couteau de chasse. Instead of the boots of the period, he wore buskins of half-dressed deer's-skin.

Although his form had not yet attained its full strength, he was tall and active, and the lightness of the step with which he advanced showed that his pedestrian mode of travelling was pleasure rather than pain to him. His complexion was fair, in spite of a general shade of darker hue, with which the foreign sun, or perhaps constant exposure to the atmosphere in his own country, had, in some degree, embrowned it.

His features, without being quite regular, were frank, open, and pleasing. A half smile, which seemed to arise from a happy exuberance of animal spirits, showed, now and then, that his teeth were well set, and as pure as ivory; whilst his bright blue eye, with a corresponding gaiety, had an appropriate glance for every object which it encountered, expressing good humour, lightness of heart, and determined resolution.

He received and returned the salutation of the few travellers who frequented the road in those dangerous times, with the action which suited each. The strolling spearman, half-soldier, half-brigand, measured the youth with his eyes, as if balancing the prospect of booty with the chance of desperate resistance; and read such a prospect of the latter in the fearless glance of the passenger, that he changed his ruffian purpose for a surly "Good morrow, comrade," which the young Scot answered with as martial, though a less sullen tone. The wandering pilgrim, or the begging friar, answered his reverend greeting with a paternal benediction; and the dark-eyed peasant girl looked after him for many a step when they had passed each other, and interchanged a laughing good morrow. In short, there was some attraction about his whole appearance not easily escaping attention, and which it derived from the combination of fearless frankness and good humour, with sprightly looks, and a handsome face and person. It seemed, too, as if his whole appearance bespoke one who was entering on life with no apprehension of the evils with which it is beset, and not much means of struggling with its hardships; excepting a lively spirit and a courageous disposition; and it is with such tempers that youth most readily sympathizes, and for whom age and experience feel affectionate and pitying interest.

The youth whom we have described, had been long visible to the two persons who loitered on the opposite side of the small river which divided him from the park and the castle; but as he descended the rugged bank to the water's edge, with the light step of a roe which visits the fountain, the younger of the two said to the other, "It is our man—it is the Bohemian! If he attempts to cross the ford, he is a lost man—the water is up, and the ford impassable."

"Let him make that discovery himself, gossip," said the elder personage; "it may, perchance, save a rope, and break a proverb."

"I judge him by the blue cap," said the other, "for I cannot see his face.—Hark, sir—he halloos to know whether the water be deep."

"Nothing like experience in this world," answered the other—"let him try."

The young man, in the meanwhile, receiving no hint to the contrary, and taking the silence of those to whom he applied as an encouragement to proceed, entered the stream without farther hesitation than the delay necessary to take off his buskins. The elder person, at the same moment, hallooed to him to beware, adding, in a lower tone, to his companion, "*Mortdieu*—gossip—you have made another mistake—this is not the Bohemian chatterer."

But the intimation to the youth came too late. He did either not hear or could not profit by it, being already in the deep stream. To one less alert, and

practised in the exercise of swimming, death had been certain, for the brook was both deep and strong.

"By Saint Anne! but he is a proper youth," said the elder man—"Run, gossip, and help your blunder, by giving him aid, if thou canst. He belongs to thine own troop—if old saws speak truth, water will not drown him."

Indeed, the young traveller swam so strongly, and buffeted the waves so well, that, notwithstanding the strength of the current, he was carried but a little way down from the ordinary landing-place.

By this time the younger of the two strangers was hurrying down to the shore to render assistance, while the other followed him at a graver pace, saying to himself as he approached, "I knew water would never drown that young fellow.—By my halidome, he is ashore, and grasps his pole—If I make not the more haste, he will beat my gossip for the only charitable action which I ever saw him perform in his life."

There was some reason to augur such a conclusion of the adventure, for the bonny Scot had already accosted the younger Samaritan, who was hastening to his assistance, with these ireful words,—“Discourteous dog! why did you not answer when I called to know if the passage was fit to be attempted? May the foul fiend catch me, but I will teach you the respect due to strangers on the next occasion."

This was accompanied with that significant flourish with his pole which is called *le moulinet*, because the artist, holding it in the middle, brandishes the two ends in every direction, like the sails of a wind-mill in motion. His opponent, seeing himself thus menaced, laid hand upon his sword, for he was one of those who on all occasions are more ready for action than for speech; but his more considerate comrade, who came up, commanded him to forbear, and, turning to the young man, accused him in turn of precipitation in plunging into the swollen ford, and of intemperate violence in quarreling with a man who was hastening to his assistance.

The young man, on hearing himself thus reproved by a man of advanced age and respectable appearance, immediately lowered his weapon, and said he would be sorry if he had done them injustice; but, in reality, it appeared to him as if they had suffered him to put his life in peril for want of a word of timely warning, which could be the part neither of honest men nor of good christians, far less of respectable burgesses, such as they seemed to be.

"Fair son," said the elder person, "you seem, from your accent and complexion, a stranger; and you should recollect your dialect is not so easily comprehended by us, as perhaps it may be uttered by you."

"Well, father," answered the youth, "I do not care much about the ducking I have had, and I will readily forgive your being partly the cause, providing you will direct me to some place where I can have my clothes dried; for it is my only suit, and I must keep it somewhat decent."

"For whom do you take us, fair son?" said the elder stranger, in answer to this question.

"For substantial burgesses, unquestionably," said the youth; "or hold—you, master, may be a money-

broker, or a corn-merchant; and this man a butcher, or grazier."

"You have hit our capacities rarely," said the elder, smiling. "My business is indeed to deal in as much money as I can; and my gossip's dealings are somewhat of kin to the butcher's. As to your accommodation, we will try to serve you; but I must first know who you are, and whither you are going; for, in these times, the roads are filled with travellers on foot and horseback, who have anything in their head but honesty and the fear of God."

The young man cast another keen and penetrating glance on him who spoke, and on his silent companion, as if doubtful whether they, on their part, merited the confidence they demanded; and the result of his observation was as follows.

The eldest, and most remarkable of these men in dress and appearance, resembled the merchant or shopkeeper of the period. His jerkin, hose, and cloak, were of a dark uniform colour, but worn so threadbare, that the acute young Scot conceived, that the wearer must be either very rich or very poor, probably the former. The fashion of the dress was close and short—a kind of garments which were not then held decorous among gentry, or even the superior class of citizens, who generally wore loose gowns, which descended below the middle of the leg.

The expression of this man's countenance was partly attractive, and partly forbidding. His strong features, sunk cheeks, and hollow eyes, had, nevertheless, an expression of shrewdness and humour, congenial to the character of the young adventurer. But then, those same sunken eyes, from under the shroud of thick black eyebrows, had something that was at once commanding and sinister. Perhaps this effect was increased by the low fur-cap, much depressed on the forehead, and adding to the shade from under which those eyes peered out; but it is certain that the young stranger had some difficulty to reconcile his looks with the meanness of his appearance in other respects. His cap, in particular, in which all men of any quality displayed either a brooch of gold or of silver, was ornamented with a paltry image of the Virgin, in lead, such as the poorer sort of pilgrims bring from Loretto.

His comrade was a stout-formed, middle-sized man, more than ten years younger than his companion, with a down-looking visage, and a very ominous smile, when by chance he gave way to that impulse, which was never, except in reply to certain secret signs that seemed to pass between him and the elder stranger. This man was armed with a sword and dagger; and, underneath his plain habit, the Scotsman observed that he concealed a jazeran, or flexible shirt of linked mail, which, as being often worn by those, even of peaceful professions, who were called upon at this perilous period to be frequently abroad, confirmed the young man in his conjecture, that the wearer was by profession a butcher, grazier, or something of that description.

The young stranger, comprehending in one glance the result of the observation which has taken us some time to express, answered, after a moment's pause, "I do not know whom I may have the ho-

nour to address," making a slight reverence at the same time, "but I am indifferent who knows that I am a cadet of Scotland; and that I come to seek my fortune in France, or elsewhere, after the custom of my countrymen."

"*Pasques-Dieu!* and a gallant custom it is," said the elder stranger. "You seem a fine young spring-ald, and at the right age to prosper, whether among men or women. What say you? I am a merchant, and want a lad to assist in my traffic—I suppose you are too much a gentleman to assist in such mechanical drudgery?"

"Fair sir," said the youth, "if your offer be seriously made—of which I have my doubts—I am bound to thank you for it, and I thank you accordingly; but I fear I should be altogether unfit for your service."

"What! I warrant thou knowest better how to draw the bow, than how to draw a bill of charges,—canst handle a broadsword better than a pen—ha!"

"I am, master," answered the young Scot, "a braeman, and therefore, as we say, a bowman. But I have been in a convent, where the good fathers taught me to read and write, and even to cipher."

"*Pasques-Dieu!* that is too magnificent," said the merchant. "By our Lady of Embrun, thou art a prodigy, man!"

"Rest you merry, fair master," said the youth, who was not much pleased with his new acquaintance's jocularities; "I must go dry myself, instead of standing dripping here, answering questions."

The merchant only laughed louder as he spoke, and answered, "*Pasques-Dieu!* the proverb never fails—*fier comme un Écossais*—but come, youngster, you are of a country I have a regard for, having traded in Scotland in my time—an honest poor set of folks they are; and, if you will come with us to the village, I will bestow on you a cup of burnt sack and a warm breakfast, to atone for your drenching.—But, *tête-bleue!* what do you with a hunting-glove on your hand? Know you not there is no hawking permitted in the royal chase?"

"I was taught that by a rascally forester of the Duke of Burgundy. I did but fly the falcon I had brought with me from Scotland, and that I reckoned on for bringing me into some note, at a heron near Peronne, and the rascally schelm shot my bird with an arrow."

"What did you do?" said the merchant.

"Beat him," said the youngster, brandishing his staff, "as near to death as a christian man should belabour another; for I wanted not to have his blood to answer."

"Know you, that had you fallen into the Duke of Burgundy's hands, he would have hung you up like a chesnut?"

"Ay, I am told he is as prompt as the King of France for that sort of work. But, as this happened near Peronne, I made a leap over the frontiers, and laughed at him. If he had not been so hasty, I might perhaps have taken service with him."

"He will have a heavy miss of such a paladin as you are, if the truce should break off," said the merchant, and threw a look at his companion,

who answered him with one of the downcast lowering smiles, which gleamed along his countenance, enlivening it as a passing meteor enlivens a winter sky.

The young Scot suddenly stopped, pulled his bonnet over his right eyebrow, as one that would not be ridiculed, and said firmly, "My masters, and especially you, sir, the elder, and who should be the wiser, you will find, I presume, no wise or safe jesting at my expense. I do not altogether like the tone of your conversation. I can take a jest with any man, and a rebuke, too, from my elder, and say Thank you, sir, if I know it to be deserved; but I do not like being borne in hand as if I were a child, when, God wot, I find myself man enough to belabour you both, if you provoke me too far."

The eldest man seemed like to choke with laughter at the lad's demeanour—his companion's hand stole to his sword-hilt, which the youth observing, dealt him a blow across the wrist, which made him incapable of grasping it; while his companion's mirth was only increased by the incident. "Hold, hold," he cried, "most doughty Scotchman, even for thine own dear country's sake; and you, gossip, forbear your menacing look. *Pasques-Dieu!* let us be just traders, and set off the wetting against the knock on the wrist, which was given with so much grace and alacrity.—And hark ye, friend," he said to the young man, with a grave sternness, which, in spite of all the youth could do, damped and overawed him, "no more violence. I am no fit object for it, and my gossip, as you may see, has had enough of it. Let me know your name."

"I can answer a civil question civilly," said the youth; "and will pay fitting respect to your age, if you do not urge my patience with mockery. Since I have been here in France and Flanders, men have called me in their fantasy, the Varlet with the Velvet Pouch, because of this hawk-purse which I carry by my side; but my true name, when at home, is Quentin Durward."

"Durward!" said the querist; "is it a gentleman's name?"

"By fifteen descents in our family," said the young man; "and that makes me reluctant to follow any other trade than arms."

"A true Scot! Plenty of blood, plenty of pride, and right great scarcity of ducats, I warrant thee.—Well, gossip," he said to his companion, "go before us, and tell them to have some breakfast ready yonder at the Mulberry-grove; for this youth will do as much honour to it as a starved mouse to a housewife's cheese. And for the Bohemian—hark in thy ear!"

His comrade answered by a gloomy, but intelligent smile, and set forward at a round pace, while the elder man continued, addressing young Durward,—“You and I will push forward together, and we may take a mass at St Hubert's Chapel in our way through the forest; for it is not good to think of our fleshly before our spiritual wants.”

Durward, as a good catholic, had nothing to object against this proposal, although he would probably have been desirous, in the first place, to have dried his clothes and refreshed himself. Meanwhile,

they soon lost sight of their downward-looking companion, but continued to follow the same path which he had taken, until it led them into a wood of tall trees, mixed with thickets and brushwood, traversed by long avenues, through which were seen, as through a vista, the deer trotting in little herds, with a degree of security which argued their consciousness of being completely protected.

"You asked me if I were a good bowman," said the young Scot—"Give me a bow and a brace of shafts, and you shall have a piece of venison."

Pasques-Dieu! my young friend," said his companion, "take care of that; my gossip yonder hath a special eye to the deer; they are under his charge, and he is a strict keeper."

"He hath more the air of a butcher, than of a gay forester," answered Durward. "I cannot think yon hang-dog look of his belongs to any one who knows the gentle rules of wood-craft."

"Ah, my young friend," answered his companion, "my gossip hath somewhat an ugly favour to look upon at the first; but those who become acquainted with him, never are known to complain of him."

Quentin Durward found something singularly and disagreeably significant in the tone with which this was spoken; and, looking suddenly at the speaker, thought he saw in his countenance, in the slight smile that curled his upper lip, and the accompanying twinkle of his keen dark eye, something to justify his unpleasing surprise. "I have heard of robbers," he thought to himself, "and of wily cheats and cut-throats—what if yonder fellow be a murderer, and this old rascal his decoy-duck? I will be on my guard—they will get little by me but good Scottish knocks."

While he was thus reflecting, they came to a glade, where the large forest-trees were more widely separated from each other, and where the ground beneath, cleared of underwood and bushes, was clothed with a carpet of the softest and most lovely verdure, which, screened from the scorching heat of the sun, was here more beautifully tender than it is usually to be seen in France. The trees in this secluded spot were chiefly beeches and elms of huge magnitude, which rose like great hills of leaves into the air. Amidst these magnificent sons of the earth, there peeped out, in the most open spot of the glade, a lowly chapel, near which trickled a small rivulet. Its architecture was of the rudest and most simple kind; and there was a very small lodge beside it, for the accommodation of a hermit or solitary priest, who remained there for regularly discharging the duty of the altar. In a small niche, over the arched door-way, stood a stone image of Saint Hubert, with the bugle-horn around his neck, and a leash of greyhounds at his feet. The situation of the chapel, in the midst of a park or chase, so richly stocked with game, made the dedication to the sainted huntsman peculiarly appropriate.

Towards this little devotional structure the old man directed his steps, followed by young Durward; and, as they approached, the priest, dressed in his sacerdotal garments, made his appearance, in the act of proceeding from his cell to the chapel, for the discharge, doubtless, of his holy office. Durward bowed his body reverently to the priest, as the re-

spect due to his sacred office demanded; whilst his companion, with an appearance of still more deep devotion, kneeled on one knee to receive the holy man's blessing, and then followed him into church, with a step and manner expressive of the most heartfelt contrition and humility.

The inside of the chapel was adorned in a manner adapted to the occupation of the patron-saint while on earth. The richest furs of animals which are made the objects of the chase in different countries, supplied the place of tapestry and hangings around the altar and elsewhere, and the characteristic emblazonments of bugles, bows, quivers, and other emblems of hunting, surrounded the walls, and were mingled with the heads of deer, wolves, and other animals considered beasts of sport. The whole adornments took a sylvan character; and the mass itself, being considerably shortened, proved to be of that sort which is called a hunting-mass, because in use before the noble and powerful, who, while assisting at the solemnity, are usually impatient to commence their favourite sport.

Yet, during this brief ceremony, Durward's companion seemed to pay the most rigid and scrupulous attention; while his younger companion, not quite so much occupied with religious thoughts, could not forbear blaming himself in his own mind, for having entertained suspicions derogatory to the character of so good and so humble a man. Far from now holding him as a companion and accomplice of robbers, he had much to do to forbear regarding him as a saint-like personage.

When mass was ended, they retired together from the chapel, and the elder said to his young comrade, "It is but a short walk from hence to the village—you may now break your fast with an unprejudiced conscience—follow me."

Turning to the right, and proceeding along a path which seemed gradually to ascend, he desired his companion by no means to quit the track, but, on the contrary, to keep the middle of it as nearly as he could. Durward could not help asking the cause of this precaution.

"You are now near the court, young man," answered his guide; "and, *Pasques-Dieu!* there is some difference betwixt walking in this region and on your own heathy hills. Every yard of this ground, excepting the path which we now occupy, is rendered dangerous, and well nigh impracticable, by snares and traps, armed with scythe-blades, which shred off the unwary passenger's limb as sheerly as a hedge-bill lops a hawthorn-sprig—and caltrops that would pierce your foot through, and pitfalls deep enough to bury you in for ever; for you are now within the precincts of the royal demesne, and we shall presently see the front of the château."

"Were I the King of France," said the young man, "I would not take so much trouble with traps and gins, but would try instead to govern so well, that no man should dare to come near my dwelling with a bad intent; and for those who came there in peace and good will, why, the more of them the merrier we should be."

His companion looked round with an alarmed gaze, and said, "Hush, hush, Sir Varlet with the Velvet Pouch! for I forgot to tell you, that one

great danger of these precincts is, that the very leaves of the trees are like so many ears, which carry all which is spoken to the king's own cabinet."

"I care little for that," answered Quentin Durward; "I bear a Scottish tongue in my head, bold enough to speak my mind to King Louis's face, God bless him—and, for the ears you talk of, if I could see them growing on a human head, I would crop them out of it with my wood-knife."

CHAPTER III.

THE CASTLE.

Full in the midst a mighty pile arose,
Where iron-grated gates their strength oppose
To each invading step—and, strong and steep,
The battled walls arose, the fosse sunk deep,
Slow round the fortress roll'd the sluggish stream,
And high in middle air the warders' turrets gleam.

Anonymous.

WHILE Durward and his new acquaintance thus spoke, they came in sight of the whole front of the Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, which, even in those dangerous times, when the great found themselves obliged to reside within places of fortified strength, was distinguished for the extreme and jealous care with which it was watched and defended.

From the verge of the wood where young Durward halted with his companion, in order to take a view of this royal residence, extended, or rather arose, though by a very gentle elevation, an open esplanade, clear of trees and bushes of every description, excepting one gigantic and half-withered old oak. This space was left open, according to the rules of fortification in all ages, in order that an enemy might not approach the walls under cover, or unobserved from the battlements, and beyond it arose the castle itself.

There were three external walls, battlemented and turreted from space to space, and at each angle, the second enclosure rising higher than the first, and being built so as to command it in case it was won by the enemy; and being again, in the same manner, commanded by the third and innermost barrier. Around the external wall, as the Frenchman informed his young companion (for, as they stood lower than the foundation of the wall, he could not see it), was sunk a ditch of about twenty feet in depth, supplied with water by a dam-head on the river Cher, or rather on one of its tributary branches. In front of the second enclosure, he said, there ran another fosse, and a third, both of the same unusual dimensions, was led between the second and the innermost enclosure. The verge, both of the outer and inner circuit of this triple moat, was strongly fenced with palisades of iron, serving the purpose of what are called *chevaux-de-frise* in modern fortification, the top of each pale being divided into a cluster of sharp spikes, which seemed to render any attempt to climb over an act of self-destruction.

From within the innermost enclosure arose the castle itself, containing buildings of different periods crowded around, and united with the ancient and grim-looking donjon keep, which was older than any of them, and which rose, like a black Ethiopian

giant, high into the air, while the absence of any windows larger than shot-holes, irregularly disposed for defence, gave the spectator the same unpleasant feeling which we experience on looking on a blind man. The other buildings seemed scarcely better adapted for the purposes of comfort, for what windows they had opened to an internal court-yard; so that the whole external front looked much more like that of a prison than that of a palace. The reigning king had even increased this effect; for, desirous that the additions which he himself made to the fortifications should be of a character not easily distinguished from the original building (for, like many jealous persons, he loved not that his suspicions should be observed), the darkest coloured brick and freestone were employed, and soot mingled with the lime, so as to give the whole castle the same uniform tinge of extreme and rude antiquity.

This formidable place had but one entrance, at least Durward saw none along the spacious front, except where, in the centre of the first and outward boundary, arose two strong towers, the usual defences of a gate-way; and they could observe their ordinary accompaniments, portcullis and draw-bridge—of which the first was lowered, and the last raised. Similar entrance-towers were visible on the second and third bounding wall, but not in the same line with those on the outward circuit; because the passage did not cut right through the whole three enclosures at the same point, but, on the contrary, those who entered had to proceed nearly thirty yards betwixt the first and second wall, exposed, if their purpose were hostile, to missiles from both; and again, when the second boundary was passed, they must make a second digression from the straight line, in order to attain the portal of the third and innermost enclosure; so that, before gaining the outer court, which ran along the front of the building, two narrow and dangerous defiles were to be traversed, under a flanking discharge of artillery, and three gates, defended in the strongest manner known to the age, were to be successively forced.

Coming from a country alike desolated by foreign war and internal feuds,—a country, too, whose unequal and mountainous surface, abounding in precipices and torrents, affords so many situations of strength,—young Durward was sufficiently acquainted with all the various contrivances by which men, in that stern age, endeavoured to secure their dwellings; but he frankly owned to his companion, that he did not think it had been in the power of art to do so much for defence where nature had done so little; for the situation, as we have hinted, was merely the summit of a gentle elevation, ascending upwards from the place where they were standing.

To enhance his surprise, his companion told him that the environs of the castle, except the single winding path by which the portal might be safely approached, were, like the thickets through which they had passed, surrounded with every species of hidden pitfall, snare, and gin, to entrap the wretch who should venture thither without a guide; that upon the walls were constructed certain cradles of iron, called *swallows' nests*, from which the sentinels, who were regularly posted there, could take

deliberate aim at any who should attempt to enter without the proper signal or pass-word of the day; and that the archers of the royal guard performed that duty day and night, for which they received high pay, rich clothing, and much honour and profit at the hands of King Louis. "And now tell me, young man," he continued, "did you ever see so strong a fortress, and do you think there are men bold enough to storm it?"

The young man looked long and fixedly on the place, the sight of which interested him so much, that he had forgotten, in the eagerness of youthful curiosity, the wetness of his dress. His eye glanced, and his colour mounted to his cheek like that of a daring man who meditates an honourable action, as he replied, "It is a strong castle, and strongly guarded; but there is no impossibility to brave men."

"Are there any in your country who could do such a feat?" said the elder, rather scornfully.

"I will not affirm that," answered the youth; "but there are thousands that, in a good cause, would attempt as bold a deed."

"Umph!" said the senior, "perhaps you are yourself such a gallant?"

"I should sin if I were to boast where there is no danger," answered young Durward; "but my father has done as bold an act, and I trust I am no bastard."

"Well," said his companion, smiling, "you might meet your match, and your kindred withal in the attempt; for the Scottish archers of King Louis's lifeguards stand sentinels on yonder walls—three hundred gentlemen of the best blood in your country."

"And were I King Louis," said the youth, in reply, "I would trust myself to the three hundred Scottish gentlemen, throw down my bounding walls to fill up the moat, call in my noble peers and paladins, and live as became me, amid breaking of lances in gallant tournaments, and feasting of days with nobles, and dancing of nights with ladies, and have no more fear of a foe than I have of a fly."

His companion again smiled, and turning his back on the castle, which, he observed, they had approached a little too nearly, he led the way again into the wood, by a more broad and beaten path, than they had yet trodden. "This," he said, "leads us to the village of Plessis, as it is called, where you, as a stranger, will find reasonable and honest accommodation. About two miles onward lies the fine city of Tours, which gives name to this rich and beautiful earldom. But the village of Plessis, or Plessis of the Park, as it is sometimes called, from its vicinity to the royal residence, and the chase with which it is encircled, will yield you nearer, and as convenient hospitality."

"I thank you, kind master, for your information," said the Scot; "but my stay will be so short here, that so I fail not in a morsel of meat, and a drink of something better than water, my necessities in Plessis, be it of the park or the pool, will be amply satisfied."

"Nay," answered his companion, "I thought you had some friend to see in this quarter."

"And so I have—my mother's own brother," an-

swered Durward; "and as pretty a man, before he left the braes of Angus, as ever planted brogue on heather."

"What is his name?" said the senior; "we will inquire him out for you; for it is not safe for you to go up to the castle, where you might be taken for a spy."

"Now, by my father's hand!" said the youth, "I taken for a spy!—By Heaven, he shall brook cold iron that brands me with such a charge!—But for my uncle's name, I care not who knows it—it is Lesly. Lesly—an honest and noble name."

"And so it is, I doubt not," said the old man; "but there are three of the name in the Scottish Guard."

"My uncle's name is Ludovic Lesly," said the young man.

"Of the three Leslies," answered the merchant, "two are called Ludovic."

"They call my kinsman Ludovic with the Scar," said Quentin.—"Our family names are so common in a Scottish house, that, where there is no land in the case, we always give a *to-name*."

"A *nom de guerre*, I suppose you to mean," answered his companion; "and the man you speak of, we, I think, call *Le Balafre*, from that scar on his face—a proper man, and a good soldier. I wish I may be able to help you to an interview with him, for he belongs to a set of gentlemen whose duty is strict, and who do not often come out of garrison, unless in the immediate attendance on the king's person.—And now, young man, answer me one question. I will wager you are desirous to take service with your uncle in the Scottish Guard. It is a great thing, if you propose so; especially as you are very young, and some years' experience is necessary for the high office which you aim at."

"Perhaps I may have thought on some such thing," said Durward, carelessly; "but if I did, the fancy is off."

"How so, young man?" said the Frenchman, something sternly—"Do you speak thus of a charge which the most noble of your countrymen feel themselves emulous to be admitted to?"

"I wish them joy of it," said Quentin, composedly.—"To speak plain, I should have liked the service of the French king full well; only, dress me as fine, and feed me as high as you will, I love the open air better than being shut up in a cage or a swallow's nest yonder, as you call these same grated pepper-boxes. Besides," he added, in a lower voice, "to speak truth, I love not the castle when the covin-tree bears such acorns as I see yonder."

"I guess what you mean," said the Frenchman; "but speak yet more plainly."

"To speak more plainly, then," said the youth, "there grows a fair oak some flight-shot or so from yonder castle—and on that oak hangs a man in a grey jerkin, such as this which I wear."

"Ay and indeed!" said the man of France—"Pasques-Dieu! see what it is to have youthful eyes! Why, I did see something, but only took it for a raven among the branches. But the sight is no way strange, young man; when the summer fades into autumn, and moon-light nights are long, and roads become unsafe, you will see a cluster of ten,

ay, of twenty such acorns, hanging on that old doddered oak.—But what then?—they are so many banners displayed to scare knaves; and for each rogue that hangs there, an honest man may reckon that there is a thief, a traitor, a robber on the highway, a pillour and oppressor of the people, the fewer in France. These, young man, are signs of our sovereign's justice."

"I would have hung them farther from my palace, though, were I King Louis," said the youth.—"In my country we hang up dead corbies where living corbies haunt, but not in our gardens or pigeon-houses. The very scent of the carrion—fough—reached my nostrils at the distance where we stood."

"If you live to be an honest and loyal servant of your prince, my good youth," answered the Frenchman, "you will know there is no perfume to match the scent of a dead traitor."

"I shall never wish to live till I lose the scent of my nostrils or the sight of my eyes," said the Scot.—"Show me a living traitor, and here are my hand and my weapon; but when life is out, hatred should not live longer.—But here, I fancy, we come upon the village; where I hope to show you that neither ducking nor disgust have spoiled mine appetite for my breakfast. So, my good friend, to the hostelry with all the speed you may.—Yet, ere I accept of your hospitality, let me know by what name to call you."

"Men call me Maître Pierre," answered his companion.—"I deal in no titles. A plain man, that can live on mine own good—that is my designation."

"So be it, Maître Pierre," said Quentin, "and I am happy my good chance has thrown us together; for I want a word of seasonable advice, and can be thankful for it."

While they spoke thus, the tower of the church and a tall wooden crucifix, rising above the trees, showed that they were at the entrance of the village.

But Maître Pierre, deflecting a little from the road, which had now joined an open and public causeway, said to his companion, that the inn to which he intended to introduce him stood somewhat secluded, and received only the better sort of travellers.

"If you mean those who travel with the better-filled purses," answered the Scot, "I am none of the number, and will rather stand my chance of your flayers on the highway, than of your flayers in the hostelry."

"*Pasques-Dieu!*" said his guide, "how cautious your countrymen of Scotland are! An Englishman, now, throws himself headlong into a tavern, eats and drinks of the best, and never thinks of the reckoning till his belly is full. But you forget, Master Quentin, since Quentin is your name, you forget I owe you a breakfast for the wetting which my mistake procured you—It is the penance of my offence towards you."

"In truth," said the light-hearted young man, "I had forgot wetting, offence, and penance and all. I have walked my clothes dry, or nearly so, and I will not refuse your offer in kindness; for my dinner yesterday was a light one, and supper I had none.

You seem an old and respectable burgess, and I see no reason why I should not accept your courtesy."

The Frenchman smiled aside, for he saw plainly that the youth, while he was probably half-famished, had yet some difficulty to reconcile himself to the thoughts of feeding upon a stranger's cost, and was endeavouring to subdue his inward pride, by the reflection, that, in such slight obligations, the acceptor performed as complaisant a part as he by whom the courtesy was offered.

In the meanwhile, they descended a narrow lane, overshadowed by tall elms, at the bottom of which a gate-way admitted them into the court-yard of an inn of unusual magnitude, calculated for the accommodation of the nobles and suitors who had business at the neighbouring castle, where very seldom, and only when such hospitality was altogether unavoidable, did Louis XI. permit any of his court to have apartments. A scutcheon, bearing the *fleur-de-lys*, hung over the principal door of the large irregular building; but there was about the yard and the offices little or none of the bustle which in those days, when attendants were maintained both in public and in private houses, marked that business was alive, and custom plenty. It seemed as if the stern and unsocial character of the royal mansion in the neighbourhood had communicated a portion of its solemn and terrific gloom even to a place designed for the temple of social indulgence, merry society, and good cheer.

Maître Pierre, without calling any one, and even without approaching the principal entrance, lifted the latch of a side door, and led the way into a large room, where a fagot was blazing on the hearth, and arrangements made for a substantial breakfast.

"My gossip has been careful," said the Frenchman to the Scot—"You must be cold, and I have commanded a fire; you must be hungry, and you shall have breakfast presently."

He whistled, and the landlord entered,—answered his *bon jour* with a reverence,—but in no respect showed any part of the prating humour properly belonging to a French publican of all ages.

"I expected a gentleman," said Maître Pierre, "to order breakfast—Hath he done so?"

In answer, the landlord only bowed; and while he continued to bring and arrange upon the table the various articles of a comfortable meal, omitted to extol their merits by a single word. And yet the breakfast merited such eulogiums as French hosts are wont to confer upon their regales, as the reader will be informed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DÉJEUNÉ.

Sacred Heaven! what masticators! what bread!

Yorick's Travels.

WE left our young stranger in France, situated more comfortably than he had found himself since entering the territories of the ancient Gauls. The breakfast, as we hinted in the conclusion of the last chapter, was admirable. There was a *pâté de Périgord*, over which a gastronome would have

wished to live and die, like Homer's lotus-eaters, forgetful of kin, native country, and all social obligations whatsoever. Its vast walls of magnificent crust seemed raised like the bulwarks of some rich metropolitan city, an emblem of the wealth which they are designed to protect. There was a delicate ragout, with just that *petit point de l'ail* which Gascons love, and Scotchmen do not hate. There was, besides, a delicate ham, which had once supported a noble wild-boar in the neighbouring wood of Mountrichart. There was the most delicate white bread, made into little round loaves called *boules* (whence the bakers took their French name of *boulangers*), of which the crust was so inviting, that, even with water alone, it would have been a delicacy. But the water was not alone, for there was a flask of leather called *bottrine*, which contained about a quart of exquisite *vin de Beaulne*. So many good things might have created appetite under the ribs of death. What effect, then, must they have produced upon a youngster of scarce twenty, who (for the truth must be told) had eaten little for the two last days, save the scarcely ripe fruit which chance afforded him an opportunity of plucking, and a very moderate portion of barley-bread! He threw himself upon the ragout, and the plate was presently vacant—he attacked the mighty pasty, marched deep into the bowels of the land, and, seasoning his enormous meal with an occasional cup of wine, returned to the charge again and again, to the astonishment of mine host, and the amusement of Maître Pierre.

The latter, indeed, probably because he found himself the author of a kinder action than he had thought of, seemed delighted with the appetite of the young Scot; and when, at length, he observed that his exertions began to languish, endeavoured to stimulate him to new efforts, by ordering confections, *darioles*, and any other light dainties he could think of, to entice the youth to continue his meal. While thus engaged, Maître Pierre's countenance expressed a kind of good humour, almost amounting to benevolence, which appeared remote from its ordinary sharp, caustic, and severe character. The aged almost always sympathize with the enjoyments of youth, and with its exertions of every kind, when the mind of the spectator rests on its natural poise, and is not disturbed by inward envy or idle emulation.

Quentin Durward also, while thus agreeably employed, could do no otherwise than discover that the countenance of his entertainer, which he had at first found so unprepossessing, mended when it was seen under the influence of the *vin de Beaulne*, and there was kindness in the tone with which he reproached Maître Pierre, that he amused himself with laughing at his appetite, without eating anything himself.

"I am doing penance," said Maître Pierre, "and may not eat anything before noon, save some comfiture and a cup of water.—Bid yonder lady," he added, turning to the innkeeper, "bring them hither to me."

The innkeeper left the room, and Maître Pierre proceeded,—“Well, have I kept faith with you concerning the breakfast I promised you?”

"The best meal I have eaten," said the youth, "since I left Glen-houlakin."

"Glen—what?" demanded Maître Pierre; "are you going to raise the devil, that you use such long-tailed words?"

"Glen-houlakin, which is to say the Glen of the Midges, is the name of our ancient patrimony, my good sir. You have bought the right to laugh at the sound, if you please."

"I have not the least intention to offend," said the old man; "but I was about to say, since you like your present meal so well, that the Scottish archers of the guard eat as good a one, or a better, every day."

"No wonder," said Durward, "for if they are shut up in the *swallows' nests* all night, they must needs have a curious appetite in the morning."

"And plenty to gratify it upon," said Maître Pierre. "They need not, like the Burgundians, chuse a bare back, that they may have a full belly—they dress like counts—and feast like abbots."

"It is well for them," said Durward.

"And wherefore will you not take service here, young man? Your uncle might, I dare say, have you placed on the file when there should a vacancy occur. And, hark in your ear, I myself have some little interest, and might be of some use to you. You can ride, I presume, as well as draw the bow?"

"Our race are as good horsemen as ever put a plated shoe into a steel stirrup; and I know not but I might accept of your kind offer. Yet, look you, food and raiment are needful things, but, in my case, men think of honour, and advancement, and brave deeds of arms. Your King Louis—God bless him, for he is a friend and ally of Scotland—but he lies here in this castle, or only rides about from one fortified town to another; and gains cities and provinces by politic embassies, and not in fair fighting. Now, for me, I am of the Douglasses' mind, who always kept the fields, because they loved better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak."

"Young man," said Maître Pierre, "do not judge too rashly of the actions of sovereigns. Louis seeks to spare the blood of his subjects, and cares not for his own. He showed himself a man of courage at Monlhery."

"Ay, but that was some dozen years ago or more," answered the youth.—"I should like to follow a master that would keep his honour as bright as his shield, and always venture foremost in the very throng of the battle."

"Why did you not tarry at Brussels, then, with the Duke of Burgundy? He would put you in the way to have your bones broken every day; and rather than fail, would do the job for you himself—especially if he heard that you had beaten his forester."

"Very true," said Quentin; "my unhappy chance has shut that door against me."

"Nay, there are plenty of dare-devils abroad, with whom mad youngsters may find service," said his adviser. "What think you, for example, of William de la Marck?"

"What!" exclaimed Durward, "serve Him with the Beard—serve the wild Boar of Ardennes—a captain of pillagers and murderers, who would take a man's life for the value of his gaberdine, and who

slays priests and pilgrims as if they were so many lance-knights and men-at-arms? It would be a blot on my father's scutcheon for ever."

"Well, my young hot-blood," replied Maître Pierre, "if you hold the *Sanglier* too unscrupulous, wherefore not follow the young Duke of Gueldres?"

"Follow the foul fiend as soon," said Quentin. "Hark in your ear—he is a burthen too heavy for earth to carry—hell gapes for him! Men say that he keeps his own father imprisoned, and that he has even struck him—Can you believe it?"

Maître Pierre seemed somewhat disconcerted with the naïve horror with which the young Scotchman spoke of filial ingratitude, and he answered, "You know not, young man, how short a while the relations of blood subsist amongst those of elevated rank;" then changed the tone of feeling in which he had begun to speak, and added gaily, "besides, if the duke has beaten his father, I warrant you, his father hath beaten him of old, so it is but a clearing of scores."

"I marvel to hear you speak thus," said the Scotchman, colouring with indignation; "grey hairs such as yours ought to have fitter subject for jesting. If the old duke did beat his son in childhood, he beat him not enough; for better he had died under the rod, than have lived to make the christian world ashamed that such a monster had been ever baptized."

"At this rate," said Maître Pierre, "as you weigh the characters of each prince and leader, I think you had better become a captain yourself; for where will one so wise find a chieftain fit to command him?"

"You laugh at me, Maître Pierre," said the youth, good-humouredly, "and perhaps you are right; but you have not named a man who is a gallant leader, and keeps a brave party up here, under whom a man might seek service well enough."

"I cannot guess whom you mean."

"Why he that hangs like Mahomet's coffin (a curse be upon him!) between the two loadstones—he that no man can call either French or Burgundian, but who knows to hold the balance between them both, and makes both of them fear and serve him, for as great princes as they be."

"I cannot guess whom you mean," said Maître Pierre, thoughtfully.

"Why, whom should I mean but the noble Louis de Luxembourg, Count of Saint Paul, the High Constable of France? Yonder he makes his place good, with his gallant little army, holding his head as high as either King Louis or Duke Charles, and balancing between them, like the boy who stands on the midst of a plank, while two others are swinging on the opposite ends."

"He is in danger of the worst fall of the three," said Maître Pierre. "And hark ye, my young friend, you who hold pillaging such a crime, do you know that your politic Count of Saint Paul was the first who set the example of burning the country during the time of war; and that before the shameful devastation which he committed, open towns and villages, which made no resistance, were spared on all sides?"

"Nay, faith," said Durward, "if that be the

case, I shall begin to think no one of these great men is much better than another, and that a choice among them is but like chusing a tree to be hung upon. But this Count de Saint Paul, this constable, hath possessed himself by clean conveyance of the town which takes its name from my honoured saint and patron, Saint Quentin (here he crossed himself), and methinks, were I dwelling there, my holy patron would keep some look-out for me—he has not so many named after him as your more popular saints—and yet he must have forgotten me, poor Quentin Durward, his spiritual godson, since he lets me go one day without food, and leaves me the next morning to the harbourage of Saint Julian, and the chance courtesy of a stranger, purchased by a ducking in the renowned river Cher, or one of its tributaries."

"Blaspheme not the saints, my young friend," said Maître Pierre. "Saint Julian is the faithful patron of travellers; and, peradventure, the blessed Saint Quentin hath done more and better for thee than thou art aware of."

As he spoke, the door opened, and a girl, rather above than under fifteen years old, entered with a platter, covered with damask, on which was placed a small saucer of the dried plums which have always added to the reputation of Tours, and a cup of the curiously chased plate which the goldsmiths of that city were anciently famous for executing, with a delicacy of workmanship that distinguished them from the other cities of France, and even excelled the skill of the metropolis. The form of the goblet was so elegant, that Durward thought not of observing closely whether the material was of silver, or, like what had been placed before himself, of a baser metal, but so well burnished as to resemble the richer ore.

But the sight of the young person by whom this service was executed, attracted Durward's attention far more than the petty particulars of the duty which she performed.

He speedily made the discovery, that a quantity of long black tresses, which, in the maiden fashion of his own country, were unadorned by any ornament, excepting a single chaplet lightly woven out of ivy-leaves, formed a veil around a countenance, which, in its regular features, dark eyes, and pensive expression, resembled that of Melpomene, though there was a faint glow on the cheek, and an intelligence on the lips and in the eye, which made it seem that gaiety was not foreign to a countenance so expressive, although it might not be its most habitual expression. Quentin even thought he could discern that depressing circumstances were the cause why a countenance so young and so lovely was graver than belongs to early beauty; and as the romantic imagination of youth is rapid in drawing conclusions from slight premises, he was pleased to infer, from what follows, that the fate of this beautiful vision was wrapped in silence and mystery.

"How now, Jacqueline!" said Maître Pierre, when she entered the apartment—"Wherefore this? Did I not desire that Dame Perette should bring what I wanted?—*Pasques-Dieu!*—Is she, or does she think herself, too good to serve me?"

"My mother is ill at ease," answered Jacqueline, in a hurried yet a humble tone; "ill at ease, and keeps her chamber."

"She keeps it *alone*, I hope?" replied Maître Pierre, with some emphasis; "I am *vieux routier*, and none of those upon whom feigned disorders pass for apologies."

Jacqueline turned pale, and even tottered at the answer of Maître Pierre; for it must be owned, that his voice and looks, at all times harsh, caustic, and unpleasing, had, when he expressed anger or suspicion, an effect both sinister and alarming.

The mountain chivalry of Quentin Durward was instantly awakened, and he hastened to approach Jacqueline, and relieve her of the burthen she bore, and which she passively resigned to him, while, with a timid and anxious look, she watched the countenance of the angry burgess. It was not in nature to resist the piercing and pity-craving expression of her looks, and Maître Pierre proceeded, not merely with an air of diminished displeasure, but with as much gentleness as he could assume in countenance and manner, "I blame not thee, Jacqueline, and thou art too young to be, what it is pity to think thou must be one day—a false and treacherous thing, like the rest of thy giddy sex. No man ever lived to man's estate, but he had the opportunity to know you all. Here is a Scottish cavalier will tell you the same."

Jacqueline looked for an instant on the young stranger, as if to obey Maître Pierre, but the glance, momentary as it was, appeared to Durward a pathetic appeal to him for support and sympathy; and, with the promptitude dictated by the feelings of youth, and the romantic veneration for the female sex inspired by his education, he answered hastily, "That he would throw down his gage to any antagonist, of equal rank and equal age, who should presume to say such a countenance, as that which he now looked upon, could be animated by other than the purest and the truest mind."

The young woman grew deadly pale, and cast an apprehensive glance on Maître Pierre, in whom the bravado of the young gallant seemed only to excite laughter, more scornful than applausive. Quentin, whose second thoughts generally corrected the first, though sometimes after they had found utterance, blushed deeply at having uttered what might be construed into an empty boast, in presence of an old man of a peaceful profession; and, as a sort of just and appropriate penance, resolved patiently to submit to the ridicule which he had incurred. He offered the cup and trencher to Maître Pierre with a blush on his cheek, and a humiliation of countenance, which endeavoured to disguise itself under an embarrassed smile.

"You are a foolish young man," said Maître Pierre, "and know as little of women as of princes,—whose hearts," he said, crossing himself devoutly, "God keeps in his right hand."

"And who keeps those of the women, then?" said Quentin, resolved, if he could help it, not to be borne down by the assumed superiority of this extraordinary old man, whose lofty and careless manner possessed an influence over him of which he felt ashamed.

"I am afraid you must ask of them in another quarter," said Maître Pierre, composedly.

Quentin was again rebuffed, but not utterly disconcerted. "Surely," he said to himself, "I do not pay this same burgess of Tours all the deference which I yield him, on account of the miserable obligation of a breakfast, though it was a right good and substantial meal. Dogs and hawks are attached by feeding only—man must have kindness, if you would bind him with the cords of affection and obligation. But he is an extraordinary person; and that beautiful emanation that is even now vanishing—surely a thing so fair belongs not to this mean place—belongs not even to the money-gathering merchant himself, though he seems to exert authority over her, as doubtless he does over all whom chance brings within his little circle. It is wonderful what ideas of consequence these Flemings and Frenchmen attach to wealth—so much more than wealth deserves, that I suppose this old merchant thinks the civility I pay to his age is given to his money—I, a Scottish gentleman of blood and coat-armour, and he a mechanic of Tours!"

Such were the thoughts which hastily traversed the mind of young Durward; while Maître Pierre said, with a smile, and at the same time patting Jacqueline's head, from which hung down her long tresses, "This young man will serve me, Jacqueline—thou mayest withdraw. I will tell thy negligent mother she does ill to expose thee to be gazed on unnecessarily."

"It was only to wait on you," said the maiden. "I trust you will not be displeased with your kinswoman, since"—

"*Pasques-Dieu!*" said the merchant, interrupting her, but not harshly, "do you bandy words with me, you brat, or stay you to gaze upon the youngster here?—Begone—he is noble, and his services will suffice me."

Jacqueline vanished; and so much was Quentin Durward interested in her sudden disappearance, that it broke his previous thread of reflection, and he complied mechanically, when Maître Pierre said, in the tone of one accustomed to be obeyed, as he threw himself carelessly upon a large easy-chair, "Place that tray beside me."

The merchant then let his dark eye-brows sink over his keen eyes, so that the last became scarce visible, or but shot forth occasionally a quick and vivid ray, like those of the sun setting behind a dark cloud, through which its beams are occasionally darted, but singly, and for an instant.

"That is a beautiful creature," said the old man at last, raising his head and looking steadily and firmly at Quentin, when he put the question—"a lovely girl to be the servant of an *auberge*!—she might grace the board of an honest burgess; but 'tis a vile education, a base origin."

It sometimes happens that a chance-shot will demolish a noble castle in the air, and the architect on such occasions entertains little good-will towards him who fires it, although the damage on the offender's part may be wholly unintentional. Quentin was disconcerted, and was disposed to be angry—he himself knew not why—with this old man, for acquainting him that this beautiful creature was neither more nor less than what her occupation an-

nounced—the servant of this *auberge*—an upper servant, indeed, and probably a niece of the landlord, or such like; but still a domestic, and obliged to comply with the humour of the customers, and particularly of Maitre Pierre, who probably had sufficiency of whims, and was rich enough to insure their being attended to.

The thought, the lingering thought, again returned on him, that he ought to make the old gentleman understand the difference betwixt their conditions, and call on him to mark, that, how rich soever he might be, his wealth put him on no level with a Durward of Glen-houlakin. Yet, whenever he looked on Maitre Pierre's countenance with such a purpose, there was, notwithstanding the downcast look, pinched features, and mean and miserly dress, something which prevented the young man from asserting the superiority over the merchant, which he conceived himself to possess. On the contrary, the oftener and more fixedly Quentin looked at him, the stronger became his curiosity to know who or what this man actually was; and he set him down internally for at least a syndic or high magistrate of Tours, or one who was, in some way or other, in the full habit of exacting and receiving deference.

Meantime, the merchant seemed again sunk into a reverie, from which he raised himself only to make the sign of the cross devoutly, and to eat some of the dried fruit, with a morsel of biscuit. He then signed to Quentin to give him the cup, adding, however, as he presented it—"You are noble."

"I surely am," replied the Scot, "if fifteen descents can make me so—So I told you before. But do not constrain yourself on that account, Maitre Pierre—I have always been taught it is the duty of the young to assist the more aged."

"An excellent maxim," said the merchant, availing himself of the youth's assistance in handing the cup, and filling it from a ewer which seemed of the same materials with the goblet, without any of those scruples in point of propriety, which, perhaps, Quentin had expected to excite.

"The devil take the ease and familiarity of this old mechanical burgher," said Durward once more to himself; "he uses the attendance of a noble Scottish gentleman with as little ceremony as I would that of a gillie from Glen-Isla."

The merchant, in the meanwhile, having finished his cup of water, said to his companion, "From the zeal with which you seemed to relish the *vin de Beaulne*, I fancy you would not care much to pledge me in this elemental liquor. But I have an elixir about me which can convert even the rock water into the richest wines of France."

As he spoke, he took a large purse from his bosom, made of the fur of the sea-otter, and streamed a shower of small silver pieces into the goblet, until the cup, which was but a small one, was more than half full.

"You have reason to be more thankful, young man," said Maitre Pierre, "both to your patron Saint Quentin, and to Saint Julian, than you seemed to be but now. I would advise you to bestow alms in their name. Remain in this hostelry until you see your kinsman, Le Balafre, who will be relieved from guard in the afternoon. I will cause him to be

acquainted that he may find you here, for I have business in the castle."

Quentin Durward would have said something to have excused himself from accepting the profuse liberality of his new friend; but Maitre Pierre, bending his dark brows, and erecting his stooping figure into an attitude of more dignity than he had yet seen him assume, said, in a tone of authority, "No reply, young man, but do what you are commanded."

With these words, he left the apartment, making a sign, as he departed, that Quentin must not follow him.

The young Scotchman stood astounded, and knew not what to think of the matter. His first most natural, though perhaps not most dignified impulse, drove him to peep into the silver goblet, which assuredly was more than half full of silver pieces, to the number of several scores, of which perhaps Quentin had never called twenty his own at one time during the course of his whole life. But could he reconcile it to his dignity as a gentleman, to accept the money of this wealthy plebeian?—This was a trying question; for though he had secured a good breakfast, it was no great reserve upon which to travel either back to Dijon, in case he chose to hazard the wrath, and enter the service, of the Duke of Burgundy, or to Saint Quentin, if he fixed on that of the Constable Saint Paul; for to one of those powers, if not to the King of France, he was determined to offer his services. He perhaps took the wisest resolution in the circumstances, in resolving to be guided by the advice of his uncle; and, in the meantime, he put the money into his velvet hawking-pouch, and called for the landlord of the house, in order to restore the silver cup—resolving, at the same time, to ask him some questions about this liberal and authoritative merchant.

The man of the house appeared presently; and, if not more communicative, was at least more loquacious, than he had formerly appeared. He positively declined to take back the silver cup. It was none of his, he said, but Maitre Pierre's, who had bestowed it on his guest. He had, indeed, four silver *hanaps* of his own, which had been left him by his grandmother, of happy memory, but no more like the beautiful carving of that in his guest's hand, than a peach was like a turnip,—that was one of the famous cups of Tours, wrought by Martin Dominique, an artist who might brag all Paris.

"And, pray, who is this Maitre Pierre," said Durward, interrupting him, "who confers such valuable gifts on strangers?"

"Who is Maitre Pierre?" said the host, dropping the words as slowly from his mouth as if he had been distilling them.

"Ay," said Durward, hastily and peremptorily, "who is this Maitre Pierre, and why does he throw about his bounties in this fashion? And who is the butcherly-looking fellow whom he sent forward to order breakfast?"

"Why, fair sir, as to who Maitre Pierre is, you should have asked the question at himself; and for the gentleman who ordered breakfast to be made ready, may God keep us from his closer acquaintance!"

"There is something mysterious in all this," said the young Scot. "This Maître Pierre tells me he is a merchant."

"And if he told you so," said the innkeeper, "surely he is a merchant."

"What commodities does he deal in?"

"O, many a fair matter of traffic," said the host; "and specially he has set up silk manufactories here, which match those rich bales that the Venetians bring from India and Cathay. You might see the rows of mulberry-trees as you came hither, all planted by Maître Pierre's commands, to feed the silk-worms."

"And that young person who brought in the confections, who is she, my good friend?" said the guest.

"My lodger, sir, with her guardian, some sort of aunt or kinswoman, as I think," replied the innkeeper.

"And do you usually employ your guests in waiting on each other?" said Durward; "for I observed that Maître Pierre would take nothing from your hand, or that of your attendant."

"Rich men may have their fancies, for they can pay for them," said the landlord; "this is not the first time that Maître Pierre has found the true way to make gentlefolks serve at his beck."

The young Scotsman felt somewhat offended at the insinuation; but, disguising his resentment, he asked whether he could be accommodated with an apartment at this place for a day, and perhaps longer.

"Certainly," the innkeeper replied; "for whatever time he was pleased to command it."

"Could he be permitted," he asked, "to pay his respects to the ladies, whose fellow-lodger he was about to become?"

The innkeeper was uncertain. "They went not abroad," he said, "and received no one at home."

"With the exception, I presume, of Maître Pierre?" said Durward.

"I am not at liberty to name any exceptions," answered the man, firmly, but respectfully.

Quentin, who carried the notions of his own importance pretty high, considering how destitute he was of means to support them, being somewhat mortified by the innkeeper's reply, did not hesitate to avail himself of a practice common enough in that age. "Carry to the ladies," he said, "a flask of *vernât*, with my humble duty; and say, that Quentin Durward, of the house of Glen-houlakin, a Scottish cavalier of honour, and now their fellow-lodger, desires the permission to dedicate his homage to them in a personal interview."

The messenger departed, and returned, almost instantly, with the thanks of the ladies, who declined the proffered refreshment, and, returning their thanks to the Scottish cavalier, regretted that, residing there in privacy, they could not receive his visit.

Quentin bit his lip, took a cup of the rejected *vernât*, which the host had placed on the table. "By the mass, but this is a strange country," said he to himself, "where merchants and mechanics exercise the manners and munificence of nobles, and little traveling damsels, who hold their court in a *cabaret*, keep their state like disguised princesses! I will see that black-browed maiden again, or it will

go hard, however;" and having formed this prudent resolution, he demanded to be conducted to the apartment which he was to call his own.

The landlord presently ushered him up a turret staircase, and from thence along a gallery, with many doors opening from it, like those of cells in a convent; a resemblance which our young hero, who recollected, with much ennui, an early specimen of a monastic life, was far from admiring. The host paused at the very end of the gallery, selected a key from the large bunch which he carried at his girdle, opened the door, and showed his guest the interior of a turret-chamber, small, indeed, but which, being clean and solitary, and having the pallet-bed, and the few articles of furniture, in unusually good order, seemed, on the whole, a little palace.

"I hope you will find your dwelling agreeable here, fair sir," said the landlord.—"I am bound to pleasure every friend of Maître Pierre."

"O happy ducking!" exclaimed Quentin Durward, cutting a caper on the floor, so soon as his host had retired: "Never came good luck in a better or a wetter form. I have been fairly deluged by my good fortune."

As he spoke thus, he stepped towards the little window, which, as the turret projected considerably from the principal line of the building, not only commanded a very pretty garden, of some extent, belonging to the inn, but overlooked, beyond its boundary, a pleasant grove of those very mulberry-trees which Maître Pierre was said to have planted for the support of the silk-worm. Besides, turning the eye from these more remote objects, and looking straight along the wall, the turret of Quentin was opposite to another turret, and the little window at which he stood, commanded a similar little window, in a corresponding projection of the building. Now it would be difficult for a man twenty years older than Quentin, to say why this locality interested him more than either the pleasant garden or the grove of mulberry-trees; for, alas! eyes which have been used for forty years and upwards, look with indifference on little turret-windows, though the lattice be half-open to admit the air, while the shutter is half-closed to exclude the sun, or perhaps a too curious eye—nay, even though there hang on the one side of the casement a lute, partly mantled by a light veil of sea-green silk. But, at Durward's happy age, such *accidents*, as a painter would call them, form sufficient foundation for a hundred airy visions and mysterious conjectures, at recollection of which the full-grown man smiles while he sighs, and sighs while he smiles.

As it may be supposed that our friend Quentin wished to learn a little more of his fair neighbour, the owner of the lute and veil,—as it may be supposed he was at least interested to know whether she might not prove the same whom he had seen in humble attendance on Maître Pierre, it must of course be understood, that he did not produce a broad, flat, staring visage and person in full front of his own casement. Durward knew better the art of bird-catching; and it was to his keeping his person skilfully withdrawn on one side of his window, while he peeped through the lattice, that he owed the pleasure of seeing a white, round, beautiful arm,

take down the instrument, and that his ears had presently after their share in the reward of his dexterous management.

The maid of the little turret, of the veil and of the lute, sung exactly such a little air as we are accustomed to suppose flowed from the lips of the high-born dames of chivalry, when knights and troubadours listened and languished. The words had neither so much sense, wit, or fancy, as to withdraw the attention from the music, nor the music so much of art, as to drown all feeling of the words. The one seemed fitted to the other; and if the song had been recited without the notes, or the air played without the words, neither would have been worth noting. It is, therefore, scarce fair to put upon record lines intended not to be said or read, but only to be sung. But such scraps of old poetry have always had a sort of fascination for us; and as the tune is lost for ever—unless Bishop happens to find the notes, or some lark teaches Stephens to warble the air—we will risk our credit, and the taste of the Lady of the Lute, by preserving the verses, simple and even rude as they are.

Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark his lay who trill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, they know the hour—
But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born cavalier.
The star of love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy?

Whatever the reader may think of this simple ditty, it had a powerful effect on Quentin, when married to heavenly airs, and sung by a sweet and melting voice, the notes mingling with the gentle breezes which wafted perfumes from the garden, and the figure of the songstress being so partially and obscurely visible as threw a veil of mysterious fascination over the whole.

At the close of the air, the listener could not help showing himself more boldly than he had yet done, in a rash attempt to see more than he had yet been able to discover. The music instantly ceased—the casement was closed, and a dark curtain dropped on the inside put a stop to all further observation on the part of the neighbour in the next turret.

Durward was mortified and surprised at the consequence of his precipitance, but comforted himself with the hope that the Lady of the Lute could neither easily forego the practice of an instrument which seemed so familiar to her, nor cruelly resolve to renounce the pleasure of fresh air and an open window, for the churlish purpose of preserving for her own exclusive ear the sweet sounds which she created. There came, perhaps, a little feeling of personal vanity to mingle with these consolatory reflexions. If, as he shrewdly suspected, there was a beautiful dark-tressed damsel inhabitant of the

one turret, he could not but be conscious that a handsome, young, roving, bright-locked gallant, a cavalier of fortune, was the tenant of the other; and romances—those prudent instructors—had taught his youth that if damsels were shy, they were yet neither void of interest nor of curiosity in their neighbours' affairs.

Whilst Quentin was engaged in these sage reflexions, a sort of attendant or chamberlain of the inn informed him that a cavalier desired to speak with him below.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN-AT-ARMS.

— Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth.
As You Like It.

THE cavalier who awaited Quentin Durward's descent into the apartment where he had breakfasted, was one of those of whom Louis XI. had long since said, that they held in their hands the fortune of France, as to them were intrusted the direct custody and protection of the royal person.

Charles the Sixth had instituted this celebrated body, the Archers, as they were called, of the Scottish Body-guard, with better reason than can generally be alleged for establishing round the throne a guard of foreign and mercenary troops. The divisions which tore from his side more than half of France, together with the wavering and uncertain faith of the nobility who yet acknowledged his cause, rendered it impolitic and unsafe to commit his personal safety to their keeping. The Scottish nation was the hereditary enemy of the English, and the ancient, and, as it seemed, the natural, allies of France. They were poor, courageous, faithful—their ranks were sure to be supplied from the superabundant population of their own country, than which none in Europe sent forth more or bolder adventurers. Their high claims of descent, too, gave them a good title to approach the person of a monarch more closely than other troops, while the smallness of their numbers prevented the possibility of their mutinying, and becoming masters where they ought to be servants.

On the other hand, the French monarchs made it their policy to conciliate the affections of this selected band of foreigners, by allowing them honorary privileges and ample pay, which last most of them disposed of with military profusion in supporting their supposed rank. Each of them ranked as a gentleman in place and honour; and their near approach to the king's person gave them dignity in their own eyes, as well as in those of the nation of France. They were sumptuously armed, equipped, and mounted; and each was entitled to allowance for a squire, a valet, a page, and two yeomen, one of whom was termed coutelier, from the large knife which he wore to dispatch those whom in the *mêlée* his master had thrown to the ground. With these followers, and a corresponding equipage, an archer of the Scottish Guard was a person of quality and importance; and vacancies being generally filled

up by those who had been trained in the service as pages or valets, the cadets of the best Scottish families were often sent to serve under some friend and relation in those capacities, until a chance of preferment should occur.

The coutelier and his companion, not being noble or capable of this promotion, were recruited from persons of inferior quality; but as their pay and appointments were excellent, their masters were easily able to select from among their wandering countrymen the strongest and most courageous to wait upon them in that capacity.

Ludovic Lesly, or, as we shall more frequently call him, Le Balafre, by which name he was generally known in France, was upwards of six feet high, robust, strongly compacted in person, and hard-favoured in countenance, which latter attribute was much increased by a large and ghastly scar, which, beginning on his forehead, and narrowly missing his right eye, had laid bare the cheek-bone, and descended from thence almost to the tip of his ear, exhibiting a deep seam, which was sometimes scarlet, sometimes purple, sometimes blue, and sometimes approaching to black; but always hideous, because at variance with the complexion of the face in whatever state it chanced to be, whether agitated or still, flushed with unusual passion, or in its ordinary state of weather-beaten and sun-burnt swarthy-thiness.

His dress and arms were splendid. He wore his national bonnet, crested with a tuft of feathers, and with a Virgin Mary of massive silver for a brooch. These had been presented to the Scottish Guard, in consequence of the king, in one of his fits of superstitious piety, having devoted the swords of his guard to the service of the Holy Virgin, and, as some say, carried the matter so far as to draw out a commission to our Lady as their captain-general. The archer's gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets, were of the finest steel, curiously inlaid with silver, and his hauberk, or shirt of mail, was as clear and bright as the frost-work of a winter morning upon fern or briar. He wore a loose surcoat, or cassock, of rich blue velvet, open at the sides like that of a herald, with a large white cross of embroidered silver bisecting it both before and behind—his knees and legs were protected by hose of mail and shoes of steel—a broad strong poniard (called the *Mercy of God*) hung by his right side—the baldric for his two-handed sword, richly embroidered, hung upon his left shoulder; but, for convenience, he at present carried in his hand that unwieldy weapon, which the rules of his service forbade him to lay aside.

Quentin Durward, though, like the Scottish youth of the period, he had been early taught to look upon arms and war, thought he had never seen a more martial-looking, or more completely equipped and accomplished man-at-arms, than now saluted him in the person of his mother's brother, called Ludovic with the Scar, or Le Balafre; yet he could not but shrink a little from the grim expression of his countenance, while, with its rough moustaches, he brushed first the one and then the other cheek of his kinsman, welcomed his fair nephew to France, and, in the same breath, asked what news from Scotland.

"Little good, dear uncle," replied young Durward; "but I am glad that you know me so readily."

"I would have known thee, boy, in the *landes* of Bourdeaux, had I met thee marching there like a crane on a pair of stilts. But sit thee down—sit thee down—if there is sorrow to hear of, we will have wine to make us bear it.—Ho! old Pinch-Measure, our good host, bring us of thy best, and that in an instant."

The well-known sound of the Scottish-French was as familiar in the taverns near Plessis, as that of the Swiss-French in the modern *guinguettes* of Paris; and promptly—ay, with the promptitude of fear and precipitation, was it heard and obeyed. A flagon of champagne stood before them, of which the elder took a draught, while the nephew helped himself only to a moderate sip, to acknowledge his uncle's courtesy, saying, in excuse, that he had already drunk wine that morning.

"That had been a rare apology in the mouth of thy sister, fair nephew," said Le Balafre; "you must fear the wine-pot less, if you would wear beard on your face, and write yourself soldier. But, come—come—unbuckle your Scottish mail-bag—give us the news of Glen-houlakin—How doth my sister?"

"Dead, fair uncle," answered Quentin, sorrowfully.

"Dead!" echoed his uncle, with a tone rather marked by wonder than sympathy—"why, she was five years younger than I, and I was never better in my life. Dead! the thing is impossible. I have never had so much as a headache, unless after reveling out my two or three days' furlough with the brethren of the joyous science—and my poor sister is dead!—And your father, fair nephew, hath he married again?"

And, ere the youth could reply, he read the answer in his surprise at the question, and said, "What! no?—I would have sworn that Allan Durward was no man to live without a wife. He loved to have his house in order—loved to look on a pretty woman too; and was somewhat strict in life withal—matrimony did all this for him. Now, I care little about these comforts; and I can look on a pretty woman without thinking on the sacrament of wedlock—I am scarce holy enough for that."

"Alas! dear uncle, my mother was left a widow a year since, when Glen-houlakin was harried by the Ogilvies. My father, and my two uncles, and my two elder brothers, and seven of my kinsmen, and the harper, and the tasker, and some six more of our people, were killed in defending the castle; and there is not a burning hearth or a standing stone in all Glen-houlakin."

"Cross of Saint Andrew!" said Le Balafre; "that is what I call an onslaught. Ay, these Ogilvies were ever but sorry neighbours to Glen-houlakin—an evil chance it was;—but fate of war—fate of war.—When did this mishap befall, fair nephew?" With that he took a deep draught of wine in lieu, and shook his head with much solemnity, when his kinsman replied, that his family had been destroyed upon the festival of Saint Jude last by-past.

"Look ye there," said the soldier; "I said it was

all chance—on that very day I and twenty of my comrades carried the Castle of Roche-noir by storm, from Amaury Bras-de-fer, a captain of free lances, whom you must have heard of. I killed him on his own threshold, and gained as much gold as made this fair chain, which was once twice as long as it now is—and that minds me to send part of it on an holy errand.—Here, Andrew—Andrew!”

Andrew, his yeoman, entered, dressed like the archer himself in the general equipment, but without the armour for the limbs,—that of the body more coarsely manufactured—his cap without a plume, and his cassock made of serge, or coarse cloth, instead of rich velvet. Untwining his gold chain from his neck, Balafre twisted off, with his firm and strong-set teeth, about four inches from the one end of it, and said to his attendant, “Here, Andrew, carry this to my gossip, jolly Father Boniface, the monk of Saint Martin’s—greet him well from me, by the same token that he could not say God save ye when we last parted at midnight—Tell my gossip that my brother and sister, and some others of my house, are all dead and gone, and I pray him to say masses for their souls as far as the value of these links will carry him, and to do on trust what else may be necessary to free them from Purgatory. And hark ye, as they were just-living people, and free from all heresy, it may be that they are well nigh out of limbo already, so that a little matter may have them free of the fetlocks; and in that case, look ye, ye will say I desire to take out the gold in curses upon a generation called the Ogilvies, in what way soever the church may best come at them. You understand all this, Andrew?”

The coutelier nodded.

“Then look that none of the links find their way to the wine-house ere the monk touches them; for if it so chance, thou shalt taste of saddle-girth and stirrup-leather, till thou art as raw as Saint Bartholomew.—Yet hold, I see thy eye has fixed on the wine measure, and thou shalt not go without tasting.”

So saying, he filled him a brimful cup, which the coutelier drank off, and retired to do his patron’s commission.

“And now, fair nephew, let us hear what was your own fortune in this unhappy matter.”

“I fought it out among those who were older and stouter than I was, till we were all brought down,” said Durward, “and I received a cruel wound.”

“Not a worse slash than I received ten years since myself,” said Le Balafre.—“Look at this now, my fair nephew,” tracing the dark crimson gash which was imprinted on his face—“An Ogilvy’s sword never ploughed so deep a furrow.”

“They ploughed deeply enough,” answered Quentin, sadly; “but they were tired at last, and my mother’s entreaties procured mercy for me, when I was found to retain some spark of life; but although a learned monk of Aberbrothock, who chanced to be our guest at the fatal time, and narrowly escaped being killed in the fray, was permitted to bind my wounds, and finally to remove me to a place of safety, it was only on promise, given both by my mother and him, that I should become a monk.”

“A monk!” exclaimed the uncle—“Holy Saint Andrew! that is what never befel me. No one, from my childhood upwards, ever so much as dreamed of making me a monk—And yet I wonder when I think of it; for you will allow that, bating the reading and writing, which I could never learn, and the psalmody, which I could never endure, and the dress, which is that of a mad beggar—Our lady forgive me!—(here he crossed himself)—and their fasts, which do not suit my appetite, I would have made every whit as good a monk as my little gossip at Saint Martin’s yonder. But I know not why, none ever proposed the station to me.—O so, fair nephew, you were to be a monk then—and wherefore, I pray you?”

“That my father’s house might be ended, either in the cloister or in the tomb,” answered Quentin, with deep feeling.

“I see,” answered his uncle—“I comprehend. Cunning rogues—very cunning!—They might have been cheated though; for, look ye, fair nephew, I myself remember the canon Robersart who had taken the vows, and afterwards broke out of cloister, and became a captain of free companions. He had a mistress, the prettiest wench I ever saw, and three as beautiful children—There is no trusting monks, fair nephew,—no trusting them—they may become soldiers and fathers when you least expect it—but on with your tale.”

“I have little more to tell,” said Durward, “except that, considering my poor mother in some degree a pledge for me, I took the dress of a novice, and conformed to the cloister rules, and even learned to read and write.”

“To read and write!” exclaimed Le Balafre, who was one of that sort of people who think all knowledge is miraculous which chances to exceed their own—“To write, sayest thou, and to read! I cannot believe it—never Durward could write his name that ever I heard of, nor Lesly either. I can answer for one of them—I can no more write than I can fly. Now, in Saint Louis’s name, how did they teach it you?”

“It was troublesome at first,” said Durward, “but became more easy by use; and I was weak with my wounds and loss of blood, and desirous to gratify my preserver, Father Peter, and so I was the more easily kept to my task. But after several months’ languishing, my good kind mother died, and as my health was now fully restored, I communicated to my benefactor, who was also sub-prior of the convent, my reluctance to take the vows; and it was agreed between us, since my vocation lay not to the cloister, that I should be sent out into the world to seek my fortune, and that, to save the sub-prior from the anger of the Ogilvies, my departure should have the appearance of flight; and to colour it, I brought off the abbot’s hawk with me. But I was regularly dismissed, as will appear from the hand and seal of the abbot himself.”

“That is right—that is well,” said his uncle. “Our king cares little what theft thou mayst have made, but hath a horror at anything like a breach of the cloister. And I warrant thee, thou hadst no great treasure to bear thy charges?”

“Only a few pieces of silver,” said the youth;

"for to you, fair uncle, I must make a free confession."

"Alas!" replied Le Balafre, "that is hard. Now, though I am never a hoarder of my pay, because it doth ill to bear a charge about one in these perilous times, yet I always have (and I would advise you to follow my example) some odd gold chain, or bracelet, or carcanet, that serves for the ornament of my person, and can at need spare a superfluous link or two for any immediate purpose.—But you may ask, fair kinsman, how you are to come by such toys as this?—(he shook his chain with complacent triumph)—They hang not on every bush—they grow not in the field like the daffodils, with whose stalks children make knights' collars. What then?—you may get such where I got this, in the service of the good King of France, where there is always wealth to be found, if a man has but the heart to seek it, at the risk of a little life or so."

"I understood," said Quentin, evading a decision to which he felt himself as yet scarce competently informed, "that the Duke of Burgundy keeps a more noble state than the King of France, and that there is more honour to be won under his banners—that good blows are struck there, and deeds of arms done; while the most christian king, they say, gains his victories by his ambassadors' tongues."

"You speak like a foolish boy, fair nephew," answered he with the scar; "and yet, I bethink me, when I came hither I was nearly as simple: I could never think of a king but what I supposed him sitting under the high deas, and feasting amid his high vassals and paladins, eating *blanc-manger*, with a great gold crown upon his head, or else charging at the head of his troops like Charlemagne in the romances, or like Robert Bruce or William Wallace in our own true histories. Hark in thine ear, man—it is all moonshine in the water. Policy—policy does it all. It is an art our king has found out, to fight with other men's swords, and to wage his soldiers out of other men's purposes. Ah! it is the wisest prince that ever put purple on his back—and yet he weareth not much of that neither—I see him often go plainer than I would think befitted me to do."

"But you meet not my exception, fair uncle," answered young Durward; "I would serve, since serve I must in a foreign land, somewhere where a brave deed, were it my hap to do one, might work me a name."

"I understand you, my fair nephew," said the royal man-at-arms, "I understand you passing well; but you are unripe in these matters. The Duke of Burgundy is a hot-headed, impetuous, pudding-headed, iron-ribbed dare-all. He charges at the head of his nobles and native knights, his liegemen of Artois and Hainault; think you, if you were there, or if I were there myself, that we could be much farther forward than the duke and all his brave nobles of his own land? if we were not up with them, we had a chance to be turned on the provost-marshal's hands for being slow in making to; if we were abreast of them, all would be called well, and we might be thought to have deserved our pay; and grant that I was a spear's-length or so in the front, which is both difficult and dangerous in such a *mé-*

lée where all do their best, why, my lord duke says, in his Flemish, when he sees a good blow struck, 'Ha! *gut getroffen!* a good lance—a brave Scot—give him a florin to drink our health;' but neither rank, nor lands, nor treasures, come to the stranger in such a service—all goes to the children of the soil."

"And where should it go, in Heaven's name, fair uncle?" demanded young Durward.

"To him that protects the children of the soil," said Balafre, drawing up his gigantic height. "Thus says King Louis:—'My good French peasant—mine honest Jacques Bonhomme—get you to your tools, your plough and your harrow, your pruning-knife and your hoe—here is my gallant Scot that will fight for you, and you shall only have the trouble to pay him—And you, my most serene duke, my illustrious count, and my most mighty marquis, e'en rein up your fiery courage till it is wanted, for it is apt to start out of the course, and to hurt its master; here are my companies of ordonnance—here are my French Guards—here are, above all, my Scottish archers, and mine honest Ludovic with the Scar, who will fight, as well or better than you, with all that undisciplined valour, which, in your fathers' time, lost Cressy and Azincour.' Now, see you not in which of these states a cavalier of fortune holds the highest rank, and must come to the highest honour?"

"I think I understand you, fair uncle," answered the nephew; "but, in my mind, honour cannot be won where there is no risk. Sure, this is—I pray you pardon me—an easy and almost slothful life, to mount guard round an elderly man whom no one thinks of harming, to spend summer-day and winter-night up in yonder battlements, and shut up all the while in iron cages, for fear you should desert your posts—uncle, uncle, it is but the hawk upon his perch, who is never carried out to the field!"

"Now, by Saint Martin of Tours, the boy has some spirit! a right touch of the Lesly in him; much like myself, though always with a little more folly in it. Hark ye, youth—Long live the King of France!—scarce a day but there is some commission in hand, by which some of his followers may win both coin and credit. Think not that the bravest and most dangerous deeds are done by day-light. I could tell you of some, as scaling castles, making prisoners, and the like, where one who shall be nameless hath run higher risk, and gained greater favour, than any desperado in the train of desperate Charles of Burgundy. And if it please his majesty to remain behind, and in the back-ground, while such things are doing, he hath the more leisure of spirit to admire, and the more liberality of hand to reward, the adventurers, whose dangers, perhaps, and whose feats of arms, he can better judge of than if he had personally shared them. O, 'tis a sagacious and most politic monarch!"

His nephew paused, and then said, in a low but impressive tone of voice, "The good Father Peter used often to teach me there might be much danger in deeds by which little glory was acquired. I need not say to you, fair uncle, that I do in course suppose that these secret commissions must needs be honourable."

"For whom or for what take you me, fair nephew?" said Balafré, somewhat sternly—"I have not been trained, indeed, in the cloister, neither can I write or read; but I am your mother's brother—I am a loyal Lesly. Think you that I am like to recommend to you anything unworthy? The best knight in France, Du Guesclin himself, if he were alive again, might be proud to number my deeds among his achievements."

"I cannot doubt your warranty, fair uncle," said the youth; "you are the only adviser my mishap has left me. But is it true, as fame says, that this king keeps a meagre court here at his Castle of Plessis? No repair of nobles or courtiers, none of his grand feudatories in attendance, none of the high officers of the crown. Half-solitary sports, shared only with the menials of his household; secret councils, to which only low and obscure men are invited; rank and nobility depressed, and men raised from the lowest origin to the kingly favour—all this seems unregulated, and resembles not the manners of his father—the noble Charles—who tore from the fangs of the English lion this more than half-conquered kingdom of France."

"You speak like a giddy child," said Le Balafré; "and even, as a child, you harp over the same notes on a new string. Look you: if the king employs Oliver Dain, his barber, to do what Oliver can do better than any peer of them all, is not the kingdom the gainer? If he bids his stout provost-marshal, Tristan, arrest such or such a seditious burgher, take off such or such a turbulent noble, the deed is done, and no more of it; when, were the commission given to a duke or a peer of France, he might perchance send the king back a defiance in exchange. If, again, the king pleases to give to plain Ludovic le Balafré a commission which he will execute, instead of employing the high constable, who would perhaps betray it, doth it not show wisdom? Above all, doth not a monarch of such conditions best suit cavaliers of fortune, who must go where their services are most highly prized and most frequently in demand?—No, no, child, I tell thee Louis knows how to chuse his confidants, and what to charge them with—suing, as they say, the burthen to each man's back. He is not like the king of Castile, who choked of thirst because the great butler was not beside to hand his cup.—But hark to the bell of Saint Martin's! I must hasten back to the castle. Farewell—make much of yourself, and at eight to-morrow morning present yourself before the draw-bridge, and ask for me at the sentinel. Take heed you step not off the straight and beaten path in approaching the portal!—it may cost you a limb, which you will sorely miss. You shall see the king, and learn to judge him for yourself. Farewell."

So saying, Balafré hastily departed, forgetting, in his hurry, to pay for the wine he had called for, a shortness of memory incidental to persons of his description, and which his host, overawed, perhaps, by the nodding bonnet and ponderous two-handed sword, did not presume to use any efforts for correcting.

It might have been expected that, when left alone, Durward would have again betaken himself

to his turret, in order to watch for the repetition of those delicious sounds which had soothed his morning reverie. But that was a chapter of romance, and his uncle's conversation had opened to him a page in the real history of life. It was no pleasing one, and, for the present, the recollections and reflections which it excited were qualified to overpower other thoughts, and especially all of a light and soothing nature.

Quentin resorted to a solitary walk along the banks of the rapid Cher, having previously inquired of his landlord for one which he might traverse without fear of disagreeable interruption from snares and pitfalls, and there endeavoured to compose his turmoiled and scattered thoughts, and consider his future motions, upon which his meeting with his uncle had thrown some dubiety.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOHEMIANS.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dantonly gaed he,
He play'd a spring and danced a round
Beneath the gallows-tree.

Old Song.

THE manner in which Quentin Durward had been educated, was not of a kind to soften the heart, or perhaps to improve the moral feeling. He, with the rest of his family, had been trained to the chase as an amusement, and taught to consider war as their only serious occupation, and that it was the great duty of their lives stubbornly to endure, and fiercely to retaliate, the attacks of their feudal enemies, by whom their race had been at last almost annihilated. And yet there mixed with these feuds a spirit of rude chivalry, and even courtesy, which softened their rigour; so that revenge, their only justice, was still prosecuted with some regard to humanity and generosity. The lessons of the worthy old monk, better attended to, perhaps, during a long illness and adversity, than they might have been in health and success, had given young Durward still farther insight into the duties of humanity towards others; and, considering the ignorance of the period, the general prejudices entertained in favour of a military life, and the manner in which he himself had been bred, the youth was disposed to feel more accurately the moral duties incumbent on his station than was usual at the time.

He reflected on his interview with his uncle with a sense of embarrassment and disappointment. His hopes had been high; for although intercourse by letters was out of the question, yet a pilgrim, or an adventurous trafficker, or a crippled soldier, sometimes brought Lesly's name to Glen-houlakin, and all united in praising his undaunted courage, and his success in many petty enterprises which his master had intrusted to him. Quentin's imagination had filled up the sketch in his own way, and assimilated his successful and adventurous uncle (whose exploits probably lost nothing in the telling) to some of the champions and knight-errants of whom minstrels sang, and who won crowns and kings' daughters by

dint of sword and lance. He was now compelled to rank his kinsman much lower in the scale of chivalry; though, blinded by the high respect paid to parents, and those who approach that character—moved by every early prejudice in his favour—inexperienced besides, and passionately attached to his mother's memory, he saw not, in the only brother of that dear relation, the character which he truly held, which was that of an ordinary mercenary soldier, neither much worse nor greatly better than the numbers of the same profession whose presence added to the distracted state of France.

Without being wantonly cruel, Balafré was, from habit, indifferent to human life and human suffering; he was profoundly ignorant, greedy of booty, unscrupulous how he acquired it, and profuse in expending it on the gratification of his own passions. The habit of attending exclusively to his own wants and interests, had converted him into one of the most selfish animals in the world; so that he was seldom able, as the reader may have remarked, to proceed far in any subject without considering how it applied to himself, or, as it is called, making the case his own, though not upon feelings connected with the golden rule, but such as were very different. To this must be added, that the narrow round of his duties and his pleasures had gradually circumscribed his thoughts, hopes, and wishes, and quenched in a great measure the wild spirit of honour, and desire of distinction in arms, by which he had been once animated. Balafré was, in short, a keen soldier, hardened, selfish, and narrow-minded; active and bold in the discharge of his duty, but acknowledging few objects beyond it, excepting the formal observance of a careless devotion, relieved by an occasional debauch with brother Boniface, his comrade and confessor. Had his genius been of a more extended character, he would probably have been promoted to some important command, for the king, who knew every soldier of his body-guard personally, reposed much confidence in Balafré's courage and fidelity; and, besides, the Scot had either wisdom or cunning enough perfectly to understand, and ably to humour, the peculiarities of that sovereign. Still, however, his capacity was too much limited to admit of his rising to higher rank, and, though smiled on and favoured by Louis on many occasions, Balafré continued a mere life-guards-man.

Without seeing the full scope of his uncle's character, Quentin felt shocked at his indifference to the disastrous extirpation of his brother-in-law's whole family, and could not help being surprised, moreover, that so near a relative had not offered him the assistance of his purse, which, but for the generosity of Maître Pierre, he would have been under the necessity of directly craving from him. He wronged his uncle, however, in supposing that this want of attention to his probable necessities was owing to actual avarice. Not precisely needing money himself at that moment, it had not occurred to Balafré that his nephew might be in exigencies; otherwise, he held a near kinsman so much a part of himself, that he would have provided for the weal of the living nephew, as he endeavoured to do for that of his deceased sister and her husband.

But whatever was the motive, the neglect was very unsatisfactory to young Durward, and he wished more than once he had taken service with the Duke of Burgundy before he quarreled with his forester. "Whatever had then become of me," he thought to himself, "I would always have been able to keep up my spirits with the reflection, that I had, in case of the worst, a stout back-friend in this uncle of mine. But now I have seen him, and, woe worth him, there has been more help in a mere mechanical stranger, than I have found in my own mother's brother, my countryman and a cavalier. One would think the slash, that has carved all comeliness out of his face, had let at the same time every drop of gentle blood out of his body."

Durward now regretted he had not had an opportunity to mention Maître Pierre to Balafré, in hopes of obtaining some farther account of that personage; but his uncle's questions had been huddled fast on each other, and the summons of the great bell of Saint Martin of Tours had broken off their conference rather suddenly. That old man, he recollected, was crabbed and dogged in appearance, sharp and scornful in language, but generous and liberal in his actions; and such a stranger is worth a cold kinsman—"What says our old Scottish proverb?—'Better kind fremit, than fremit kindred.' I will find out that man, which, methinks, should be no difficult task, since he is so wealthy as mine host bespeaks him. He will give me good advice for my governance, at least; and if he goes to strange countries, as many such do, I know not but his may be as adventurous a service as that of those Guards of Louis."

As Quentin framed this thought, a whisper from those recesses of the heart in which lies much that the owner does not know of, or will not acknowledge willingly, suggested that, perchance, the lady of the turret, she of the veil and lute, might share that adventurous journey.

As the Scottish youth made these reflections, he met two grave-looking men, apparently citizens of Tours, whom, doffing his cap with the reverence due from youth to age, he respectfully asked to direct him to the house of Maître Pierre.

"The house of whom, my fair son?" said one of the passengers.

"Of Maître Pierre, the great silk-merchant, who planted all the mulberry-trees in the park yonder," said Durward.

"Young man," said one of them who was nearest to him, "you have taken up an idle trade a little too early."

"And have chosen wrong subjects to practise your fooleries upon," said the farther one, still more gruffly. "The Syndic of Tours is not accustomed to be thus talked to by strolling jesters from foreign parts."

Quentin was so much surprised at the causeless offence which these two decent-looking persons had taken at a very simple and civil question, that he forgot to be angry at the rudeness of their reply, and stood staring after them as they walked on with amended pace, often looking back at him, as if they were desirous to get as soon as possible out of his reach.

He next met a party of vine-dressers, and addressed to them the same question; and, in reply, they demanded to know whether he wanted Maître Pierre, the schoolmaster? or Maître Pierre, the carpenter? or Maître Pierre, the beadle? or half-a-dozen of Maître Pierres besides. When none of these corresponded with the description of the person after whom he inquired, the peasants accused him of jesting with them impertinently, and threatened to fall upon him and beat him, in guerdon of his raillery. The oldest amongst them, who had some influence over the rest, prevailed on them to desist from violence.

"You see by his speech and his fool's cap," said he, "that he is one of the foreign mountebanks who are come into the country, and whom some call magicians and soothsayers, and some jugglers, and the like, and there is no knowing what tricks they have amongst them. I have heard of such a one paying a liard to eat his belly-full of grapes in a poor man's vineyard; and he ate as many as would have loaded a wain, and never undid a button of his jerkin—and so let him pass quietly, and keep his way, as we will keep ours.—And you friend, if you would shun worse, walk quietly on, in the name of God, our Lady of Marmoutier, and Saint Martin of Tours, and trouble us no more about your Maître Pierre, which may be another name for the devil, for aught we know."

The Scot, finding himself much the weaker party, judged it his wisest course to walk on without reply; but the peasants, who at first shrunk from him in horror, at his supposed talents for sorcery and grape-devouring, took heart of grace as he got to a distance, and having uttered a few cries and curses, finally gave them emphasis with a shower of stones, although at such a distance as to do little or no harm to the object of their displeasure. Quentin, as he pursued his walk, began to think, in his turn, either that he himself lay under a spell, or that the people of Touraine were the most stupid, brutal, and inhospitable of the French peasants. The next incident which came under his observation did not tend to diminish this opinion.

On a slight eminence, rising above the rapid and beautiful Cher, in the direct line of his path, two or three large chesnut-trees were so happily placed as to form a distinguished and remarkable group; and beside them stood three or four peasants, motionless, with their eyes turned upwards, and fixed, apparently, upon some object amongst the branches of the tree next to them. The meditations of youth are seldom so profound as not to yield to the slightest impulse of curiosity, as easily as the lightest pebble, dropped casually from the hand, breaks the surface of a limpid pool. Quentin hastened his pace, and ran lightly up the rising ground, time enough to witness the ghastly spectacle which attracted the notice of these gazers—which was nothing less than the body of a man, convulsed by the last agony, suspended on one of the branches.

"Why do you not cut him down?" said the young Scot, whose hand was as ready to assist affliction, as to maintain his own honour when he deemed it assailed.

One of the peasants, turning on him an eye from

which fear had banished all expression but its own, and a face as pale as clay, pointed to a mark cut upon the bark of a tree, bearing the same rude resemblance to a *fleur-de-lys* which certain talismanic scratches, well known to our revenue officers, bear to a broad arrow. Neither understanding nor heeding the import of this symbol, young Durward sprung lightly as the ounce up into the tree, drew from his pouch that most necessary implement of a highlander, or woodsman, the trusty skene-dhu, and, calling to those below to receive the body on their hands, cut the rope asunder in less than a minute after he had perceived the exigency.

But his humanity was ill seconded by the bystanders. So far from rendering Durward any assistance, they seemed terrified at the audacity of his action, and took to flight with one consent, as if they feared their merely looking on might have been construed into accession to his daring deed. The body, unsupported from beneath, fell heavily to earth, in such a manner, that Quentin, who presently afterwards jumped down, had the mortification to see that the last sparks of life were extinguished. He gave not up his charitable purpose, however, without farther efforts. He freed the wretched man's neck from the fatal noose, undid the doublet, threw water on the face, and practised the other ordinary remedies resorted to for recalling suspended animation.

While he was thus humanely engaged, a wild clamour of tongues, speaking a language which he knew not, arose around him; and he had scarcely time to observe that he was surrounded by several men and women of a singular and foreign appearance, when he found himself roughly seized by both arms, while a naked knife, at the same moment, was offered to his throat.

"Pale slave of Eblis!" said a man, in imperfect French, "are you robbing him you have murdered?—But we have you—and you shall abide it."

There were knives drawn on every side of him as these words were spoken, and the grim and distorted countenances which glared on him, were like those of wolves rushing on their prey.

Still the young Scot's courage and presence of mind bore him out. "What mean ye, my masters?" he said; "if that be your friend's body, I have just now cut him down, in pure charity, and you will do better to try to recover his life, than to misuse an innocent stranger, to whom he owes his chance of escape."

The women had by this time taken possession of the dead body, and continued the attempts to recover animation which Durward had been making use of, though with the like bad success; so that, desisting from their fruitless efforts, they seemed to abandon themselves to all the oriental expressions of grief; the women making a piteous wailing, and tearing their long black hair, while the men seemed to rend their garments, and to sprinkle dust upon their heads. They gradually became so much engaged in their mourning rites, that they bestowed no longer any attention on Durward, of whose innocence they were probably satisfied from circumstances. It would certainly have been his wisest course to have left these wild people to their own

courses, but he had been bred in almost reckless contempt of danger, and felt all the eagerness of youthful curiosity.

The singular assemblage, both male and female, wore turbans and caps, more similar, in general appearance, to his own bonnet, than to those generally worn in France. Several of the men had curled black beards, and the complexion of all was nearly as dark as that of Africans. One or two, who seemed their chiefs, had some tawdry ornaments of silver about their necks and in their ears, with showy scarfs of yellow, or scarlet, or light-green; but their legs and arms were bare, and the whole troop seemed wretched and squalid in appearance. There were no weapons among them that Durward saw, excepting the long knives with which they had lately menaced him, and one short crooked sabre, or Moorish sword, which was worn by an active-looking young man, who often laid his hand upon the hilt, while he surpassed the rest of the party in his extravagant expressions of grief, and seemed to mingle with them threats of vengeance.

The disordered and yelling group were so different in appearance from any beings whom Quentin had yet seen, that he was on the point of concluding them to be a party of Saracens, of those "heathen hounds," who were the opponents of gentle knights and christian monarchs, in all the romances which he had heard or read, and was about to withdraw himself from a neighbourhood so perilous, when a galloping of horse was heard, and the supposed Saracens, who had raised by this time the body of their comrade upon their shoulders, were at once charged by a party of French soldiers.

This sudden apparition changed the measured wailing of the mourners into irregular shrieks of terror. The body was thrown to the ground in an instant, and those who were around it showed the utmost and most dexterous activity in escaping, under the bellies, as it were, of the horses, and from the point of the lances which were leveled at them, with exclamations of "Down with the accursed heathen thieves—take and kill—bind them like beasts—spear them like wolves!"

These cries were accompanied with corresponding acts of violence; but such was the alertness of the fugitives, the ground being rendered unfavourable to the horsemen by thickets and bushes, that only two were struck down and made prisoners, one of whom was the young fellow with the sword, who had previously offered some resistance. Quentin, whom fortune seemed at this period to have chosen for the butt of her shafts, was at the same time seized by the soldiers, and his arms, in spite of his remonstrances, bound down with a cord; those who apprehended him showing a readiness and dispatch in the operation, which proved them to be no novices in matters of police.

Looking anxiously to the leader of the horsemen, from whom he hoped to obtain liberty, Quentin knew not exactly whether to be pleased or alarmed upon recognizing in him the down-looking and silent companion of Maître Pierre. True, whatever crime these strangers might be accused of, this officer might know, from the history of the morning, that he, Durward, had no connexion with them whatso-

ever; but it was a more difficult question, whether this sullen man would be either a favourable judge or a willing witness in his behalf, and he felt doubtful whether he would mend his condition by making any direct application to him.

But there was little leisure for hesitation. "Trois-Éschelles and Petit-André," said the down-looking officer to two of his band, "these same trees stand here quite convenient. I will teach these misbelieving, thieving sorcerers, to interfere with the king's justice, when it has visited any of their accursed race. Dismount, my children, and do your office briskly."

Trois-Éschelles and Petit-André were in an instant on foot, and Quentin observed that they had each, at the crupper and pommel of his saddle, a coil or two of ropes, which they hastily undid, and showed that, in fact, each coil formed a halter, with the fatal noose adjusted, ready for execution. The blood ran cold in Quentin's veins, when he saw three cords selected, and perceived that it was proposed to put one around his own neck. He called on the officer loudly, reminded him of their meeting that morning, claimed the right of a free-born Scotchman, in a friendly and allied country, and denied any knowledge of the persons along with whom he was seized, or of their misdeeds.

The officer whom Durward thus addressed, scarce deigned to look at him while he was speaking, and took no notice whatsoever of the claim he preferred to prior acquaintance. He barely turned to one or two of the peasants who were now come forward, either to volunteer their evidence against the prisoners, or out of curiosity, and said gruffly, "Was yonder young fellow with the vagabonds?"

"That he was, sir, an' it please your noble provostship," answered one of the clowns; "he was the very first blasphemously to cut down the rascal whom his majesty's justice most deservedly hung up, as we told your worship."

"I'll swear by God, and Saint Martin of Tours, to have seen him with their gang," said another, "when they pillaged our *métairie*."

"Nay, but, father," said a boy, "yonder heathen was black, and this youth is fair; yonder one had short curled hair, and this hath long fair locks."

"Ay, child," said the peasant, "and yonder one had a green coat, and this a grey jerkin. But his worship, the provost, knows that they can change their complexions as easily as their jerkins, so that I am still minded he was the same."

"It is enough that you have seen him intermeddle with the course of the king's justice, by attempting to recover an executed traitor," said the officer.—"Trois-Éschelles and Petit-André, dispatch."

"Stay, signior officer!" exclaimed the youth, in mortal agony—"hear me speak—let me not die guiltlessly—my blood will be required of you by my countrymen in this world, and by Heaven's justice in that which is to follow."

"I will answer my actions in both," said the provost, coldly; and made a sign with his left hand to the executioners; then, with a smile of triumphant malice, touched with his fore-finger his right arm, which hung suspended in a scarf, disabled probably by the blow which Durward had dealt him that morning.

"Miserable, vindictive wretch!" answered Quentin, persuaded by that action that private revenge was the sole motive of this man's rigour, and that no mercy whatever was to be expected from him.

"The poor youth raves," said the functionary; "speak a word of comfort to him ere he makes his transit, Trois-Éschelles; thou art a comfortable man in such cases, when a confessor is not to be had. Give him one minute of ghostly advice, and dispatch matters in the next. I must proceed on the rounds.—Soldiers, follow me!"

The provost rode on, followed by his guard, excepting two or three who were left to assist in the execution. The unhappy youth cast after him an eye almost darkened by despair, and thought he heard in every tramp of his horse's retreating hoofs, the last slight chance of his safety vanish. He looked around him in agony, and was surprised, even in that moment, to see the stoical indifference of his fellow-prisoners. They had previously testified every sign of fear and made every effort to escape; but now, when secured, and destined apparently to inevitable death, they awaited its arrival with the most stoical indifference. The scene of fate before them gave, perhaps, a more yellow tinge to their swarthy cheeks; but it neither agitated their features, nor quenched the stubborn haughtiness of their eye. They seemed like foxes, which, after all their wiles and artful attempts at escape are exhausted, die with a silent and sullen fortitude, which wolves and bears, the fiercer objects of the chase, do not exhibit.

They were undaunted by the conduct of the fatal executioners, who went about their work with more deliberation than their master had recommended, and which probably arose from their having acquired by habit a kind of pleasure in the discharge of their horrid office. We pause an instant to describe them, because, under a tyranny, whether despotic or popular, the character of the hangman becomes a subject of grave importance.

These functionaries were essentially different in their appearance and manners. Louis used to call them Democritus and Heraclitus, and their master, the provost, termed them, *Jean-qui-pleure* and *Jean-qui-rit*.

Trois-Éschelles was a tall, thin, ghastly man, with a peculiar gravity of visage, and a large rosary round his neck, the use of which he was accustomed piously to offer to those sufferers on whom he did his duty. He had one or two Latin texts continually in his mouth on the nothingness and vanity of human life; and, had it been regular to have enjoyed such a plurality, he might have held the office of confessor to the jail in commendam with that of executioner. Petit-André, on the contrary, was a joyous-looking, round, active, little fellow, who rolled about in execution of his duty as if it was the most diverting occupation in the world. He seemed to have a sort of fond affection for his victims, and always spoke of them in kindly and affectionate terms. They were his poor honest fellows, his pretty dears, his gossips, his good old fathers, as their age or sex might be; and as Trois-Éschelles endeavoured to inspire them with a philosophical or religious regard to futurity, Petit-André seldom

failed to refresh them with a jest or two, to make them pass from life as something that was ludicrous, contemptible, and not worthy of serious consideration.

I cannot tell why or wherefore it was, but these two excellent persons, notwithstanding the variety of their talents, and the rare occurrence of such among persons of their profession, were both more utterly detested than, perhaps, any creatures of their kind, whether before or since; and the only doubt of those who knew aught of them was, whether the grave and pathetic Trois-Éschelles, or the frisky, comic, alert Petit-André, was the object of the greatest fear or of the deepest execration. It is certain they bore the palm in both particulars over every hangman in France, unless it were perhaps their master, Tristan l'Hermite, the renowned provost-marshal, or *his* master, Louis XI.

It must not be supposed that these reflections were of Quentin Durward's making. Life, death, time, and eternity, were swimming before his eyes—a stunning and overwhelming prospect, from which human nature recoiled in its weakness, though human pride would fain have borne up. He addressed himself to the God of his fathers; and when he did so, the little rude and unroofed chapel, which now held almost all his race but himself, rushed on his recollection. "Our feudal enemies gave us graves in our own land," he thought, "but I must feed the ravens and kites of a foreign land, like an excommunicated felon." The tears gushed involuntarily from his eyes. Trois-Éschelles, touching one shoulder, gravely congratulated him on his heavenly disposition for death, and, pathetically exclaiming, *Beati qui in Domino moriuntur*, remarked, the soul was happy that left the body while the tear was in the eye. Petit-André, slapping the other shoulder, called out, "Courage, my fair son! since you must begin the dance, let the ball open gaily, for all the rebecs are in tune," twitching the halter at the same time, to give point to his joke. As the youth turned his dismayed looks, first on the one and then on the other, they made their meaning plainer by gently urging him forward to the fatal tree, and bidding him be of good courage, for it would be over in a moment.

In this fatal predicament, the youth cast a distracted look around him. "Is there any good christian who hears me," he said, "that will tell Ludovic Lesly of the Scottish Guard, called in this country Le Balafré, that his nephew is here basely murdered?"

The words were spoken in good time, for an archer of the Scottish Guard, attracted by the preparations for the execution, was standing by, with one or two other chance-passengers, to witness what was passing.

"Take heed what you do," he said to the executioners; "if this young man be of Scottish birth, I will not permit him to have foul play."

"Heaven forbid, sir cavalier," said Trois-Éschelles; "but we must obey our orders," drawing Durward forward by one arm.

"The shortest play is ever the fairest," said Petit-André, pulling him onward by the other.

But Quentin had heard words of comfort, and,

exerting his strength, he suddenly shook off both the finishers of the law, and, with his arms still bound, ran to the Scottish archer. "Stand by me," he said in his own language, "countryman, for the love of Scotland and Saint Andrew! I am innocent—I am your own native landsman. Stand by me, as you shall answer at the last day!"

"By Saint Andrew! they shall make at you through me," said the archer, and unsheathed his sword.

"Cut my bonds, countryman," said Quentin, "and I will do something for myself."

This was done with a touch of the archer's weapon; and the liberated captive, springing suddenly on one of the provost's guard, wrested from him a halberd with which he was armed; "And now," he said, "come on, if you dare!"

The two officers whispered together.

"Ride thou after the provost-marshal," said Trois-Éschelles, "and I will detain them here, if I can.—Soldiers of the provost's guard, stand to your arms."

Petit-André mounted his horse and left the field, and the other marshal's-men in attendance drew together so hastily at the command of Trois-Éschelles, that they suffered the other two prisoners to make their escape during the confusion. Perhaps they were not very anxious to detain them; for they had of late been sated with the blood of such wretches, and, like other ferocious animals, were, through long slaughter, become tired of carnage. But the pretext was, that they thought themselves immediately called upon to attend to the safety of Trois-Éschelles; for there was a jealousy, which occasionally led to open quarrels betwixt the Scottish archers and the marshal-guards, who executed the orders of their provost.

"We are strong enough to beat the proud Scots twice over, if it be your pleasure," said one of these soldiers to Trois-Éschelles.

But that cautious official made a sign to him to remain quiet, and addressed the Scottish archer with great civility. "Surely, sir, this is a great insult to the provost-marshal, that you should presume to interfere with the course of the king's justice, duly and lawfully committed to his charge; and it is no act of justice to me, who am in lawful possession of my criminal. Neither is it a well-meant kindness to the youth himself, seeing that fifty opportunities of hanging him may occur, without his being found in so happy a state of preparation as he was before your ill-advised interference."

"If my young countryman," said the Scot, smiling, "be of opinion I have done him an injury, I will return him to your charge without a word more dispute."

"No, no!—for the love of Heaven, no!" exclaimed Quentin. "I would rather you swept my head off with your long sword—it would better become my birth, than to die by the hands of such a foul churl."

"Hear how he revileth!" said the finisher of the law. "Alas! how soon our best resolutions pass away!—he was in a blessed frame for departure but now, and in two minutes he has become a contemner of authorities."

"Tell me at once," said the archer, "what has this young man done?"

"Interfered to take down the dead body of a criminal, when the *fleur-de-lys* was marked on the tree where he was hung with my own proper hand," said the executioner.

"How is this, young man?" said the archer; "how came you to have committed such an offence?"

"As I desire your protection," answered Durward, "I will tell you the truth as if I were at confession. I saw a man struggling on the tree, and I went to cut him down out of mere humanity. I thought neither of *fleur-de-lys* nor of clove-gilliflower, and had no more idea of offending the King of France than our Father the Pope."

"What a murrain had you to do with the dead body, then? You'll see them hanging, in the rear of this gentleman, like grapes on every tree, and you will have enough to do in this country if you go a-gleaning after the hangman. However, I will not quit a countryman's cause if I can help it.—Hark ye, Master Marshal's-man, you see this is entirely a mistake. You should have some compassion on so young a traveller. In our country at home he has not been accustomed to see such active proceedings, as yours and your master's."

"Not for want of need of them, Signior Archer," said Petit-André, who returned at this moment. "Stand fast, Trois-Éschelles, for here comes the provost-marshal; we shall presently see how he will relish having his work taken out of his hand before it is finished."

"And in good time," said the archer, "here come some of my comrades."

Accordingly, as the Provost Tristan rode up with his patrol on one side of the little hill which was the scene of the altercation, four or five archers came as hastily up on the other, and at their head the Balafré himself.

Upon this urgency, Lesly showed none of that indifference towards his nephew of which Quentin had in his heart accused him; for he no sooner saw his comrade and Durward standing upon their defence, than he exclaimed, "Cunningham, I thank thee.—Gentlemen—comrades, lend me your aid—It is a young Scottish gentleman—my nephew—Lindsay—Guthrie—Tyrie, draw, and strike in."

There was now every prospect of a desperate scuffle between the parties, who were not so disproportioned in numbers, but that the better arms of the Scottish cavaliers gave them an equal chance of victory. But the provost-marshal, either doubting the issue of the conflict, or aware that it would be disagreeable to the king, made a sign to his followers to forbear from violence, while he demanded from Balafré, who now put himself forward at the head of the other party, "What he, a cavalier of the king's body-guard, purposed by opposing the execution of a criminal?"

"I deny that I do so," answered the Balafré. "Saint Martin! there is, I think, some difference between the execution of a criminal, and the slaughter of my own nephew."

"Your nephew may be a criminal as well as another, signior," said the provost-marshal; "and

every stranger in France is amenable to the laws of France."

"Yes, but we have privileges, we Scottish archers," said Balafre; "Have we not, comrades?"

"Yes, yes," they all exclaimed together. "Privileges—privileges! Long live King Louis—long live the bold Balafre—long live the Scottish Guard—and death to all who would infringe our privileges!"

"Take reason with you, gentlemen cavaliers," said the provost-marshal; "consider my commission."

"We will have no reason at your hand," said Cunningham; "our own officers shall do us reason. We will be judged by the king's grace, or by our own captain, now that the lord high constable is not in presence."

"And we will be hanged by none," said Lindesay, "but Sandie Wilson, the auld marshal's-man of our ain body."

"It would be a positive cheating of Sandie, who is as honest a man as ever tied noose upon hemp, did we give way to any other proceeding," said the Balafre. "Were I to be hanged myself, no other should tie tippet about my craig."

"But hear ye," said the provost-marshal, "this young fellow belongs not to you, and cannot share what you call your privileges."

"What we *call* our privileges, all shall admit to be such," said Cunningham.

"We will not hear them questioned!" was the universal cry of the archers.

"Ye are mad, my masters," said Tristan l'Hermite—"No one disputes your privileges; but this youth is not one of you."

"He is *my* nephew," said the Balafre, with a triumphant air.

"But no archer of the guard, I think," retorted Tristan l'Hermite.

The archers looked on each other in some uncertainty.

"Stand to it yet, comrade," whispered Cunningham to Balafre—"Say he is engaged with us."

"Saint Martin! you say well, fair kinsman," answered Lesly; and, raising his voice, swore that he had that day enrolled his kinsman as one of his own retinue.

This declaration was a decisive argument.

"It is well, gentlemen," said the Provost Tristan, who was aware of the king's nervous apprehension of disaffection creeping in among his guards—"You know, as you say, your privileges, and it is not my duty to have brawls with the king's guards, if it is to be avoided. But I will report this matter for the king's own decision; and I would have you to be aware, that in doing so, I act more mildly than perhaps my duty warrants me."

So saying, he put his troop into motion, while the archers, remaining on the spot, held a hasty consultation what was next to be done.

"We must report the matter to Lord Crawford, our captain, in the first place, and have the young fellow's name put on the roll."

"But, gentlemen, and my worthy friends and preservers," said Quentin, with some hesitation, "I

have not yet determined whether to take service with you or no."

"Then settle in your own mind," said his uncle, "whether you chuse to do so, or be hanged—for I promise you, that, nephew of mine as you are, I see no other chance of your 'scaping the gallows."

This was an unanswerable argument, and reduced Quentin at once to acquiesce in what he might have otherwise considered as no very agreeable proposal; but the recent escape from the halter, which had been actually around his neck, would probably have reconciled him to a worse alternative than was proposed.

"He must go home with us to our caserne," said Cunningham; "there is no safety for him out of our bounds, whilst these man-hunters are prowling about."

"May I not then abide for this night at the hostelry where I breakfasted, fair uncle?" said the youth—thinking, perhaps, like many a new recruit, that even a single night of freedom was something gained.

"Yes, fair nephew," answered his uncle, ironically, "that we may have the pleasure of fishing you out of some canal or moat, or perhaps out of a loop of the Loire, knit up in a sack, for the greater convenience of swimming—for that is like to be the end on't.—The provost-marshal smiled on us when we parted," continued he, addressing Cunningham, "and that is a sign his thoughts were dangerous."

"I care not for his danger," said Cunningham; "such game as we are is beyond his bird-bolts. But I would have thee tell the whole to the Devil's Oliver, who is always a good friend to the Scottish Guard, and will see Father Louis before the provost can, for he is to shave him to-morrow."

"But hark you," said Balafre, "it is ill going to Oliver empty-handed, and I am as bare as the birch in December."

"So are we all," said Cunningham—"Oliver must not scruple to take our Scottish words for once. We will make up something handsome among us against the next pay-day; and if *he* expects to share, let me tell you, the pay-day will come about all the sooner."

"And now for the chateau," said Balafre; "and my nephew shall tell us by the way how he brought the provost-marshal on his shoulders, that we may know how to shape our report both to Crawford and Oliver."

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENROLMENT.

Justice of Peace.—Here, hand me down the statute—read the articles—

Swear, kiss the book—subscribe, and be a hero;

Drawing a portion from the public stock

For deeds of valour to be done hereafter—

Sixpence per day, subsistence and arrears.

FARQUHAR'S Recruiting Officer.

AN attendant upon the archers having been dismounted, Quentin Durward was accommodated with his horse, and, in company of his martial countrymen, rode at a round pace towards the Castle of

Plessis, about to become, although on his own part involuntarily, an inhabitant of that gloomy fortress, the outside of which had, that morning, struck him with so much surprise.

In the meanwhile, in answer to his uncle's repeated interrogations, he gave him an exact account of the accident which had that morning brought him into so much danger. Although he himself saw nothing in his narrative save what was affecting, he found it was received with much laughter by his escort.

"And yet it is no good jest either," said his uncle, "for what, in the devil's name, could lead the senseless boy to meddle with the body of a cursed misbelieving Jewish Moorish pagan?"

"Had he quarreled with the marshal's-men about a pretty wench, as Michael of Moffat did, there had been more sense in it," said Cunningham.

"But I think it touches our honour, that Tristan and his people pretend to confound our Scottish bonnets with these pilfering vagabonds' *tocques* and *turbands*, as they call them," said Lindesay—"If they have not eyes to see the difference, they must be taught by rule of hand. But it's my belief, Tristan but pretends to mistake, that he may snap up the kindly Scots that come over to see their kinsfolks."

"May I ask, kinsman," said Quentin, "what sort of people these are of whom you speak?"

"In troth, you may ask," said his uncle, "but I know not, fair nephew, who is able to answer you. Not I, I am sure, although I know, it may be, as much as other people; but they have appeared in this land within a year or two, just as a flight of locusts might do."

"Ay," said Lindesay, "and Jacques Bonhomme (that is our name for the peasant, young man,—you will learn our way of talk by times)—honest Jacques, I say, cares little what wind either brings them or the locusts, so he but knows any gale that would carry them away again."

"Do they do so much evil?" said the young man.

"Evil?—why, boy, they are heathens, or Jews, or Mahomedans at the least, and neither worship Our Lady nor the saints—(crossing himself)—and steal what they can lay hands on, and sing, and tell fortunes," added Cunningham.

"And they say there are some goodly wenches amongst these women," said Guthrie; "but Cunningham knows that best."

"How, brother!" said Cunningham; "I trust ye mean me no reproach?"

"I am sure I said ye none," answered Guthrie.

"I will be judged by the company," said Cunningham—"Ye said as much as that I, a Scottish gentleman, and living within pale of holy church, had a fair friend among these off-scourings of Heathenese."

"Nay, nay," said Balafré, "he did but jest—We will have no quarrels among comrades."

"We must have no such jesting then," said Cunningham, murmuring as if he had been speaking to his own beard.

"Be there such vagabonds in other lands than France?" said Lindesay.

VOL. III.

"Ay, in good sooth, are there—tribes of them have appeared in Germany, and in Spain, and in England," answered Balafré. "By the blessing of good Saint Andrew, Scotland is free of them yet."

"Scotland," said Cunningham, "is too cold a country for locusts, and too poor a country for thieves."

"Or perhaps John Highlander will suffer no thieves to thrive there but his own," said Guthrie.

"I let you all know," said Balafré, "that I come from the Braes of Angus, and have gentle Highland kin in Glen-Isla, and I will not have the Highlanders slandered."

"You will not deny that they are cattle-lifters?" said Guthrie.

"To drive a spreagh, or so, is no thievery," said Balafré, "and that I will maintain when and how you dare."

"For shame, comrade," said Cunningham; "who quarrels now?—the young man should not see such mad misconstruction.—Come, here we are at the château. I will bestow a runlet of wine to have a rouse in friendship, and drink to Scotland, Highland and Lowland both, if you will meet me at dinner at my quarters."

"Agreed—agreed," said Balafré; "and I will bestow another, to wash away unkindness, and to drink a health to my nephew on his first entrance to our corps."

At their approach, the wicket was opened, and the draw-bridge fell. One by one entered; but when Quentin appeared, the sentinels crossed their pikes, and commanded him to stand, while bows were bent and harquebusses aimed at him from the walls—a rigour of vigilance used, notwithstanding that the young stranger came in company of a party of the garrison, nay, of the very body which furnished the sentinels, who were then upon duty.

Balafré, who had remained by his nephew's side on purpose, gave the necessary explanations, and, after some considerable hesitation and delay, the youth was conveyed under a strong guard to the Lord Crawford's apartment.

This Scottish nobleman was one of the last relics of the gallant band of Scottish lords and knights who had so long and so truly served Charles VI. in those bloody wars which decided the independence of the French crown, and the expulsion of the English. He had fought, when a boy, abreast with Douglas and with Buchan, had ridden beneath the banner of the Maid of Arc, and was perhaps one of the last of those associates of Scottish chivalry who had so willingly drawn their swords for the *fleur-de-lys*, against the "auld enemies of England." Changes which had taken place in the Scottish kingdom, and perhaps his having become habituated to French climate and manners, had induced the old baron to resign all thoughts of returning to his native country, the rather that the high office which he held in the household of Louis, and his own frank and loyal character, had gained a considerable ascendancy over the king, who, though in general no ready believer in human virtue or honour, trusted and confided in those of the Lord Crawford, and allowed him the greater influence, because he was

never known to interfere excepting in matters which concerned his charge.

Balafré and Cunningham followed Durward and the guard to the apartment of their officer, by whose dignified appearance, as well as with the respect paid to him by these proud soldiers, who seemed to respect no one else, the young man was much and strongly impressed.

Lord Crawford was tall, and through advanced age had become gaunt and thin; yet retaining in his sinews the strength, at least, if not the elasticity, of youth, he was able to endure the weight of his armour during a march as well as the youngest man who rode in his band. He was hard-favoured, with a scarred and weather-beaten countenance, and an eye that had looked upon death as his play-fellow in thirty pitched battles, but which nevertheless expressed a good-humoured contempt of danger, rather than the ferocious courage of a mercenary soldier. His tall erect figure was at present wrapped in a loose chamber-gown, secured around him by his buff belt, in which was suspended his richly-hilted poniard. He had round his neck the collar and badge of the order of Saint Michael. He sat upon a couch covered with deer's hide, and with spectacles on his nose (then a recent invention), was labouring to read a huge manuscript called the *Rosier de la Guerre*, a code of military and civil policy which Louis had compiled for the benefit of his son the dauphin, and upon which he was desirous to have the opinion of the experienced Scottish warrior.

Lord Crawford laid his book somewhat peevishly aside upon the entrance of these unexpected visitors, and demanded, in his broad national dialect, "What, in the foul fiend's name, they lacked now?"

Balafré, with more respect than perhaps he would have shown to Louis himself, stated at full length the circumstances in which his nephew was placed, and humbly requested his lordship's protection. Lord Crawford listened very attentively. He could not but smile at the simplicity with which the youth had interfered in behalf of the hanged criminal, but he shook his head at the account which he received of the ruffle betwixt the Scottish archers and the provost-marshal's guard.

"How often," he said, "will you bring me such ill-winded pirns to ravel out? How often must I tell you, and especially both you, Ludovic Lesly, and you, Archie Cunningham, that the foreign soldier should bear himself modestly and decorously towards the people of the country, if you would not have the whole dogs of the town at your heels? However, if you must have a bargain, I would rather it were with that loon of a provost than any one else; and I blame you less for this onslaught than for other frays that you have made, Ludovic, for it was but natural and kind-like to help your young kinsman. This simple bairn must come to no skaith neither; so give me the roll of the company yonder down from the shelf, and we will even add his name to the troop, that he may enjoy the privileges."

"May it please your lordship"—said Durward—

"Is the lad crazed!" exclaimed his uncle—"Would you speak to his lordship, without a question asked?"

"Patience, Ludovic," said Lord Crawford, "and let us hear what the bairn has to say."

"Only this, if it may please your lordship," replied Quentin, "that I told my uncle formerly I had some doubts about entering this service. I have now to say that they are entirely removed, since I have seen the noble and experienced commander under whom I am to serve; for there is authority in your look."

"Weel said, my bairn," said the old lord, not insensible to the compliment; "we have had some experience, had God sent us grace to improve by it, both in service and in command. There you stand, Quentin, in our honourable corps of Scottish body-guards, as esquire to your uncle, and serving under his lance. I trust you will do well, for you should be a right man-at-arms, if all be good that is upcome, and you are come of a gentle kindred.—Ludovic, you will see that your kinsman follows his exercise diligently, for we will have spears breaking one of these days."

"By my hilts, and I am glad of it, my lord—this peace makes cowards of us all. I myself feel a sort of decay of spirit, closed up in this cursed dungeon of a castle."

"Well, a bird whistled in my ear," continued Lord Crawford, "that the old banner will be soon dancing in the field again."

"I will drink a cup the deeper this evening to that very tune," said Balafré.

"Thou wilt drink to any tune," said Lord Crawford; "and I fear me, Ludovic, you will drink a bitter browst of your own brewing one day."

Lesly, a little abashed, replied, that it had not been his wont for many a day; but his lordship knew the use of the company, to have a carouse to the health of a new comrade.

"True," said the old leader, "I had forgot the occasion. I will send a few stoups of wine to assist your carouse; but let it be over by sunset. And, hark ye—let the soldiers for duty be carefully pricked off; and see that none of them be more or less partakers of your debauch."

"Your lordship shall be lawfully obeyed," said Ludovic, "and your health duly remembered."

"Perhaps," said Lord Crawford, "I may look in myself upon your mirth, just to see that all is carried decently."

"Your lordship shall be most dearly welcome," said Ludovic; and the whole party retreated in high spirits to prepare for their military banquet, to which Lesly invited about a score of his comrades, who were pretty much in the habit of making their mess together.

A soldier's festival is generally a very extempore affair, providing there is enough of meat and drink to be had; but, on the present occasion, Ludovic bustled about to procure some better wine than ordinary, observing that "the old lord was the surest gear in their aught, and that while he preached sobriety to them, he himself, after drinking at the royal table as much wine as he could honestly come by, never omitted any creditable opportunity to fill up the evening over the wine-pot; so you must prepare, comrades," he said, "to hear the old histories of the battles of Vernuil and Beaugé."

The Gothic apartment in which they generally met was, therefore, hastily put into the best order; their grooms were dispatched to collect green rushes to spread upon the floor; and banners, under which the Scottish Guard had marched to battle, or which they had taken from the enemies' ranks, were displayed, by way of tapestry, over the table and around the walls of the chamber.

The next point was to invest the young recruit as hastily as possible with the dress and appropriate arms of the guard, that he might appear in every respect the sharer of its important privileges, in virtue of which, and by the support of his countrymen, he might freely brave the power and the displeasure of the provost-marshal—although the one was known to be as formidable as the other was unrelenting.

The banquet was joyous in the highest degree; and the guests gave vent to the whole current of their national partiality on receiving into their ranks a recruit from their beloved father-land. Old Scottish songs were sung, old tales of Scottish heroes told—the achievements of their fathers, and the scenes in which they were wrought, were recalled to mind; and, for a time, the rich plains of Touraine seemed converted into the mountainous and sterile regions of Caledonia.

When their enthusiasm was at high flood, and each was endeavouring to say something to enhance the dear remembrance of Scotland, it received a new impulse from the arrival of Lord Crawford, who, as Balafré had well prophesied, sat, as it were, on thorns at the royal board, until an opportunity occurred of making his escape to the revelry of his own countrymen. A chair of state had been reserved for him at the upper end of the table; for, according to the manners of the age, and the constitution of that body, although their leader and commander under the king and high constable, the members of the corps (as we should now say, the privates) being all ranked as noble by birth, their captain sat with them at the same table without impropriety, and might mingle when he chose in their festivity, without derogation from his dignity as commander.

At present, however, Lord Crawford declined occupying the seat prepared for him, and bidding them "hold themselves merry," stood looking on the revel with a countenance which seemed greatly to enjoy it.

"Let him alone," whispered Cunningham to Lindesay, as the latter offered the wine to their noble captain, "let him alone—hurry no man's cattle—let him take it of his own accord."

In fact, the old lord, who at first smiled, shook his head, and placed the untasted wine-cup before him, began presently, as if it were in absence of mind, to sip a little of the contents, and in doing so, fortunately recollected that it would be ill luck did he not drink a draught to the health of the gallant lad who had joined them this day. The pledge was filled, and answered, as may be well supposed, with many a joyous shout, when the old leader proceeded to acquaint them that he had possessed Master Oliver with an account of what had passed that day: "And as," he said, "the scraper of chins

hath no great love for the stretcher of throats, he has joined me in obtaining from the king an order, commanding the provost to suspend all proceedings, under whatsoever pretence, against Quentin Durward; and to respect, on all occasions, the privileges of the Scottish Guard."

Another shout broke forth, the cups were again filled, till the wine sparkled on the brim, and there was an acclaim to the health of the noble Lord Crawford, the brave conservator of the privileges and rights of his countrymen. The good old lord could not but in courtesy do reason to this pledge also, and gliding into the ready chair, as it were, without reflecting what he was doing, he caused Quentin to come up beside him, and assailed him with many more questions concerning the state of Scotland, and the great families there, than he was well able to answer; while ever and anon, in the course of his queries, the good lord kissed the wine-cup by way of parenthesis, remarking, that sociality became Scottish gentlemen, but that young men, like Quentin, ought to practise it cautiously, lest it might degenerate into excess; upon which occasion he uttered many excellent things, until his own tongue, although employed in the praises of temperance, began to articulate something thicker than usual. It was now that, while the military ardour of the company augmented with each flagon which they emptied, Cunningham called on them to drink the speedy hoisting of the *oriflamme* (the royal banner of France).

"And a breeze of Burgundy to fan it!" echoed Lindesay.

"With all the soul that is left in this worn body do I accept the pledge, bairns," echoed Lord Crawford; "and as old as I am, I trust I may see it flutter yet. Hark ye, my mates (for wine had made him something communicative), ye are all true servants to the French crown, and wherefore should ye not know there is an envoy come from Duke Charles of Burgundy, with a message of an angry favour?"

"I saw the Count of Crevecoeur's equipage, horses, and retinue," said another of the guests, "down at the inn yonder, at the Mulberry-grove. They say the king will not admit him into the castle."

"Now, Heaven send him an ungracious answer!" says Guthrie; "but what is it he complains of?"

"A world of grievances upon the frontier," said Lord Crawford; "and latterly, that the king hath received under his protection a lady of his land, a young countess, who hath fled from Dijon, because, being a ward of the duke, he would have her marry his favourite, Campo-basso."

"And hath she actually come hither alone, my Lord?" said Lindesay.

"Nay, not altogether alone, but with the old countess, her kinswoman, who hath yielded to her cousin's wishes in this matter."

"And will the king," said Cunningham, "he being the duke's feudal sovereign, interfere between the duke and his ward, over whom Charles hath the same right, which, were he himself dead, the king would have over the heiress of Burgundy?"

"The king will be ruled as he is wont, by rules of policy; and you know," continued Crawford, "that he hath not publicly received those ladies, nor

placed them under the protection of his daughter, the Lady of Beaujeu, or the Princess Joan, so, doubtless, he will be guided by circumstances. He is our master—but it is no treason to say, he shall chase with the hounds, and run with the hare, with any prince in Christendom.”

“But the Duke of Burgundy understands no such doubling,” said Cunningham.

“No,” answered the old lord; “and, therefore, it is like to make work between them.”

“Well—Saint Andrew further the fray,” said Balafre. “I had it foretold me ten, ay, twenty years since, that I was to make the fortune of my house by marriage. Who knows what may happen, if once we come to fight for honour and ladies’ love, as they do in the old romaunts?”

“Thou name ladies’ love, with such a trench in thy visage!” said Guthrie.

“As well not love at all, as love a Bohemian woman of Heathenesse,” answered Balafre.

“Hold there, comrades,” said Lord Crawford; “no tilting with sharp weapons, no jesting with keen scoffs—friends all. And for the lady, she is too wealthy to fall to a poor Scotch lord, or I would put in my own claim, fourscore years and all, or not very far from it. But here is her health, nevertheless, for they say she is a lamp of beauty.”

“I think I saw her,” said another soldier, “when I was upon guard this morning at the inner barrier; but she was more like a dark lantern than a lamp, for she and another were brought into the chateau in close litters.”

“Shame! shame! Arnot!” said Lord Crawford; “a soldier on duty should say nought of what he sees. Besides,” he added after a pause, his own curiosity prevailing over the show of discipline which he had thought it necessary to exert, “why should these litters contain this very same Countess Isabelle de Croye?”

“Nay, my lord,” replied Arnot, “I know nothing of it save this, that my coutelier was airing my horses in the road to the village, and fell in with Doguin the muleteer, who brought back the litters to the inn, for they belong to the fellow of the Mulberry-grove yonder—he of the Fleur-de-Lys, I mean—and so Doguin asked Saunders Steed to take a cup of wine, as they were acquainted, which he was no doubt willing enough to do”——

“No doubt—no doubt,” said the old lord; “it is a thing I wish were corrected among you, gentlemen; but all your grooms and couteliers, and jackmen, as we should call them in Scotland, are but too ready to take a cup of wine with any one—It is a thing perilous in war, and must be amended. But, Andrew Arnot, this is a long tale of yours, and we will cut it with a drink; as the Highlander says, *Skeoch doch nan skial*, and that’s good Gaelic.—Here is to the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and a better husband to her than Campo-basso, who is a base Italian cullion!—And now, Andrew Arnot, what said the muleteer to this yeoman of thine?”

“Why he told him in secrecy, if it please your lordship,” continued Arnot, “that these two ladies whom he had presently before convoyed up to the castle in the close litters, were great ladies, who had been living in secret at his master’s house for

some days, and that the king had visited them more than once very privately, and had done them great honour; and that they had fled up to the castle, as he believed, for fear of the Count de Crevecœur, the Duke of Burgundy’s ambassador, whose approach was just announced by an advanced courier.”

“Ay, Andrew, come you there to me?” said Guthrie; “then I will be sworn it was the countess whose voice I heard singing to the lute, as I came even now through the inner court—the sound came from the bay-windows of the Dauphin’s Tower; and such melody was there as no one ever heard before in the castle of Plessis of the Park. By my faith, I thought it was music of the Fairy Melusina’s making. There I stood—though I knew your board was covered, and that you were all impatient—there I stood, like”——

“Like an ass, Johnny Guthrie,” said his commander; “thy long nose smelling the dinner, thy long ears hearing the music, and thy short discretion not enabling thee to tell which of them thou didst prefer.—Hark! is not that the cathedral bell tolling to vespers?—Sure it cannot be that time yet?—The mad old sexton has toll’d even-song an hour too soon.”

“In faith, the bell rings but too justly the hour,” said Cunningham; “Yonder the sun is sinking on the west side of the fair plain.”

“Ay,” said the Lord Crawford, “is it even so?—Well, lads, we must live within compass—Fair and soft goes far—slow fire makes sweet malt—to be merry and wise is a sound proverb.—One other rouse to the weal of old Scotland, and then each man to his duty.”

The parting cup was emptied, and the guests dismissed—the stately old baron taking the Balafre’s arm, under pretence of giving him some instructions concerning his nephew, but, perhaps, in reality, lest his own lofty pace should seem in the public eye less steady than became his rank and high command. A solemn countenance did he bear as he passed through the two courts which separated his lodging from the festal chamber, and solemn as the gravity of a hogshead was the farewell caution, with which he prayed Ludovic to attend his nephew’s motions, especially in the matters of wenches and wine-cups.

Meanwhile, not a word that was spoken concerning the beautiful Countess Isabelle had escaped the young Durward, who, conducted into a small cabin, which he was to share with his uncle’s page, made his new and lowly abode the scene of much high musing. The reader will easily imagine that the young soldier should build a fine romance on such a foundation as the supposed, or rather the assumed, identification of the maiden of the turret, to whose lay he had listened with so much interest, and the fair cup-bearer of Maître Pierre, with a fugitive countess, of rank and wealth, flying the pursuit of a hated lover, the favourite of an oppressive guardian, who abused his feudal power. There was an interlude in Quentin’s vision concerning Maître Pierre, who seemed to exercise such authority even over the formidable officer from whose hands he had that day, with much difficulty, made his escape. At length the youth’s reveries, which had been respected

by little Will Harper, the companion of his cell, were broken in upon by the return of his uncle, who commanded Quentin to bed, that he might arise betimes in the morning, and attend him to his majesty's ante-chamber, to which he was called by his hour of duty, along with five of his comrades.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENVOY.

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;
For ere thou canst report I will be there.
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard—
So, hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath.

King John.

HAD sloth been a temptation by which Durward was easily beset, the noise with which the caserne of the guards resounded after the first toll of primes, had certainly banished the siren from his couch; but the discipline of his father's tower, and of the Convent of Aberbrothock, had taught him to start with the dawn; and he did on his clothes gaily, amid the sounding of bugles and the clash of armour, which announced the change of the vigilant guards—some of whom were returning to barracks after their nightly duty, whilst others were marching out to that of the morning—and others, again, amongst whom was his uncle, were arming for immediate attendance upon the person of Louis. Quentin Durward soon put on, with the feelings of so young a man on such an occasion, the splendid dress and arms appertaining to his new situation; and his uncle, who looked with great accuracy and interest to see that he was completely fitted out in every respect, did not conceal his satisfaction at the improvement which had been thus made in his nephew's appearance. "If thou doest prove as faithful and bold as thou art well-favoured, I shall have in thee one of the handsomest and best esquires in the guard, which cannot but be an honour to thy mother's family. Follow me to the presence-chamber; and see thou keep close at my shoulder."

So saying, he took up a partizan, large, weighty, and beautifully inlaid and ornamented, and directing his nephew to assume a lighter weapon of a similar description, they proceeded to the inner court of the palace, where their comrades, who were to form the guard of the interior apartments, were already drawn up, and under arms—the squires each standing behind their masters, to whom they thus formed a second rank. Here were also in attendance many yeomen-prickers, with gallant horses and noble dogs, on which Quentin looked with such inquisitive delight, that his uncle was obliged more than once to remind him that they were not there for his private amusement, but for the king's, who had a strong passion for the chase, one of the few inclinations which he indulged, even when coming into competition with his course of policy; being so strict a protector of the game in the royal forests, that it was currently said, you might kill a man with greater impunity than a stag.

On a signal given, the guards were put into motion by the command of Balafre, who acted as officer

upon the occasion; and, after some minutiae of word and signal, which all went to show the extreme and punctilious jealousy with which their duty was performed, they marched into the hall of audience, where the king was immediately expected.

New as Quentin was to scenes of splendour, the effect of that which was now before him rather disappointed the expectations which he had formed of the brilliancy of a court. There were household officers, indeed, richly attired; there were guards gallantly armed, and there were domestics of various degrees: But he saw none of the ancient counsellors of the kingdom, none of the high officers of the crown, heard none of the names which in those days sounded an alarm to chivalry; saw none either of those generals or leaders, who, possessed of full prime of manhood, were the strength of France, or of the more youthful and fiery nobles, those early aspirants after honour, who were her pride. The jealous habits—the reserved manners—the deep and artful policy of the king, had estranged this splendid circle from the throne, and they were only called around it upon certain stated and formal occasions, when they went reluctantly, and returned joyfully, as the animals in the fable are supposed to have approached and left the den of the lion.

The very few persons who seemed to be there in the character of counsellors, were mean-looking men, whose countenances sometimes expressed sagacity, but whose manners showed they were called into a sphere for which their previous education and habits had qualified them but indifferently. One or two persons, however, did appear to Durward to possess a more noble mien, and the strictness of the present duty was not such as to prevent his uncle communicating the names of those whom he thus distinguished.

With the Lord Crawford, who was in attendance, dressed in the rich habit of his office, and holding a leading staff of silver in his hand, Quentin, as well as the reader, was already acquainted. Among others who seemed of quality, the most remarkable was the Count de Dunois, the son of that celebrated Dunois, known by the name of the Bastard of Orleans, who, fighting under the banner of Jeanne d'Arc, acted such a distinguished part in liberating France from the English yoke. His son well supported the high renown which had descended to him from such an honoured source; and, notwithstanding his connexion with the royal family, and his hereditary popularity both with the nobles and the people, Dunois had, upon all occasions, manifested such an open, frank loyalty of character, that he seemed to have escaped all suspicion, even on the part of the jealous Louis, who loved to see him near his person, and sometimes even called him to his councils. Although accounted complete in all the exercises of chivalry, and possessed of much of the character of what was then termed a perfect knight, the person of the count was far from being a model of romantic beauty. He was under the common size, though very strongly built, and his legs rather curved outwards, into that make which is more convenient for horseback, than elegant for a pedestrian. His shoulders were broad, his hair black, his complexion swarthy, his arms remarkably long and nervous.

The features of his countenance were irregular, even to ugliness; yet, after all, there was an air of conscious worth and nobility about the Count de Dunois, which stamped, at the first glance, the character of the high-born nobleman, and the undaunted soldier. His mien was bold and upright, his step free and manly, and the harshness of his countenance was dignified by a glance like an eagle, and a frown like a lion. His dress was a hunting-suit, rather sumptuous than gay, and he acted on most occasions as grand huntsman, though we are not inclined to believe that he actually held the office.

Upon the arm of Dunois, walking with a step so slow and melancholy, that he seemed to rest on his kinsman and supporter, came Louis Duke of Orleans, the first prince of the blood royal, and to whom the guards and attendants rendered their homage as such. The jealously-watched object of Louis's suspicions, this prince, who, failing the king's offspring, was heir to the kingdom, was not suffered to absent himself from court, and, while residing there, was denied alike employment and countenance. The dejection which his degraded and almost captive state naturally impressed on the deportment of this unfortunate prince, was at this moment greatly increased, by his consciousness that the king meditated, with respect to him, one of the most cruel and unjust actions which a tyrant could commit, by compelling him to give his hand to the Princess Joan of France, the younger daughter of Louis, to whom he had been contracted in infancy, but whose deformed person rendered the insisting upon such an agreement an act of abominable rigour.

The exterior of this unhappy prince was in no respect distinguished by personal advantages; and in mind, he was of a gentle, mild, and beneficent disposition, qualities which were even visible through the veil of extreme dejection, with which his natural character was at present obscured. Quentin observed that he studiously avoided even looking at the royal guards, and when he returned their salute, that the duke kept his eyes bent on the ground, as if he feared the king's jealousy might have construed that gesture of ordinary courtesy, as arising from the purpose of establishing a separate and personal interest among them.

Very different was the conduct of the proud cardinal and prelate, John of Balue, the favourite minister of Louis for the time, whose rise and character bore as close a resemblance to that of Wolsey, as the difference betwixt the crafty and politic Louis, and the headlong and rash Henry VIII. of England, would permit. The former had raised his minister from the lowest rank, to the dignity, or at least to the emoluments, of Grand Almoner of France, loaded him with benefices, and obtained for him the hat of a cardinal; and although he was too cautious to repose in the ambitious Balue the unbounded power and trust which Henry placed in Wolsey, yet he was more influenced by him than by any other of his avowed counsellors. The cardinal, accordingly, had not escaped the error incidental to those who are suddenly raised to power from an obscure situation, for he entertained a strong persuasion, dazzled doubtless by the suddenness of his elevation, that his capacity was equal to intermeddling

with affairs of every kind, even those most foreign to his profession and studies. Tall and ungainly in his person, he affected gallantry and admiration of the fair sex, although his manners rendered his pretensions absurd, and his profession marked them as indecorous. Some male or female flatterer had, in evil hour, possessed him with the idea that there was much beauty of contour in a pair of huge substantial legs, which he had derived from his father, a carman of Limoges; and with this idea he had become so infatuated, that he always had his cardinal's robes a little looped up on one side, that the sturdy proportion of his limbs might not escape observation. As he swept through the stately apartment in his crimson dress and rich cope, he stopped repeatedly to look at the arms and appointments of the cavaliers on guard, asked them several questions in an authoritative tone, and took upon him to censure some of them for what he termed irregularities of discipline, in language to which these experienced soldiers dared no reply, although it was plain they listened to it with impatience and with contempt.

"Is the king aware," said Dunois to the cardinal, "that the Burgundian envoy is peremptory in demanding an audience?"

"He is," answered the cardinal; "and here, as I think, comes the all-sufficient Oliver Dain, to let us know his royal pleasure."

As he spoke, a remarkable person, who then divided the favour of Louis with the proud cardinal himself, entered from the inner apartment, but without any of that important and consequential demeanour which marked the full-blown dignity of the churchman. On the contrary, this was a little, pale, meagre man, whose black-silk jerkin and hose, without either coat, cloak, or cassock, were ill qualified to set off to advantage a very ordinary person. He carried a silver basin in his hand, and a napkin flung over his arm indicated his menial capacity. His visage was penetrating and quick, although he endeavoured to banish such expression from his features, by keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, as, with the stealthy and quiet pace of a cat, he seemed modestly rather to glide than to walk through the apartment. But though modesty may easily disguise worth, it cannot hide court-favour; and all attempts to steal unperceived through the presence-chamber were vain, on the part of one known to have such possession of the king's ear, as had been attained by his celebrated barber and groom of the chamber, Oliver le Dain, called sometimes Oliver le Mauvais, and sometimes Oliver le Diable, epithets derived from the unscrupulous cunning with which he assisted the execution of the schemes of his master's tortuous policy. At present he spoke earnestly for a few moments with the Count de Dunois, who instantly left the chamber, while the tonsor glided quietly back towards the royal apartment whence he had issued, every one giving place to him; which civility he only acknowledged by the most humble inclination of the body, excepting in a very few instances, where he made one or two persons the subject of envy to all the other courtiers, by whispering a single word in their ear; and at the same time muttering something of the duties of his place, he

escaped from their replies, as well as from the eager solicitations of those who wished to attract his notice. Ludovic Lesly had the good fortune to be one of the individuals who, on the present occasion, was favoured by Oliver with a single word, to assure him that his matter was fortunately terminated.

Presently afterwards, he had another proof of the same agreeable tidings; for Tristan l'Hermite, the provost-marshal of the royal household, entered the apartment, and came straight to the place where Le Balafre was posted. This formidable officer's dress, which was very rich, had only the effect of making his sinister countenance and bad mien more strikingly remarkable, and the tone which he meant for conciliatory, was like nothing so much as the growling of a bear. The import of his words, however, was more amicable than the voice in which they were pronounced. He regretted the mistake which had fallen between them on the preceding day, and observed it was owing to the *Sieur le Balafre's* nephew not wearing the uniform of his corps, or announcing himself as belonging to it, which had led him into the error for which he now asked forgiveness.

Ludovic Lesly made the necessary reply, and as soon as Tristan had turned away, observed to his nephew, that they had now the distinction of having a mortal enemy from henceforward in the person of this dreaded officer. "But a soldier," said he, "who does his duty, may laugh at the provost-marshal."

Quentin could not help being of his uncle's opinion, for, as Tristan parted from them, it was with the look of angry defiance which the bear casts upon the hunter whose spear has wounded him. Indeed, even when less strongly moved, his sullen eye expressed a malevolence of purpose which made men shudder to meet his glance; and the thrill of the young Scot was the deeper and more abhorrent, that he seemed to himself still to feel on his shoulders the grasp of the two death-doing functionaries of this fatal officer.

Meanwhile, Oliver, after he had prowled around the room in the stealthy manner which we have endeavoured to describe,—all, even the highest officers, making way for him, and loading him with their ceremonious attentions, which his modesty seemed desirous to avoid,—again entered the inner apartment, the doors of which were presently thrown open, and King Louis entered the presence-chamber.

Quentin, like all others, turned his eyes upon him; and started so suddenly, that he almost dropped his weapon, when he recognized in the King of France that silk-merchant, *Maître Pierre*, who had been the companion of his morning walk. Singular suspicions respecting the real rank of this person had at different times crossed his thoughts; but this, the proved reality, was wilder than his wildest conjecture.

The stern look of his uncle, offended at this breach of the decorum of his office, recalled him to himself; but not a little was he astonished when the king, whose quick eye had at once discovered him, walked straight to the place where he was posted, without taking notice of any one else.—"So," he said, "young man, I am told you have been brawling

on your first arrival in Touraine; but I pardon you, as it was chiefly the fault of a foolish old merchant, who thought your Caledonian blood required to be heated in the morning with *vin de Beaulne*. If I can find him, I will make him an example to those who debauch my guards—*Balafre*," he added, speaking to Lesly, "your kinsman is a fair youth, though a fiery. We love to cherish such spirits, and mean to make more than ever we did of the brave men who are around us. Let the year, day, hour, and minute of his birth be written down, and given to Oliver Dain."

Balafre bowed to the ground, and re-assumed his erect military position, as one who would show by his demeanour his promptitude to act in the king's quarrel or defence. Quentin, in the meantime, recovered from his first surprise, studied the king's appearance more attentively, and was surprised to find how differently he construed his deportment and features.

These were not much changed in exterior, for Louis, always a scorner of outward show, wore, on the present occasion, an old dark-blue hunting-dress, not much better than the plain burgher suit of the preceding day, and garnished with a huge rosary of ebony, which had been sent to him by no less a personage than the Grand Seigneur, with an attestation that it had been used by a Coptic hermit on Mount Lebanon, a personage of profound sanctity. And for his cap with a single image, he now wore a hat, the band of which was garnished with at least a dozen of little paltry figures of saints stamped in lead. But those eyes, which, according to Quentin's former impression, only twinkled with the love of gain, had, now that they were known to be the property of an able and powerful monarch, a piercing and majestic glance; and those wrinkles on the brow, which he had supposed were formed during a long series of petty schemes of commerce, seemed now the furrows which sagacity had worn while toiling in meditation upon the fate of nations.

Presently after the king's appearance, the princesses of France, with the ladies of their suite, entered the apartment. With the eldest, afterwards married to Peter of Bourbon, and known in French history by the name of the Lady of Beaujeu, our story has but little to do. She was tall, and rather handsome, possessed eloquence, talent, and much of her father's sagacity, who reposed much confidence in her, and loved her as much perhaps as he loved any one.

The younger sister, the unfortunate Joan, the destined bride of the Duke of Orleans, advanced timidly by the side of her sister, conscious of a total want of those external qualities which women are most desirous of possessing, or being thought to possess. She was pale, thin, and sickly in her complexion, her shape visibly bent to one side, and her gait so unequal that she might be called lame. A fine set of teeth, and eyes which were expressive of melancholy, softness, and resignation, with a quantity of light-brown locks, were the only redeeming points which flattery itself could have dared to number, to counteract the general homeliness of her face and figure. To complete the picture, it was easy to remark, from the princess's negligence in

dress, and the timidity of her manner, that she had an unusual and distressing consciousness of her own plainness of appearance, and did not dare to make any of those attempts to mend by manners or by art what nature had left amiss, or in any other way to exert a power of pleasing. The king (who loved her not) stepped hastily to her as she entered.—“How now!” he said, “our world-contemning daughter—Are you robed for a hunting-party, or for the convent, this morning? Speak—answer.”

“For which your highness pleases, sire,” said the princess, scarce raising her voice above her breath.

“Ay, doubtless, you would persuade me it is your desire to quit the court, Joan, and renounce the world and its vanities.—Ha! maiden, wouldst thou have it thought that we, the first-born of holy church, would refuse our daughter to Heaven?—Our Lady and Saint Martin forbid we should refuse the offering, were it worthy of the altar, or were thy vocation in truth thitherward!”

So saying, the king crossed himself devoutly, looking, in the meantime, as appeared to Quentin, very like a cunning vassal, who was depreciating the merit of something which he was desirous to keep to himself, in order that he might stand excused for not offering it to his chief or superior. “Dares he thus play the hypocrite with Heaven,” thought Durward, “and sport with God and his saints, as he may safely do with men, who dare not search his nature too closely?”

Louis meantime resumed, after a moment’s mental devotion—“No, fair daughter, I and another know your real mind better—Ha! fair cousin of Orleans, do we not? Approach, fair sir, and lead this devoted vestal of ours to her horse.”

Orleans started when the king spoke, and hastened to obey him; but with such precipitation of step, and confusion, that Louis called out, “Nay, cousin, rein your gallantry, and look before you.—Why, what a headlong matter a gallant’s haste is on some occasions!—You had well nigh taken Anne’s hand instead of her sister’s.—Sir, must I give Joan’s to you myself?”

The unhappy prince looked up, and shuddered like a child, when forced to touch something at which it has instinctive horror—then making an effort, took the hand which the princess neither gave nor yet withheld. As they stood, her cold damp fingers enclosed in his trembling hand, with their eyes looking on the ground, it would have been difficult to say which of these two youthful beings was rendered more utterly miserable—the duke, who felt himself fettered to the object of his aversion by bonds which he durst not tear asunder, or the unfortunate young woman, who too plainly saw that she was an object of abhorrence to him to gain whose kindness she would willingly have died.

“And now to horse, gentlemen and ladies—We will ourselves lead forth our daughter of Beaujeu,” said the king, “and God’s blessing and Saint Hubert’s be on our morning sport.”

“I am, I fear, doomed to interrupt it, sire,” said the Comte de Dunois—“The Burgundian envoy is before the gates of the castle, and demands an audience.”

“Demands an audience, Dunois!” replied the

king—“Did you not answer him, as we sent you word by Oliver, that we were not at leisure to see him to-day,—and that to-morrow was the festival of Saint Martin, which, please Heaven, we would disturb by no earthly thoughts,—and that on the succeeding day we were designed for Amboise—but that we would not fail to appoint him as early an audience, when we returned, as our pressing affairs would permit?”

“All this I said,” answered Dunois; “but yet, sire”——

“*Pasques-Dieu*, man! what is it that thus sticks in thy throat?” said the king. “This Burgundian’s terms must have been hard of digestion.”

“Had not my duty, your grace’s commands, and his character as an envoy, restrained me,” said Dunois, “he should have tried to digest them himself; for, by our Lady of Orleans, I had more mind to have made him eat his own words, than to have brought them to your majesty.”

“Body of me, Dunois,” said the king, “it is strange that thou, one of the most impatient fellows alive, shouldst have so little sympathy with the like infirmity in our blunt and fiery cousin, Charles of Burgundy.—Why, man, I mind his blustering messages no more than the towers of this castle regard the whistling of the north-east wind, which comes from Flanders, as well as this brawling envoy.”

“Know then, sire,” replied Dunois, “that the Count of Crevecœur tarries below, with his retinue of pursuivants and trumpets, and says, that, since your majesty refuses him the audience which his master has instructed him to demand, upon matters of most pressing concern, he will remain there till midnight, and accost your majesty at whatever hour you are pleased to issue from your castle, whether for business, exercise, or devotion; and that no consideration, except the use of absolute force, shall compel him to desist from this resolution.”

“He is a fool,” said the king, with much composure. “Does the hot-headed Hainaulter think it any penance for a man of sense to remain for twenty-four hours quiet within the walls of his castle, when he hath the affairs of a kingdom to occupy him? These impatient coxcombs think that all men, like themselves, are miserable, save when in saddle and stirrup. Let the dogs be put up, and well looked to, gentle Dunois—We will hold council to-day, instead of hunting.”

“My liege,” answered Dunois, “you will not thus rid yourself of Crevecœur; for his master’s instructions are, that if he hath not this audience which he demands, he shall nail his gauntlet to the palisades before the castle, in token of mortal defiance on the part of his master, shall renounce the duke’s fealty to France, and declare instant war.”

“Ay,” said Louis, without any perceptible alteration of voice, but frowning until his piercing dark eyes became almost invisible under his shaggy eyebrows, “is it even so?—will our ancient vassal prove so masterful—our dear cousin treat us thus unkindly?—Nay then, Dunois, we must unfold the *Oriflamme*, and cry *Denis Montjoye*!”

“Marry and amen, and in a most happy hour!” said the martial Dunois; and the guards in the hall, unable to resist the same impulse, stirred each upon

his post, so as to produce a low but distinct sound of clashing arms. The king cast his eyes proudly round, and, for a moment, thought and looked like his heroic father.

But the excitement of the moment presently gave way to the host of political considerations, which, at that conjuncture, rendered an open breach with Burgundy so peculiarly perilous. Edward IV., a brave and victorious king, who had in his own person fought thirty battles, was now established on the throne of England, was brother to the Duchess of Burgundy, and, it might well be supposed, waited but a rupture between his near connexion and Louis, to carry into France, through the ever-open gate of Calais, those arms which had been triumphant in the civil wars, and to obliterate the recollection of civil dissensions by that most popular of all occupations amongst the English, an invasion of France. To this consideration was added the uncertain faith of the Duke of Bretagne, and other weighty subjects of reflection. So that, after a deep pause, when Louis again spoke, although in the same tone, it was with an altered spirit. "But God forbid," he said, "that aught less than necessity should make us, the most christian king, give cause to the effusion of christian blood, if anything short of dishonour may avert such a calamity. We tender our subjects' safety dearer than the ruffle which our own dignity may receive from the rude breath of a malapert ambassador, who hath perhaps exceeded the errand with which he was charged.—Admit the envoy of Burgundy to our presence."

"*Beati pacifici*," said the Cardinal Balue.

"True; and your eminence knoweth that they who humble themselves shall be exalted," added the king.

The cardinal spoke an amen, to which few assented; for even the pale cheek of Orleans kindled with shame, and Balafré suppressed his feelings so little, as to let the butt-end of his partizan fall heavily on the floor,—a movement of impatience for which he underwent a bitter reproof from the cardinal, with a lecture on the mode of handling his arms when in presence of the sovereign. The king himself seemed unusually embarrassed at the silence around him. "You are pensive, Dunois," he said—"You disapprove of our giving way to this hot-headed envoy."

"By no means," said Dunois; "I meddle not with matters beyond my sphere. I was but thinking of asking a boon of your majesty."

"A boon, Dunois—what is it?—You are an unfrequent suitor, and may count on our favour."

"I would, then, your majesty would send me to Evreux to regulate the clergy," said Dunois, with military frankness.

"That were indeed beyond thy sphere," replied the king, smiling.

"I might order priests as well," replied the count, "as my Lord Bishop of Evreux, or my lord cardinal, if he likes the title better, can exercise the soldiers of your majesty's guard."

The king smiled again, and more mysteriously, while he whispered Dunois, "The time may come when you and I will regulate the priests together—But this is for the present a good conceited animal

VOL. III.

of a bishop. Ah, Dunois!—Rome, Rome puts him and other burthens upon us—But patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards, till our hand is a stronger one."*

The flourish of the trumpets in the court-yard now announced the arrival of the Burgundian nobleman. All in the presence-chamber made haste to arrange themselves according to their proper places of precedence, the king and his daughters remaining in the centre of the assembly.

The Count of Crevecœur, a renowned and undaunted warrior, entered the apartment; and, contrary to the usage among the envoys of friendly powers, he appeared all armed, excepting his head, in a gorgeous suit of the most superb Milan armour, made of steel, inlaid and embossed with gold, which was wrought into the fantastic taste called arabesque. Around his neck, and over his polished cuirass, hung his master's order of the Golden Fleece, one of the most honoured associations of chivalry then known in Christendom. A handsome page bore his helmet behind him, a herald preceded him, bearing his letters of credence, which he offered on his knee to the king; while the ambassador himself paused in the midst of the hall, as if to give those present time to admire his lofty look, commanding stature, and undaunted composure of countenance and manner. The rest of his attendants waited in the ante-chamber, or court-yard.

"Approach, Seignior Count de Crevecœur," said Louis, after a moment's glance at his commission; "we need not our cousin's letters of credence, either to introduce to us a warrior so well known, or to assure us of your highly deserved credit with your master. We trust that your fair partner, who shares some of our ancestral blood, is in good health. Had you brought her in your hand, Seignior Count, we might have thought you wore your armour, on this unwonted occasion, to maintain the superiority of her charms against the amorous chivalry of France. As it is, we cannot guess the reason of this complete panoply."

"Sir," replied the ambassador, "the Count of Crevecœur must lament his misfortune, and entreat your forgiveness, that he cannot, on this occasion, reply with such humble deference as is due to the royal courtesy with which your majesty has honoured him. But, although it is only the voice of Philip Crevecœur de Cordès which speaks, the words which he utters must be those of his gracious lord and sovereign the Duke of Burgundy."

"And what has Crevecœur to say in the words of Burgundy?" said Louis, with an assumption of sufficient dignity. "Yet hold—remember, that in this presence, Philip Crevecœur de Cordès speaks to him whom he calls his sovereign's sovereign."

Crevecœur bowed, and then spoke aloud:—"King of France, the mighty Duke of Burgundy once more sends you a written schedule of the

* Dr Dryasdust here remarks, that cards, said to have been invented in a preceding reign, for the amusement of Charles V. during the intervals of his mental disorder, seem speedily to have become common among the courtiers, since they already furnished Louis XI. with a metaphor. The same proverb was quoted by Durward, in the enchanted cave of Montesinos.

wrongs and oppressions committed on his frontiers by your majesty's garrisons and officers; and the first point of inquiry is, whether it is your majesty's purpose to make him amends for these injuries?"

The king, looking slightly at the memorial which the herald delivered to him upon his knee, said, "These matters have been already long before our council. Of the injuries complained of, some are in requital of those sustained by my subjects, some are affirmed without any proof, some have been retaliated by the duke's garrisons and soldiers; and if there remain any which fall under none of those predicaments, we are not, as a christian prince, averse to make satisfaction for wrongs actually sustained by our neighbour, though committed not only without our countenance, but against our express order."

"I will convey your majesty's answer," said the ambassador, "to my most gracious master; yet, let me say, that, as it is in no degree different from the evasive replies which have already been returned to his just complaints, I cannot hope that it will afford the means of re-establishing peace and friendship betwixt France and Burgundy."

"Be that at God's pleasure," said the king. "It is not for dread of thy master's arms, but for the sake of peace only, that I return so temperate an answer to his injurious reproaches. Proceed with thine errand."

"My master's next demand," said the ambassador, "is, that your majesty will cease your secret and underhand dealings with his towns of Ghent, Liege, and Malines. He requests, that your majesty will recal the secret agents, by whose means the discontents of his good citizens of Flanders are inflamed; and dismiss from your majesty's dominions, or rather deliver up to the condign punishment of their liege lord, those traitorous fugitives, who, having fled from the scene of their machinations, have found too ready a refuge in Paris, Orleans, Tours, and other French cities."

"Say to the Duke of Burgundy," replied the king, "that I know of no such indirect practices as those with which he injuriously charges me; that my subjects of France have frequent intercourse with the good cities of Flanders, for the purpose of mutual benefit by free traffic, which it would be as much contrary to the duke's interest as mine to interrupt; and that many Flemings have residence in my kingdom, and enjoy the protection of my laws, for the same purpose; but none, to our knowledge, for those of treason or mutiny against the duke. Proceed with your message—you have heard my answer."

"As formerly, sire, with pain," replied the Count of Crevecoeur; "it not being of that direct or explicit nature which the duke, my master, will accept, in atonement for a long train of secret machinations, not the less certain, though now disavowed by your majesty. But I proceed with my message. The Duke of Burgundy further requires the King of France to send back to his dominions without delay, and under a secure safe-guard, the persons of Isabelle Countess of Croye, and of her relation and guardian the Countess Hameline, of the same fa-

mily, in respect the said Countess Isabelle, being, by the law of the country, and the feudal tenure of her estates, the ward of the said Duke of Burgundy, hath fled from his dominions, and from the charge which he, as a careful prince, was willing to extend over her, and is here maintained in secret by the King of France, and by him fortified in her contumacy to the duke, her natural lord and guardian, contrary to the laws of God and man, as they ever have been acknowledged in civilized Europe.—Once more I pause for your majesty's reply."

"You did well, Count de Crevecoeur," said Louis, scornfully, "to begin your embassy at an early hour; for, if it be your purpose to call on me to account for the flight of every vassal whom your master's heady passion may have driven from his dominions, the beadroll may last till sunset. Who can affirm that these ladies are in my dominions? who can presume to say, if it be so, that I have either countenanced their flight hither, or have received them with offers of protection?"

"Sire," said Crevecoeur, "may it please your majesty, I was provided with a witness on this subject—one who beheld these fugitive ladies in the inn called the Fleur-de-Lys, not far from this castle—one who saw your majesty in their company, though under the unworthy disguise of a burgess of Tours—one who received from them, in your royal presence, messages and letters to their friends in Flanders—all which he conveyed to the hand and ear of the Duke of Burgundy."

"Bring him forward," said the king; "place the man before my face who dares maintain these palpable falsehoods."

"You speak in triumph, my lord; for you are well aware that this witness exists no longer. When he lived, he was called Zamet Magraubin, by birth one of those Bohemian wanderers. He was yesterday, as I have learned, executed by a party of your majesty's provost-marshal, to prevent, doubtless, his standing here, to verify what he said of this matter to the Duke of Burgundy, in presence of his council, and of me, Philip Crevecoeur de Cordès."

"Now, by our Lady of Embrun!" said the king, "so gross are these accusations, and so free of consciousness am I of aught that approaches them, that, by the honour of a king, I laugh, rather than am wroth at them. My provost-guard put to death, as is their duty, thieves and vagabonds; and my crown is to be slandered with whatsoever these thieves and vagabonds may have said to our hot cousin of Burgundy and his wise counsellors! I pray you, tell my kind cousin, if he loves such companions, he had best keep them in his own estates; for here they are like to meet short shrift and a tight cord."

"My master needs no such subjects, Sir King," answered the count, in a tone more disrespectful than he had yet permitted himself to make use of; "for the noble duke uses not to inquire of witches, wandering Egyptians, or others, upon the destiny and fate of his neighbours and allies."

"We have had patience enough, and to spare," said the king, interrupting him; "and since thy sole errand here seems to be for the purpose of insult, we will send some one in our name to the Duke of Burgundy—convinced, in thus demeaning thyself towards

us, thou hast exceeded thy commission, whatever that may have been."

"On the contrary," said Crevecœur, "I have not yet acquitted myself of it. Harken, Louis of Valois, King of France—Harken, nobles and gentlemen, who may be present—Harken, all good and true men—And thou, Toison d'Or," addressing the herald, "make proclamation after me.—I, Philip Crevecœur of Cordès, Count of the Empire, and Knight of the honourable and princely Order of the Golden Fleece, in the name of the most puissant lord and prince, Charles, by the grace of God, Duke of Burgundy and Lothairingia, of Brabant and Limbourg, of Luxembourg and of Gueldres; Earl of Flanders and of Artois; Count Palatine of Hainault, of Holland, Zealand, Namur, and Zutphen; Marquis of the Holy Empire; Lord of Friezeland, Salines, and Malines, do give you, Louis, King of France, openly to know, that, you having refused to remedy the various griefs, wrongs, and offences, done and wrought by you, or by and through your aid, suggestion, and instigation, against the said duke and his loving subjects, he, by my mouth, renounces all allegiance and fealty towards your crown and dignity—pronounces you false and faithless; and defies you as a prince, and as a man. There lies my gage, in evidence of what I have said."

So saying, he plucked the gauntlet off his right hand, and flung it down on the floor of the hall.

Until this last climax of audacity, there had been a deep silence in the royal apartment during the extraordinary scene; but no sooner had the clash of the gauntlet, when cast down, been echoed by the deep voice of Toison d'Or, the Burgundian herald, with the ejaculation, "Vive Bourgogne!" than there was a general tumult. While Dunois, Orleans, old Lord Crawford, and one or two others, whose rank authorized their interference, contended which should lift up the gauntlet, the others in the hall exclaimed, "Strike him down! Cut him to pieces! Comes he here to insult the King of France in his own palace?"

But the king appeased the tumult by exclaiming, in a voice like thunder, which overawed and silenced every other sound, "Silence, my lieges! lay not a hand on the man, not a finger on the gage!—And you, Sir Count, of what is your life composed, or how is it warranted, that you thus place it on the cast of a die so perilous? Or is your duke made of a different metal from other princes, since he thus asserts his pretended quarrel in a manner so unusual?"

"He is indeed framed of a different and more noble metal than the other princes of Europe," said the undaunted Count of Crevecœur; "for, when not one of them dared to give shelter to you—to you, I say, King Louis—when you were an exile from France, and pursued by the whole bitterness of your father's revenge, and all the power of his kingdom, you were received and protected like a brother by my noble master, whose generosity of disposition you have so grossly misused. Farewell, sire, my mission is discharged."

So saying, the Count de Crevecœur left the apartment abruptly, and without further leave-taking.

"After him—after him—take up the gauntlet and

after him!" said the king. "—I mean not you, Dunois, nor you, my Lord of Crawford, who, methinks, may be too old for such hot frays; nor you, cousin of Orleans, who are too young for them.—My lord cardinal—my Lord Bishop of Auxerre—it is your holy office to make peace among princes;—do you lift the gauntlet, and remonstrate with Count Crevecœur on the sin he has committed, in thus insulting a great monarch in his own court, and forcing us to bring the miseries of war upon his kingdom and that of his neighbour.

Upon this direct personal appeal, the Cardinal Balue proceeded to lift the gauntlet, with such precaution as one would touch an adder,—so great was apparently his aversion to this symbol of war,—and presently left the royal apartment to hasten after the challenger.

Louis paused and looked round the circle of his courtiers, most of whom, except such as we have already distinguished, being men of low birth, and raised to their rank in the king's household for other gifts than courage or feats of arms, looked pale on each other, and had obviously received an unpleasant impression from the scene which had been just acted. Louis gazed on them with contempt, and then said aloud, "Although the Count of Crevecœur be presumptuous and overweening, it must be confessed that in him the Duke of Burgundy hath as bold a servant as ever bore message for a prince. I would I knew where to find as faithful an envoy to carry back my answer."

"You do your French nobles injustice, sire," said Dunois; "not one of them but would carry a defiance to Burgundy on the point of his sword."

"And, sire," said old Crawford, "you wrong also the Scottish gentlemen who serve you. I, or any of my followers, being of meet rank, would not hesitate a moment to call yonder proud count to a reckoning; my own arm is yet strong enough for the purpose, if I have but your majesty's permission."

"But your majesty," continued Dunois, "will employ us in no service through which we may win honour to ourselves, to your majesty, or to France."

"Say rather," said the king, "that I will not give way, Dunois, to the headlong impetuosity, which, on some knight-errant punctilio, would wreck yourselves, the throne, France, and all. There is not one of you who knows not how precious every hour of peace is at this moment, when so necessary to heal the wounds of a distracted country; yet there is not one of you who would not rush into war on account of the tale of a wandering gipsy, or of some errant demosel, whose reputation, perhaps, is scarce higher.—Here comes the cardinal, and we trust with more pacific tidings.—How now, my lord—have you brought the count to reason and to temper?"

"Sire," said Balue, "my task hath been difficult. I put it to yonder proud count, how he dared to use towards your majesty, the presumptuous reproach with which his audience had broken up, and which must be understood as proceeding, not from his master, but from his own insolence, and as placing him therefore in your majesty's discretion, for what penalty you might think proper."

"You said right," replied the king; "and what was his answer?"

"The count," continued the cardinal, "had at that moment his foot in the stirrup, ready to mount; and, on hearing my expostulation, he turned his head without altering his position. 'Had I,' said he, 'been fifty leagues distant, and had heard by report that a question vituperative of my prince had been asked by the King of France, I had, even at that distance, instantly mounted, and returned to disburthen my mind of the answer which I gave him but now.'"

"I said, sirs," said the king, turning around, without any show of angry emotion, "that in the Count Philip of Crevecoeur, our cousin the duke possesses as worthy a servant as ever rode at a prince's right hand.—But you prevailed with him to stay?"

"To stay for twenty-four hours; and in the meanwhile to receive again his gage of defiance," said the cardinal; "he has dismounted at the Fleur-de-lys."

"See that he be nobly attended and cared for, at our charges," said the king; "such a servant is a jewel in a prince's crown.—Twenty-four hours!" he added, muttering to himself, and looking as if he were stretching his eyes to see into futurity; "twenty-four hours!—'tis of the shortest. Yet twenty-four hours, ably and skilfully employed, may be worth a year in the hand of indolent or incapable agents.—Well.—To the forest—to the forest, my gallant lords!—Orleans, my fair kinsman, lay aside that modesty, though it becomes you; mind not my Joan's coyness. The Loire may as soon avoid mingling with the Cher, as she from favouring your suit, or you from preferring it," he added, as the unhappy prince moved slowly on after his betrothed bride. "And now for your boar-spears, gentlemen; for Allegre, my pricker, hath harboured one that will try both dog and man.—Dunois, lend me your spear,—take mine, it is too weighty for me; but when did you complain of such a fault in your lance?—To horse—to horse, gentlemen."

And all the chase rode on.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOAR-HUNT.

I will converse with unrespective boys
And iron-witted fools. None are for me
That look into me with suspicious eyes.

King Richard.

ALL the experience which the cardinal had been able to collect of his master's disposition, did not, upon the present occasion, prevent his falling into a great error of policy. His vanity induced him to think that he had been more successful in prevailing upon the Count of Crevecoeur to remain at Tours, than any other moderator whom the king might have employed, would, in all probability, have been; and as he was well aware of the importance which Louis attached to the postponement of a war with the Duke of Burgundy, he could not help showing that he conceived himself to have rendered the king great and acceptable service. He pressed nearer to the king's person than he was wont to do, and endeavoured to engage him in conversation on the events of the morning.

This was injudicious in more respects than one; for princes love not to see their subjects approach them with an air conscious of deserving, and thereby seeming desirous to extort, acknowledgment and recompense of their services; and Louis, the most jealous monarch that ever lived, was peculiarly averse and inaccessible to any one who seemed either to presume upon service rendered, or to pry into his secrets.

Yet, hurried away, as the most cautious sometimes are, by the self-satisfied humour of the moment, the cardinal continued to ride on the king's right hand, turning the discourse, whenever it was possible, upon Crevecoeur and his embassy; which, although it might be the matter at that moment most in the king's thoughts, was nevertheless precisely that which he was least willing to converse on. At length Louis, who had listened to him with attention, yet without having returned any answer which could tend to prolong the conversation, signed to Dunois, who rode at no great distance, to come up on the other side of his horse.

"We came hither for sport and exercise," said he, "but the reverend father here would have us hold a council of state."

"I hope your highness will excuse my assistance," said Dunois; "I am born to fight the battles of France, and have heart and hand for that, but I have no head for her councils."

"My lord cardinal hath a head turned for nothing else, Dunois; he hath confessed Crevecoeur at the castle-gate, and he hath communicated to us his whole shrift—Said you not the *whole*?" he continued, with an emphasis on the word, and a glance at the cardinal, which shot from betwixt his long dark eye-lashes, as a dagger gleams when it leaves the scabbard.

The cardinal trembled, as, endeavouring to reply to the king's jest, he said, "That though his order was obliged to conceal the secrets of their penitents in general, there was no *sigillum confessionis* which could not be melted at his majesty's breath."

"And as his eminence," said the king, "is ready to communicate the secrets of others to us, he naturally expects that we should be equally communicative to him; and, in order to get upon this reciprocal footing, he is very reasonably desirous to know if these two ladies of Croye be actually in our territories. We are sorry we cannot indulge his curiosity, not ourselves knowing in what precise place errant damsels, disguised princesses, distressed countesses, may lie leaguer within our dominions, which are, we thank God and our Lady of Embrun, rather too extensive, for us to answer easily his eminence's most reasonable inquiries.—But supposing they were with us, what say you, Dunois, to our cousin's peremptory demand?"

"I will answer you, my lord, if you will tell me in sincerity, whether you want war or peace," replied Dunois, with a frankness which, while it arose out of his own native openness and intrepidity of character, made him from time to time a considerable favourite with Louis, who, like all astutious persons, was as desirous of looking into the hearts of others as of concealing his own.

"By my halidome," said he, "I should be as well

contented as thyself, Dunois, to tell thee my purpose, did I myself but know it exactly. But say I declared for war, what should I do with this beautiful and wealthy young heiress, supposing her to be in my dominions?"

"Bestow her in marriage on one of your own gallant followers, who has a heart to love and an arm to protect her," said Dunois.

"Upon thyself, ha!" said the king. "*Pasques-Dieu!* thou art more politic than I took thee for, with all thy bluntness."

"Nay, sire, I am aught except politic. By our Lady of Orleans, I come to the point at once, as I ride my horse at the ring. Your majesty owes the house of Orleans at least one happy marriage."

"And I will pay it, count. *Pasques-Dieu*, I will pay it!—See you not yonder fair couple?"

The king pointed to the unhappy Duke of Orleans and the princess, who, neither daring to remain at a greater distance from the king, nor in his sight appear separate from each other, were riding side by side, yet with an interval of two or three yards betwixt them, a space which timidity on the one side, and aversion on the other, prevented them from diminishing, while neither dared to increase it.

Dunois looked in the direction of the king's signal, and as the situation of his unfortunate relative and the destined bride reminded him of nothing so much as of two dogs, which, forcibly linked together, remain nevertheless as widely separated as the length of their collars will permit, he could not help shaking his head, though he ventured not on any other reply to the hypocritical tyrant. Louis seemed to guess his thoughts.

"It will be a peaceful and quiet household they will keep—not much disturbed with children, I should augur. But these are not always a blessing."

It was, perhaps, the recollection of his own filial ingratitude that made the king pause as he made the last reflection, and which converted the sneer which trembled on his lip into something resembling an expression of contrition. But he instantly proceeded in another tone.

"Frankly, my Dunois, much as I revere the holy sacrament of matrimony (here he crossed himself), I would rather the house of Orleans raised for me such gallant soldiers as thy father and thyself, who share the blood-royal of France without claiming its rights, than that the country should be rent to pieces, as England, by wars by the rivalry of legitimate candidates for the crown. The lion should never have more than one cub."

Dunois sighed and was silent, conscious that contradicting his arbitrary sovereign might well hurt his kinsman's interests, but could do him no service; yet he could not forbear adding, in the next moment,

"Since your majesty has alluded to the birth of my father, I must needs own, that, setting the frailty of his parents on one side, he might be termed happier, and more fortunate, as the son of lawless love, than of conjugal hatred."

"Thou art a scandalous fellow, Dunois, to speak thus of holy wedlock. But to the devil with the discourse, for the boar is unharboured.—Lay on the dogs, in the name of the holy Saint Hubert!—Ha!

ha! tra-la-la-lira-la!"—And the king's horn rung merrily through the woods as he pushed forward on the chase, followed by two or three of his guards, amongst whom was our friend Quentin Durward. And here it was remarkable, that, even in the keen prosecution of his favourite sport, the king, in indulgence of his caustic disposition, found leisure to amuse himself by tormenting Cardinal Balue.

It was one of that able statesman's weaknesses, as we have elsewhere hinted, to suppose himself, though of low rank and limited education, qualified to play the courtier and the man of gallantry. He did not, indeed, actually enter the lists like Becket, or levy soldiers like Wolsey. But gallantry, in which they also were proficient, was his professed pursuit; and he likewise affected great fondness for the martial amusement of the chase. But, however well he might succeed with certain ladies, to whom his power, his wealth, and his influence as a statesman, might atone for deficiencies in appearance and manners, the gallant horses, which he purchased at almost any price, were totally insensible to the dignity of carrying a cardinal, and paid no more respect to him than they would have done to his father the tailor, whom he rivaled in horsemanship. The king knew this, and, by alternately exciting and checking his own horse, he brought that of the cardinal, whom he kept close by his side, into such a state of mutiny against his rider, that it became apparent they must soon part company; and then, in the midst of its starting, bolting, rearing, and lashing out, alternately, the royal tormentor rendered the rider miserable, by questioning him upon many affairs of importance, and hinting his purpose to take that opportunity of communicating to him some of those secrets of state, which the cardinal had but a little while before seemed so anxious to learn.

A more awkward situation could hardly be imagined, than that of a privy councillor forced to listen to and reply to his sovereign, while each fresh gambade of his unmanageable horse placed him in a new and more precarious attitude—his violet robe flying loose in every direction, and nothing securing him from an instant and perilous fall, save the depth of the saddle, and its height before and behind. Dunois laughed without restraint; while the king, who had a private mode of enjoying his jest inwardly, without laughing aloud, mildly rebuked his minister on his eager passion for the chase, which would not permit him to dedicate a few moments to business. "I will no longer be your hindrance," continued he, addressing the terrified cardinal, and giving his own horse the rein at the same time.

Before Balue could utter a word by way of answer or apology, his horse, seizing the bit with his teeth, went forth at an uncontrollable gallop, soon leaving behind the king and Dunois, who followed at a more regulated pace, enjoying the statesman's distressing predicament. If any of our readers has chanced to be run away with in his time (as we ourselves have in ours), he will have a full sense at once of the pain, peril, and absurdity of the situation. These four legs of the quadruped, which, noway under the rider's control, nor sometimes under that of the creature they more properly belong to, fly at such a rate as if the hindermost

meant to overtake the foremost—those clinging legs of the biped which we so often wish safely planted on the green sward, but which now only augment our distress by pressing the animal's sides—the hands which have forsaken the bridle for the mane—the body which, instead of sitting upright on the centre of gravity, as old Angelo used to recommend, or stooping forward like a jockey at Newmarket, lies, rather than hangs, crouched upon the back of the animal, with no better chance of saving itself than a sack of corn,—combine to make a picture more than sufficiently ludicrous to spectators, however uncomfortable to the exhibitor. But add to this some singularity of dress or appearance on the part of the unhappy cavalier—a robe of office, a splendid uniform, or any other peculiarity of costume,—and let the scene of action be a race-course, a review, a procession, or any other place of concourse and public display, and if the poor wight would escape being the object of a shout of inextinguishable laughter, he must contrive to break a limb or two, or, which will be more effectual, to be killed on the spot; for on no slighter condition will his fall excite anything like serious sympathy. On the present occasion, the short violet-coloured gown of the cardinal, which he used as a riding-dress (having changed his long robes before he left the castle), his scarlet stockings, and scarlet hat, with the long strings hanging down, together with his utter helplessness, gave infinite zest to his exhibition of horsemanship.

The horse, having taken matters entirely into his own hand, flew rather than galloped up a long green avenue, overtook the pack in hard pursuit of the boar, and then, having overturned one or two yeomen prickers, who little expected to be charged in the rear,—having ridden down several dogs, and greatly confused the chase,—animated by the clamours and threats of the huntsman, carried the terrified cardinal past the formidable animal itself, which was rushing on at a speedy trot, furious and embossed with the foam which he churned around his tusks. Balue, on beholding himself so near the boar, set up a dreadful cry for help, which, or perhaps the sight of the boar, produced such an effect on his horse, that the animal interrupted its headlong career by suddenly springing to one side; so that the cardinal, who had long only kept his seat because the motion was straight forward, now fell heavily to the ground. The conclusion of Balue's chase took place so near the boar, that, had not the animal been at that moment too much engaged about his own affairs, the vicinity might have proved as fatal to the cardinal, as it is said to have done to Favila, King of the Visigoths, in Spain. He got off, however, for the fright, and crawling as hastily as he could out of the way of hounds and huntsmen, saw the whole chase sweep by him without affording him assistance; for hunters in those days were as little moved by sympathy for such misfortunes as they are in our own.

The king, as he passed, said to Dunois, "Yonder lies his eminence low enough—he is no great huntsman—though for a fisher (when a secret is to be caught) he may match Saint Peter himself. He has, however, for once, I think, met with his match."

The cardinal did not hear the words, but the scornful look with which they were spoken led him to suspect their general import. The devil is said to seize such opportunities of temptation as was now afforded by the passions of Balue, bitterly moved as they had been by the scorn of the king. The momentary fright was over so soon as he had assured himself that his fall was harmless; but mortified vanity and resentment against his sovereign had a much longer influence on his feelings.

After all the chase had passed him, a single cavalier, who seemed rather to be a spectator than a partaker of the sport, rode up with one or two attendants, and expressed no small surprise to find the cardinal there upon foot, without a horse or attendants, and in such a plight as plainly showed the nature of the accident which had there placed him. To dismount and offer his assistance in this predicament—to cause one of his attendants resign a staid and quiet palfrey for the cardinal's use—to express his surprise at the customs of the French court, which thus permitted them to abandon to the dangers of the chase and forsake in his need their wisest statesman—were the natural modes of assistance and consolation which so strange a rencontre supplied to Crevecœur; for it was the Burgundian ambassador who came to the assistance of the fallen cardinal.

He found him in a lucky time and humour for essaying some of those practices on his fidelity, to which it is well known that Balue had the criminal weakness to listen. Already in the morning, as the jealous temper of Louis had suggested, more had passed betwixt them than the cardinal durst have reported to his master. But, although he had listened with gratified ears to the high value which he was assured by Crevecœur the Duke of Burgundy placed upon his person and talents, and not without a feeling of temptation, when the count hinted at the munificence of his master's disposition and the rich benefices of Flanders, it was not until the accident, as we have related, had highly irritated him, that, stung with wounded vanity, he resolved, in a fatal hour, to show that no enemy can be so dangerous as an offended friend and confidant.

On the present occasion he hastily requested Crevecœur to separate from him, lest they should be observed, but appointed him a meeting for the evening in the abbey of Saint Martin's, at Tours, after vesper service; and that in a tone which assured the Burgundian that his master had obtained an advantage hardly to have been hoped for.

In the meanwhile Louis, who, though the most politic prince of his time, upon this, as on other occasions, suffered his passions to interfere with his art, followed contentedly the chase of the wild-boar, which was now come to an interesting point. It had so happened that a sounder (*i. e.*, in the language of the period, a boar of only two years old) had crossed the track of the proper object of the chase, and withdrawn, in pursuit of him, all the dogs, saving two or three couple of old staunch hounds, and the greater part of the huntsmen. The king saw, with internal glee, Dunois, as well as others, follow upon this false scent, and enjoyed in

secret the thought of triumphing over that accomplished knight, in the art of venerie, which was then thought almost as glorious as war. Louis was well mounted and followed close on the hounds, so that when the boar turned to bay in a marshy piece of ground, there was no one near him but the king himself.

Louis showed all the bravery and expertness of an experienced huntsman; for, unheeding the danger, he rode up to the tremendous animal, which was defending itself with fury against the dogs, and struck him with his boar-spear; yet, as the horse shyed from the boar, the blow was not so effectual as either to kill or disable him. No effort could prevail on the horse to charge a second time; so that the king, dismounting, advanced on foot against the furious animal, holding naked in his hand one of those short, sharp, straight, and pointed swords, which huntsmen used for such encounters. The boar instantly quitted the dogs to rush on his human enemy, while the king, taking his station, and posting himself firmly, presented the sword, with the purpose of aiming it at the boar's throat, or rather chest, within the collar-bone; in which case, the weight of the beast, and the impetuosity of his career, would have served to accelerate his own destruction. But, owing to the wetness of the ground, the king's foot slipped, just as this delicate and perilous manœuvre ought to have been accomplished, and the point of the sword encountering the cuirass of bristles on the outside of the creature's shoulder, glanced off without making any impression, and Louis fell flat on the ground. This was so far fortunate for the monarch, because the animal, owing to the king's fall, missed his blow in his turn, and only rent with his tusk the king's short hunting-cloak, instead of ripping up his thigh. But as, after running a little a-head in the fury of his course, the boar turned to repeat his attack on the king in the moment when he was rising, the life of Louis was in imminent danger, when Quentin Durward, who had been thrown out in the chase by the slowness of his horse, but who, nevertheless, had luckily distinguished and followed the blast of the king's horn, rode up, and transfixed the animal with his spear.

The king, who had by this time recovered his feet, came in turn to Durward's assistance, and cut the animal's throat with his sword. Before speaking a word to Quentin, he measured the huge creature not only by paces, but even by feet—then wiped the sweat from his brow, and the blood from his hands—then took off his hunting-cap, hung it on a bush, and devoutly made his orisons to the little leaden images which it contained—and then looking upon Durward, said to him, "Is it thou, my young Scot?—thou hast begun thy wood-craft well, and Maître Pierre owes thee as good entertainment as he gave thee at the Fleur-de-Lys yonder.—Why dost thou not speak? Thou hast lost thy forwardness and fire, methinks, at the court, where others find both."

Quentin, as shrewd a youth as ever Scottish breeze breathed caution into, was far too wise to embrace the perilous permission of familiarity which he seemed thus invited to use. He answered in very few and well-chosen words, that if he ventured to

address his majesty at all, it could be but to crave pardon for the rustic boldness with which he had conducted himself when ignorant of his high rank.

"Tush! man," said the king; "I forgive thy sauciness for thy spirit and shrewdness. I admired how near thou didst hit upon my gossip Tristan's occupation. You have nearly tasted of his handy-work since, as I am given to understand. I bid thee beware of him; he is a merchant who deals in rough bracelets and tight necklaces. Help me to my horse—I love thee, and will do thee good. Build on no man's favour but mine—not even on thine uncle's or Lord Crawford's—and say nothing of thy timely aid in this matter of the boar; for if a man makes boast that he has served a king in such a pinch, he must take the braggart humour for its own recompense."

The king then winded his horn, which brought up Dunois and several attendants, whose compliments he received on the slaughter of such a noble animal, without scrupling to appropriate a much greater share of merit than actually belonged to him; for he mentioned Durward's assistance as slightly as a sportsman, who, in boasting of the number of birds which he has bagged, does not always dilate upon the presence and assistance of the game-keeper. He then ordered Dunois to see that the boar's carcass was sent to the brotherhood of Saint Martin, at Tours, to mend their fare upon holidays, and that they might remember the king in their private devotions.

"And," said Louis, "who hath seen his eminence my lord cardinal? Methinks it were but poor courtesy, and cold regard to holy church, to leave him a-foot here in the forest."

"May it please you, sire," said Quentin, when he saw that all were silent, "I saw his lordship the cardinal accommodated with a horse, on which he left the forest."

"Heaven cares for its own," replied the king. "Set forward, my lords; we'll hunt no more this morning.—You, sir squire," addressing Quentin, "reach me my wood-knife—it has dropped from the sheath beside the quarry there. Ride in, Dunois—I follow instantly."

Louis, whose slightest motions were often conducted like stratagems, thus gained an opportunity to ask Quentin privately, "My bonny Scot, thou hast an eye, I see—Canst thou tell me who helped the cardinal to a palfrey?—Some stranger, I should suppose; for, as I passed without stopping, the courtiers would likely be loth to do him such a turn."

"I saw those who aided his eminence but an instant, sire," said Quentin; "for I had been unluckily thrown out, and was riding fast, to be in my place; but I think it was the Ambassador of Burgundy and his people."

"Ha!" said Louis.—"Well, be it so—France will match them yet."

There was nothing more remarkable happened, and the king, with his retinue, returned to the castle.

CHAPTER X.

THE SENTINEL.

Where should this music be? i' the air, or the earth?

The Tempest.

—— I was all ear,

And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.

Comus.

QUENTIN had hardly reached his little cabin, in order to make some necessary changes in his dress, when his worthy relative required to know from him the full particulars which had befallen him at the hunt.

The youth, who could not help thinking that his uncle's hand was probably more powerful than his understanding, took care, in his reply, to leave the king in full possession of the victory which he had seemed desirous to appropriate. The Balafré's reply was an account of how much better he himself would have behaved in the like circumstances, and it was mixed with a gentle censure of his nephew's slackness, in not making in to the king's assistance, when he might be in imminent peril. The youth had prudence, in answer, to abstain from all farther vindication of his own conduct, excepting that, according to the rules of wood-craft, he held it ungentle to interfere with the game attacked by another hunter, unless he was specially called upon for his assistance. This discussion was scarce ended, when occasion was afforded Quentin to congratulate himself for observing some reserve towards his kinsman. A low tap at the door announced a visitor—it was presently opened, and Oliver Dain, or Mauvais or Diable, for by all these names he was known, entered the apartment.

This able but most unprincipled man has been already described, in so far as his exterior is concerned. The aptest resemblance of his motions and manners might perhaps be to those of the domestic cat, which, while couching in seeming slumber, or gliding through the apartment with slow, stealthy, and timid steps, is now engaged in watching the hole of some unfortunate mouse, now in rubbing herself with apparent confidence and fondness against those by whom she desires to be caressed, and, presently after, is flying upon her prey, or scratching, perhaps, the very object of her former cajolements.

He entered with stooping shoulders, a humble and modest look, and threw such a degree of civility into his address to the Signior Balafré, that no one who saw the interview could have avoided concluding that he came to ask a boon of the Scottish archer. He congratulated Lesly on the excellent conduct of his young kinsman in the chase that day, which, he observed, had attracted the king's particular attention. He here paused for a reply; and, with his eyes fixed on the ground, save just when once or twice they stole upwards to take a side glance at Quentin, he heard Balafré observe, "That his majesty had been unlucky in not having himself by his side instead of his nephew, as he would ques-

tionless have made in and speared the brute, a matter which he understood Quentin had left upon his majesty's royal hands, so far as he could learn the story. But it will be a lesson to his majesty," he said, "while he lives, to mount a man of my inches on a better horse; for how could my great hill of a Flemish dray-horse keep up with his majesty's Norman runner? I am sure I spurred till his sides were furrowed. It is ill considered, Master Oliver, and you must represent it to his majesty."

Master Oliver only replied to this observation by turning toward the bold bluff speaker one of those slow, dubious glances, which, accompanied by a slight motion of the hand, and a gentle depression of the head to one side, may be either interpreted as a mute assent to what is said, or as a cautious deprecation of farther prosecution of the subject. It was a keener, more scrutinizing glance, which he bent on the youth, as he said, with an ambiguous smile, "So, young man, is it the wont of Scotland to suffer your princes to be endangered for the lack of aid, in such emergencies as this of to-day?"

"It is our custom," answered Quentin, determined to throw no farther light on the subject, "not to encumber them with assistance in honourable pastimes, when they can aid themselves without it. We hold that a prince in a hunting-field must take his chance with others, and that he comes there for the very purpose.—What were wood-craft without fatigue and without danger?"

"You hear the silly boy," said his uncle; "that is always the way with him; he hath an answer or a reason ready to be rendered for every one. I wonder whence he hath caught the gift; I never could give a reason for anything I have ever done in my life, except for eating when I was a-hungry, calling the muster-roll, and such points of duty as the like."

"And pray, worthy signior," said the royal tonsor, looking at him from under his eye-lids, "what might your reason be for calling the muster-roll on such occasions?"

"Because the captain commanded me," said Balafré. "By Saint Giles, I know no other reason! If he had commanded Tyrie or Cunningham, he must have done the same."

"A most military final cause!" said Oliver.—"But, Signior Balafré, you will be glad, doubtless, to learn, that his majesty is so far from being displeased with your nephew's conduct, that he hath selected him to execute a piece of duty this afternoon."

"Selected *him*!" said Balafré, in great surprise;—"Selected *me*, I suppose, you mean?"

"I mean precisely as I speak," replied the barber, in a mild but decided tone; "the king hath a commission with which to intrust your nephew."

"Why, wherefore, and for what reason?" said Balafré; "why doth he chuse the boy, and not me?"

"I can go no farther back than your own ultimate cause, Signior Balafré; such are his majesty's commands. But," said he, "if I might use the presumption to form a conjecture, it may be his majesty hath work to do, fitter for a youth like your nephew, than for an experienced warrior like yourself, Signior Balafré.—Wherefore, young gentleman, get your

weapons and follow me. Bring with you a harquebuss, for you are to mount sentinel."

"Sentinel!" said the uncle—"Are you sure you are right, Master Oliver? The inner guards have ever been mounted by those only who have (like me) served twelve years in our honourable body."

"I am quite certain of his majesty's pleasure," said Oliver, "and must no longer delay executing it.—Have the goodness to assist to put your nephew in order for the service."

Balafré, who had no ill-nature, or even much jealousy, in his disposition, hastily set about adjusting his nephew's dress, and giving him directions for his conduct under arms, but was unable to refrain from larding them with interjections of surprise at such luck chancing to fall upon the young man so early.

"It had never taken place before in the Scottish Guard," he said, "not even in his own instance. But doubtless his service must be to mount guard over the popinjays and Indian peacocks, which the Venetian ambassador had lately presented to the king—it could be nothing else; and such duty being only fit for a beardless boy (here he twirled his own grim moustaches), he was glad the lot had fallen on his fair nephew."

Quick, and sharp of wit, as well as ardent in fancy, Quentin saw visions of higher importance in this early summons to the royal presence, and his heart beat high at the anticipation of rising into speedy distinction. He determined carefully to watch the manners and language of his conductor, which he suspected must, in some cases at least, be interpreted by contraries, as soothsayers are said to discover the interpretation of dreams. He could not but hug himself on having observed strict secrecy on the events of the chase, and then formed a resolution, which, for so young a person, had much prudence in it, that while he breathed the air of this secluded and mysterious court, he would keep his thoughts locked in his bosom, and his tongue under the most careful regulation.

His equipment was soon complete, and, with his harquebuss on his shoulder (for, though they retained the name of archers, the Scottish Guard very early substituted fire-arms for the long-bow, in the use of which their nation never excelled), he followed Master Oliver out of the barrack.

His uncle looked long after him, with a countenance in which wonder was blended with curiosity; and though neither envy nor the malignant feelings which it engenders, entered into his honest meditations, there was yet a sense of wounded or diminished self-importance, which mingled with the pleasure excited by his nephew's favourable commencement of service.

He shook his head gravely, opened a privy cupboard, took out a large *bottrine* of stout old wine, shook it to examine how low the contents had ebbed, filled and drank a hearty cup; then took his seat, half reclining, on the great oaken settle, and having once again slowly shaken his head, received so much apparent benefit from the oscillation, that, like the toy called a mandarin, he continued the motion until he dropped into a slumber, from which he was first roused by the signal to dinner.

VOL. III.

When Quentin Durward left his uncle to these sublime meditations, he followed his conductor, Master Oliver, who, without crossing any of the principal courts, led him partly through private passages exposed to the open air, but chiefly through a maze of stairs, vaults, and galleries, communicating with each other by secret doors, and at unexpected points, into a large and spacious latticed gallery, which, from its breadth, might have been almost termed a hall, hung with tapestry more ancient than beautiful, and with a very few of the hard, cold, ghastly-looking pictures, belonging to the first dawn of the arts, which preceded their splendid sunrise. These were designed to represent the Paladins of Charlemagne, who made such a distinguished figure in the romantic history of France; and as the gigantic form of the celebrated Orlando constituted the most prominent figure, the apartment acquired from him the title of Roland's Hall, or Roland's Gallery.

"You will keep watch here," said Oliver, in a low whisper, as if the hard delineations of monarchs and warriors around could have been offended at the elevation of his voice, or as if he had feared to awaken the echoes that lurked among the groined-vaults and Gothic drop-work of this huge and dreary apartment.

"What are the orders and signs of my watch?" answered Quentin, in the same suppressed tone.

"Is your harquebuss loaded?" replied Oliver, without answering his query.

"That," answered Quentin, "is soon done;" and proceeded to charge his weapon, and to light the slow-match (by which, when necessary, it was discharged), at the embers of a wood-fire, which was expiring in the huge hall chimney—a chimney itself so large, that it might have been called a Gothic closet or chapel appertaining to the hall.

When this was performed, Oliver told him that he was ignorant of one of the high privileges of his own corps, which only received orders from the king in person, or the high constable of France, in lieu of their own officers. "You are placed here by his majesty's command, young man," added Oliver, "and you will not be long here without knowing wherefore you are summoned. Meantime your walk extends along this gallery. You are permitted to stand still while you list, but on no account to sit down, or quit your weapon. You are not to sing aloud, or whistle, upon any account; but you may, if you list, mutter some of the church's prayers, or what you list that has no offence in it, in a low voice. Farewell, and keep good watch."

"Good watch!" thought the youthful soldier as his guide stole away from him with that noiseless gliding step which was peculiar to him, and vanished through a side-door behind the arras—"Good watch! but upon whom, and against whom?—for what, save bats or rats, are there here to contend with, unless these grim old representatives of humanity should start into life for the disturbance of my guard? Well, it is my duty, I suppose, and I must perform it."

With the vigorous purpose of discharging his duty, even to the very rigour, he tried to while away the time with some of the pious hymns which he had learned in the convent in which he had found

shelter after the death of his father—allowing in his own mind, that, but for the change of a novice's frock for the rich military dress which he now wore, his soldierly walk in the royal gallery of France resembled greatly those of which he had tired excessively in the cloistered seclusion of Aberbrothock.

Presently, as if to convince himself he now belonged not to the cell but to the world, he chaunted to himself, but in such tone as not to exceed the license given to him, some of the ancient rude ballads which the old family harper had taught him, of the defeat of the Danes at Aberlemno and Forres, the murder of King Duffus at Forfar, and other pithy sonnets and lays, which appertained to the history of his distant native country, and particularly of the district to which he belonged. This wore away a considerable space of time, and it was now more than two hours past noon, when Quentin was reminded by his appetite, that the good fathers of Aberbrothock, however strict in demanding his attendance upon the hours of devotion, were no less pointed in summoning him to those of refection; whereas here, in the interior of a royal palace, after a morning spent in exercise, and a noon exhausted in duty, no man seemed to consider it as a natural consequence that he must be impatient for his dinner.

There are, however, charms in sweet sounds which can lull to rest even the natural feelings of impatience, by which Quentin was now visited. At the opposite extremities of the long hall or gallery, were two large doors, ornamented with heavy architraves, probably opening into different suites of apartments, to which the gallery served as a medium of mutual communication. As the sentinel directed his solitary walk betwixt these two entrances, which formed the boundary of his duty, he was startled by a strain of music, which was suddenly waked near one of those doors, and which, at least in his imagination, was a combination of the same lute and voice by which he had been enchanted upon the preceding day. All the dreams of yesterday morning, so much weakened by the agitating circumstances which he had since undergone, again arose more vivid from their slumber, and, planted on the spot where his ear could most conveniently drink in the sounds, Quentin remained, with his harquebuss shouldered, his mouth half open, ear, eye, and soul, directed to the spot, rather the picture of a sentinel than a living form,—without any other idea than that of catching, if possible, each passing sound of the dulcet melody.

These delightful sounds were but partially heard—they languished, lingered, ceased totally, and were from time to time renewed after uncertain intervals. But, besides that music, like beauty, is often most delightful, or at least most interesting to the imagination, when its charms are but partially displayed, and the imagination is left to fill up what is from distance but imperfectly detailed, Quentin had matter enough to fill up his reverie during the intervals of fascination. He could not doubt, from the report of his uncle's comrades, and the scene which had passed in the presence-chamber that morning, that the siren who thus delighted his ears, was not, as he had profanely supposed, the daughter

or kinswoman of a base *cabaretier*, but the disguised and distressed countess, for whose cause kings and princes were now about to buckle on armour, and put lance in rest. A hundred wild dreams, such as romantic and adventurous youth readily nourished in a romantic and adventurous age, chased from his eyes the bodily presentment of the actual scene, and substituted their own bewildering delusions, when at once, and rudely, they were banished by a rough grasp laid upon his weapon, and a harsh voice which exclaimed, close to his ear, "Ha! *Pasques-Dieu*, sir squire, methinks you keep sleepy ward here!"

The voice was the tuneless, yet impressive and ironical tone of Maître Pierre, and Quentin, suddenly recalled to himself, saw, with shame and fear, that he had, in his reverie, permitted Louis himself—entering probably by some secret door, and gliding along by the wall, or behind the tapestry—to approach him so nearly, as almost to master his weapon.

The first impulse of his surprise was to free his harquebuss by a violent exertion, which made the king stagger backward into the hall. His next apprehension was, that, in obeying the animal instinct, as it may be termed, which prompts a brave man to resist an attempt to disarm him, he had aggravated, by a personal struggle with the king, the displeasure produced by the negligence with which he had performed his duty upon guard; and, under this impression, he recovered his harquebuss without almost knowing what he did, and having again shouldered it, stood motionless before the monarch whom he had reason to conclude he had mortally offended.

Louis, whose tyrannical disposition was less founded on natural ferocity or cruelty of temper, than on cold-blooded policy and jealous suspicion, had, nevertheless, a share of that caustic severity which would have made him a despot in private conversation, and always seemed to enjoy the pain which he inflicted on occasions like the present. But he did not push his triumph far, and contented himself with saying,—“Thy service of the morning hath already overpaid some negligence in so young a soldier—Hast thou dined?”

Quentin, who rather looked to be sent to the provost-marshal, than greeted with such a compliment, answered humbly in the negative.

“Poor lad,” said Louis, in a softer tone than he usually spoke in, “hunger hath made him drowsy.—I know thine appetite is a wolf,” he continued; “and I will save thee from one wild beast as thou didst me from another; thou hast been prudent too in that matter, and I thank thee for it. Canst thou yet hold out an hour without food?”

“Four-and-twenty, sire,” replied Durward, “or I were no true Scot.”

“I would not for another kingdom be the pasty to encounter thee after such a vigil,” said the king; “but the question now is, not of thy dinner, but of my own. I admit to my table this day, and in strict privacy, the Cardinal Balue and this Burgundian—this Count de Crevecoeur, and something may chance—the devil is most busy when foes meet on terms of truce.”

He stopped, and remained silent, with a deep and gloomy look. As the king was in no haste to proceed, Quentin at length ventured to ask what his duty was to be in these circumstances.

"To keep watch at the beauffet, with thy loaded weapon," said Louis; "and if there is treason, to shoot the traitor dead."

"Treason, sire! and in this guarded castle!" exclaimed Durward.

"You think it impossible," said the king, not offended, it would seem, by his frankness; "but our history has shown that treason can creep into an auger-hole.—Treason excluded by guards! O thou silly boy!—*quis custodiat ipsos custodes*—who shall exclude the treason of those very warders?"

"Their Scottish honour," answered Durward, boldly.

"True; most right—thou pleasest me," said the king, cheerfully; "the Scottish honour was ever true, and I trust it accordingly. But treason!"—Here he relapsed into his former gloomy mood, and traversed the apartment with unequal steps—"She sits at our feasts, she sparkles in our bowls, she wears the beard of our counsellors, the smiles of our courtiers, the crazy laugh of our jesters—above all, she lies hid under the friendly air of a reconciled enemy. Louis of Orleans trusted John of Burgundy—he was murdered in the rue Barbette. John of Burgundy trusted the faction of Orleans—he was murdered on the bridge of Montereau. I will trust no one—no one. Hark ye; I will keep my eye on that insolent count; ay, and on the churchman too, whom I hold not too faithful. When I say, *Écosse, en avant*, shoot Crevecœur dead on the spot."

"It is my duty," said Quentin, "your majesty's life being endangered."

"Certainly—I mean it no otherwise," said the king.—"What should I get by slaying this insolent soldier?—Were it the Constable Saint Paul indeed"—Here he paused, as if he thought he had said a word too much, but resumed, laughing, "There's our brother-in-law, James of Scotland—your own James, Quentin—poniarded the Douglas when on an hospitable visit, within his own royal castle of Skirling."

"Of Stirling," said Quentin, "and so please your highness.—It was a deed of which came little good."

"Stirling call you the castle?" said the king, overlooking the latter part of Quentin's speech—"Well, let it be Stirling—the name is nothing to the purpose. But I meditate no injury to these men—none—It would serve me nothing. They may not purpose equally fair by me—I rely on thy harquebuss."

"I shall be prompt at the signal," said Quentin; "but yet"—

"You hesitate," said the king. "Speak out—I give thee full leave. From such as thou hints may be caught that are right valuable."

"I would only presume to say," replied Quentin, "that your majesty having occasion to distrust this Burgundian, I marvel that you suffer him to approach so near your person, and that in privacy."

"O content you, sir squire," said the king.

"There are some dangers, which, when they are braved, disappear, and which yet, when there is an obvious and apparent dread of them displayed, become certain and inevitable. When I walk boldly up to a surly mastiff, and caress him, it is ten to one I soothe him to good temper; if I show fear of him, he flies on me and rends me. I will be thus far frank with thee—It concerns me nearly that this man returns not to his headlong master in a resentful humour. I run my risk, therefore. I have never shunned to expose my life for the weal of my kingdom.—Follow me."

Louis led his young life guardsman, for whom he seemed to have taken a special favour, through the side-door by which he had himself entered, saying, as he showed it him, "He who would thrive at court must know the private wickets and concealed staircases—ay, and the traps and pitfalls of the palace, as well as the principal entrances, folding-doors, and portals."

After several turns and passages, the king entered a small vaulted room, where a table was prepared for dinner with three covers. The whole furniture and arrangements of the room were plain almost to meanness. A beauffet, or folding and moveable cupboard, held a few pieces of gold and silver plate, and was the only article in the chamber which had, in the slightest degree, the appearance of royalty. Behind this cupboard, and completely hidden by it, was the post which Louis assigned to Quentin Durward; and after having ascertained, by going to different parts of the room, that he was invisible on all quarters, he gave him his last charge,—"*Remember the word, Écosse, en avant*; and so soon as ever I utter these sounds, throw down the screen—spare not for cup or goblet, and be sure thou take good aim at Crevecœur—If thy piece fail, cling to him, and use thy knife—Oliver and I can deal with the cardinal."

Having thus spoken, he whistled aloud, and summoned into the apartment Oliver, who was premier-valet of the chamber, as well as barber, and who, in fact, performed all offices immediately connected with the king's person, and who now appeared, attended by two old men, who were the only assistants or waiters at the royal table. So soon as the king had taken his place, the visitors were admitted; and Quentin, though himself unseen, was so situated as to remark all the particulars of the interview.

The king welcomed his visitors with a degree of cordiality, which Quentin had the utmost difficulty to reconcile with the directions which he had previously received, and the purpose for which he stood behind the beauffet with his deadly weapon in readiness. Not only did Louis appear totally free from apprehension of any kind, but one would have supposed that those guests whom he had done the high honour to admit to his table, were the very persons in whom he could most unreservedly confide, and whom he was most willing to honour. Nothing could be more dignified, and, at the same time, more courteous, than his demeanour. While all around him, including even his own dress, was far beneath what the petty princes of the kingdom displayed in their festivities, his own language and manners were

those of a mighty sovereign in his most condescending mood. Quentin was tempted to suppose, either that the whole of his previous conversation with Louis had been a dream, or that the dutiful demeanour of the cardinal, and the frank, open, and gallant bearing of the Burgundian noble, had entirely erased the king's suspicion.

But whilst the guests, in obedience to the king, were in the act of placing themselves at the table, his majesty darted one keen glance on them, and then instantly directed his look to Quentin's post. This was done in an instant; but the glance conveyed so much doubt and hatred towards his guests, such a peremptory injunction on Quentin to be watchful in attendance, and prompt in execution, that no room was left for doubting that the sentiments of Louis continued unaltered, and his apprehensions unabated. He was, therefore, more than ever astonished at the deep veil under which that monarch was able to conceal the movements of his jealous disposition.

Appearing to have entirely forgotten the language which Crevecœur had held towards him in the face of his court, the king conversed with him of old times, of events which had occurred during his own exile in the territories of Burgundy, and inquired respecting all the nobles with whom he had been then familiar, as if that period had indeed been the happiest of his life, and as if he retained towards all who had contributed to soften the term of his exile the kindest and most grateful sentiments.

"To an ambassador of another nation," he said, "I would have thrown something of state into our reception; but to an old friend, who shared my board at the Castle of Genappes, I wished to show myself, as I love best to live, old Louis of Valois, as simple and plain as any of his Parisian *badauds*. But I directed them to make some better cheer for you, sir count, for I know your Burgundian proverb, '*Mieux vault bon repas que bel habit*;' and I bid them have some care of our table. For our wine, you know well it is the subject of an old emulation betwixt France and Burgundy, which we will presently reconcile; for I will drink to you in Burgundy, and you, sir count, shall pledge me in Champagne.—Here, Oliver, let me have a cup of *vin d'Auxerre*;" and he hummed gaily a song then well known—

"Auxerre est la boisson des rois."

"Here, sir count, I drink to the health of the noble Duke of Burgundy, our kind and loving cousin.—Oliver, replenish yon golden cup with *vin de Rheims*, and give it to the count on your knee—he represents our loving brother.—My lord cardinal, we will ourselves fill your cup."

"You have already, sire, even to overflowing," said the cardinal, with the lowly mien of a favourite towards an indulgent master.

"Because we know that your eminence can carry it with a steady hand," said Louis. "But which side do you espouse in the great controversy—Silvery or Auxerre—France or Burgundy?"

"I will stand neutral, sire," said the cardinal, "and replenish my cup with Auvernat."

"A neutral has a perilous part to sustain," said the king; but as he observed the cardinal colour

somewhat, he glided from the subject, and added, "But you prefer the Auvernat, because it is so noble it suffers not water.—You, sir count, hesitate to fill your cup. I trust you have found no national bitterness at the bottom?"

"I would, sir," said the Count de Crevecœur, "that all national quarrels could be as pleasantly ended as the rivalry betwixt our vineyards."

"With time, sir count—with time—such time as you have taken to your draught of Champagne.—And now that it is finished, favour me by putting the goblet in your bosom, and keeping it as a pledge of our regard. It is not to every one that we would part with it. It belonged of yore to that terror of France, Henry V. of England, and was taken when Rouen was reduced, and those islanders expelled from Normandy by the joint arms of France and Burgundy. It cannot be better bestowed than on a noble and valiant Burgundian, who well knows, that in the union of these two nations depends the continuance of the freedom of the Continent from the English yoke."

The count made a suitable answer, and Louis gave unrestrained way to the satirical gaiety of disposition which sometimes enlivened the darker shades of his character. Leading, of course, the conversation, his remarks, always shrewd and caustic, and often actually witty, were seldom good-natured, and the anecdotes with which he illustrated them were often more humorous than delicate; but in no one word, syllable, or letter, did he betray the state of mind of one who, apprehensive of assassination, hath in his apartment an armed soldier, with his piece loaded, in order to prevent or anticipate the deed.

The Count of Crevecœur gave frankly in to the king's humour; while the smooth churchman laughed at every jest, and enhanced every ludicrous idea, without expressing any shame at expressions which made the rustic young Scot blush even in his place of concealment. In about an hour and a half the tables were drawn; and the king, taking courteous leave of his guests, gave the signal that it was his desire to be alone.

So soon as all, even Oliver, had retired, he called Quentin from his place of concealment; but with a voice so faint, that the youth could scarce believe it to be the same which had so lately given animation to the jest, and zest to the tale. As he approached, he saw an equal change in his countenance. The light of assumed vivacity had left his eyes, the smile had deserted his face, and he exhibited all the fatigue of a celebrated actor, when he has finished the exhausting representation of some favourite character.

"Thy watch is not yet over," said he to Quentin—"refresh thyself for an instant—yonder dormant table affords the means—I will then instruct thee in thy farther duty. Meanwhile, it is ill talking between a full man and a fasting."

He threw himself back on his seat, covered his brow with his hand, and was silent.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HALL OF ROLAND.

Painters show Cupid blind—Hath Hymen eyes?
Or is his sight warp'd by those spectacles
Which parents, guardians, and advisers, lend him,
That he may look through them on lands and mansions,
On jewels, gold, and all such rich dotations,
And see their value ten times magnified?—
Methinks 't will brook a question.

The Miseries of enforced Marriage.

LOUIS the XIth of France, though the sovereign in Europe who was fondest and most jealous of power, desired only its substantial enjoyment, and though he knew well enough, and at times exacted strictly, the observances due to his rank, was in general singularly careless of show.

In a prince of better qualities, the familiarity with which he invited subjects to his board—nay, occasionally sat at theirs—must have been highly popular; and even such as he was, the king's homeliness of manners atoned for many of his vices with that class of his subjects who were not particularly exposed to their consequences. The *tiers état*, or commons of France, who rose to more opulence and consequence under the reign of this sagacious prince, respected his person, though they loved him not; and it was resting on their support that he was enabled to make his party good against the hatred of the nobles, who conceived that he diminished the honour of the French crown, and obscured their own splendid privileges, by the very neglect of form which gratified the citizens and commons.

With patience, which most other princes would have considered as degrading, and not without a sense of amusement, the monarch of France waited till his life-guardsmen had satisfied the keenness of a youthful appetite. It may be supposed, however, that Quentin had too much sense and prudence to put the royal patience to a long or tedious proof; and indeed he was repeatedly desirous to break off his repast ere Louis would permit him. "I see it in thine eye," he said, "that thy courage is not half abated. Go on—God and Saint Dennis!—charge again. I tell thee that meat and mass (crossing himself) never hindered the work of a good christian man. Take a cup of wine; but mind thou be cautious of the wine-pot—it is the vice of thy countrymen as well as of the English, who, lacking that folly, are the choicest soldiers ever wore armour. And now wash speedily—forget not thy *benedicite*, and follow me."

Quentin obeyed, and, conducted by a different, but as maze-like an approach as he had formerly passed, he followed Louis into the Hall of Roland.

"Take notice," said the king, imperatively, "thou hast never left this post—let that be thine answer to thy kinsman and comrades—and, hark thee, to bind the recollection on thy memory, I give thee this gold chain (flinging on his arm one of considerable value). If I go not brave myself, those whom I trust have ever the means to ruffle it with the best. But, when such chains as these bind not the tongue from wagging too freely, my gossip, l'Hermite, hath an

amulet for the throat, which never fails to work a certain cure. And now attend.—No man, save Oliver or I myself, enters here this evening; but ladies will come hither, perhaps from the one extremity of the hall, perhaps from the other, perhaps from both. You may answer, if they address you, but, being on your duty, your answer must be brief; and you must neither address them in your turn, nor engage in any prolonged discourses. But hearken to what they say. Thine ears, as well as thy hands, are mine—I have bought thee body and soul. Therefore, if thou hearest aught of their conversation, thou must retain it in memory until it is communicated to me, and then forget it.—And, now I think better on it, it will be best that thou pass for a Scottish recruit who hath come straight down from his mountains, and hath not yet acquired our most christian language.—Right.—So, if they speak to thee, thou wilt *not* answer—this will free you from embarrassment, and lead them to converse without regard to your presence. You understand me.—Farewell. Be wary, thou hast a friend."

The king had scarce spoken these words ere he disappeared behind the arras, leaving Quentin to meditate on what he had seen and heard. The youth was in one of those situations from which it is pleasanter to look forward than to look back; for the reflection that he had been planted like a marksman in a thicket who watches for a stag, to take the life of the noble Count of Crevecoeur, had in it nothing ennobling. It was very true, that the king's measures seemed on this occasion merely cautionary and defensive; but how did he know but he might be soon commanded on some offensive operation of the same kind? This would be an unpleasant crisis, since it was plain, from the character of his master, that there would be destruction in refusing, while his honour told him there would be disgrace in complying. He turned his thoughts from this subject of reflection, with the sage consolation so often adopted by youth when prospective dangers intrude themselves on their mind, that it was time enough to think what was to be done when the emergence actually arrived, and that sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.

Quentin made use of this sedative reflection the more easily, that the last commands of the king had given him something more agreeable to think of than his own condition. The Lady of the Lute was certainly one of those to whom his attention was to be dedicated; and well in his mind did he promise to obey one part of the king's mandate, and listen with diligence to every word that might drop from her lips, that he might know if the magic of her conversation equalled that of her music. But with as much sincerity did he swear to himself, that no part of her discourse should be reported by him to the king, which might affect the fair speaker otherwise than favourably.

Meantime, there was no fear of his again slumbering on his post. Each passing breath of wind, which, finding its way through the open lattice, waved the old arras, sounded like the approach of the fair object of his expectation. He felt, in short, all that mysterious anxiety, and eagerness of expectation, which is always the companion of love, and

sometimes hath a considerable share in creating it.

At length, a door actually creaked and jingled (for the doors even of palaces did not in the fifteenth century turn on their hinges so noiseless as ours); but, alas! it was not at that end of the hall from which the lute had been heard. It opened, however, and a female figure entered, followed by two others, whom she directed by a sign to remain without, while she herself came forward into the hall. By her imperfect and unequal gait, which showed to peculiar disadvantage as she traversed this long gallery, Quentin at once recognized the Princess Joan, and, with the respect which became his situation, drew himself up in a fitting attitude of silent vigilance, and lowered his weapon to her as she passed. She acknowledged the courtesy by a gracious inclination of her head, and he had an opportunity of seeing her countenance more distinctly than he had in the morning.

There was little in the features of this ill-fated princess to atone for the misfortune of her shape and gait. Her face was, indeed, by no means disagreeable in itself, though destitute of beauty; and there was a meek expression of suffering patience in her large blue eyes, which were commonly fixed upon the ground. But, besides that she was extremely pallid in complexion, her skin had the yellowish discoloured tinge which accompanies habitual bad health; and though her teeth were white and regular, her lips were thin and pale. The princess had a profusion of flaxen hair, but it was so light-coloured as to be almost of a blueish tinge; and her tire-woman, who doubtless considered the luxuriance of her mistress's tresses as a beauty, had not greatly improved matters by arranging them in curls around her pale countenance, to which they gave an expression almost unearthly. To make matters still worse, she had chosen a vest or cymar of a pale green silk, which gave her, on the whole, a ghastly and even spectral appearance.

While Quentin followed this singular apparition with eyes in which curiosity was blended with compassion—for every look and motion of the princess seemed to call for the latter feeling—two ladies entered from the upper end of the apartment.

One of these was the young person who, upon Louis's summons, had served him with fruit, while Quentin made his memorable breakfast at the Fleur-de-Lys. Invested now with all the mysterious dignity belonging to the nymph of the veil and lute, and proved, besides (at least in Quentin's estimation), to be the high-born heiress of a rich earldom, her beauty made ten times the impression upon him which it had done when he beheld in her one whom he deemed the daughter of a paltry innkeeper, in attendance upon a rich and humorous old burgher. He now wondered what fascination could ever have concealed from him her real character. Yet her dress was nearly as simple as before, being a suit of deep mourning without any ornaments. Her head-dress was only a veil of crape, which was entirely thrown back, so as to leave her face discovered; and it was only Quentin's knowledge of her actual rank which gave, in his estimation, new elegance to her beautiful shape, a dignity to her step which had before remained unnoticed, and to her regular fea-

tures, brilliant complexion, and dazzling eyes, an air of conscious nobleness that enhanced their beauty.

Had death been the penalty, Durward must needs have rendered to this beauty and her companion the same homage which he had just paid to the royalty of the princess. They received it as those who were accustomed to the deference of inferiors, and returned it with courtesy; but he thought—perhaps it was but a youthful vision—that the young lady coloured slightly, kept her eyes on the ground, and seemed embarrassed, though in a trifling degree, as she returned his military salutation. This must have been owing to her recollection of the audacious stranger in the neighbouring turret at the Fleur-de-Lys; but did that discomposure express displeasure? This question he had no means to determine.

The companion of the youthful countess, dressed like herself simply, and in deep mourning, was at the age when women are apt to cling most closely to that reputation for beauty which has for years been diminishing. She had still remains enough to show what the power of her charms must once have been, and, remembering past triumphs, it was evident from her manner that she had not relinquished the pretensions to future conquests. She was tall and graceful, though somewhat haughty in her deportment, and returned the salute of Quentin with a smile of gracious condescension, whispering, the next instant, something into her companion's ear, who turned towards the soldier, as if to comply with some hint from the elder lady, but answered, nevertheless, without raising her eyes. Quentin could not help suspecting that the observation called on the young lady to notice his own good mien; and he was (I do not know why) pleased with the idea, that the party referred to did not chuse to look at him, in order to verify with her own eyes the truth of the observation. Probably he thought there was already a sort of mysterious connexion beginning to exist between them, which gave importance to the slightest trifle.

This reflection was momentary, for he was instantly wrapped up in attention to the meeting of the princess with these stranger ladies. She had stood still upon their entrance, in order to receive them, conscious, perhaps, that motion did not become her well; and as she was somewhat embarrassed in receiving and repaying their compliments, the elder stranger, ignorant of the rank of the party whom she addressed, was led to pay her salutation in a manner, rather as if she conferred than received an honour through the interview.

"I rejoice, madam," she said, with a smile, which was meant to express condescension at once and encouragement, "that we are at length permitted the society of such a respectable person of our own sex as you appear to be. I must say, that my niece and I have had but little for which to thank the hospitality of King Louis—Nay, niece, never pluck my sleeve—I am sure I read in the looks of this young lady, sympathy for our situation.—Since we came hither, fair madam, we have been used little better than mere prisoners; and after a thousand invitations to throw our cause and our persons under the pro-

tection of France, the most christian king has afforded us but a base inn for our residence, and now a corner of this moth-eaten palace, out of which we are only permitted to creep towards sunset, as if we were bats or owls, whose appearance in the sunshine is to be held matter of ill omen."

"I am sorry," said the princess, faltering with the awkward embarrassment of the interview, "that we have been unable, hitherto, to receive you according to your deserts.—Your niece, I trust, is better satisfied?"

"Much—much better than I can express," answered the youthful countess—"I sought but safety, and I have found solitude and secrecy besides. The seclusion of our former residence, and the still greater solitude of that now assigned to us, augment, in my eye, the favour which the king vouchsafed to us unfortunate fugitives."

"Silence, my silly cousin," said the elderly lady, "and let us speak according to our conscience, since at last we are alone with one of our own sex—I say alone, for that handsome young soldier is a mere statue, since he seems not to have the use of his limbs, and I am given to understand he wants that of his tongue, at least in civilized language—I say, since no one but this lady can understand us, I must own there is nothing I have regretted equal to taking this French journey. I looked for a splendid reception, tournaments, carousals, pageants, and festivals; and instead of which, all has been seclusion and obscurity! and the best society whom the king introduced to us, was a Bohemian vagabond, by whom he directed us to correspond with our friends in Flanders.—Perhaps," said the lady, "it is his politic intention to mew us up here until our lives' end, that he may seize on our estates, on the extinction of the ancient house of Croye. The Duke of Burgundy was not so cruel; he offered my niece a husband, though he was a bad one."

"I should have thought the veil preferable to an evil husband," said the princess, with difficulty finding opportunity to interpose a word.

"One would at least wish to have the choice, madam," replied the voluble dame. "It is, Heaven knows, on account of my niece that I speak; for myself, I have long laid aside thoughts of changing my condition. I see you smile, but, by my halidome, it is true—yet that is no excuse for the king, whose conduct, like his person, hath more resemblance to that of old Michaud, the money-changer of Ghent, than to the successor of Charlemagne."

"Hold!" said the princess; "remember you speak of my father."

"Of your father!" replied the Burgundian lady, in surprise.

"Of my father," repeated the princess, with dignity. "I am Joan of France.—But fear not, madam," she continued, in the gentle tone which was natural to her, "you designed no offence, and I have taken none. Command my influence to render your exile, and that of this interesting young person, more supportable. Alas! it is but little I have in my power; but it is willingly offered."

Deep and submissive was the reverence with which the Countess Hameline de Croye (so was the elder lady called) received the obliging offer of the

princess's protection. She had been long the inhabitant of courts, was mistress of the manners which are there acquired, and held firmly the established rule of courtiers of all ages, who, although their usual private conversation turns upon the vices and follies of their patrons, and on the injuries and neglect which they themselves have sustained, never suffer such hints to drop from them in the presence of the sovereign or those of his family. The lady was, therefore, scandalized to the last degree at the mistake which had induced her to speak so indecorously in presence of the daughter of Louis. She would have exhausted herself in expressing regret and making apologies, had she not been put to silence and restored to equanimity by the princess, who requested, in the most gentle manner, yet which, from a daughter of France, had the weight of a command, that no more might be said in the way either of excuse or of explanation.

The Princess Joan then took her own chair with a dignity which became her, and compelled the two strangers to sit, one on either hand, to which the younger consented with unfeigned and respectful diffidence, and the elder with an affectation of deep humility and respect, which was intended for such. They spoke together, but in such a low tone, that the sentinel could not overhear their discourse, and only remarked, that the princess seemed to bestow much of her regard on the younger and more interesting lady; and that the Countess Hameline, though speaking a great deal more, attracted less of the princess's attention by her full flow of conversation and compliment, than did her kinswoman by her brief and modest replies to what was addressed to her.

The conversation of the ladies had not lasted a quarter of an hour, when the door at the lower end of the hall opened, and a man entered shrouded in a riding-cloak. Mindful of the king's injunction, and determined not to be a second time caught slumbering, Quentin instantly moved towards the intruder, and, interposing between him and the ladies, requested him to retire instantly.

"By whose command?" said the stranger, in a tone of contemptuous surprise.

"By that of the king," said Quentin, firmly, "which I am placed here to enforce."

"Not against Louis of Orleans," said the duke, dropping his cloak.

The young man hesitated a moment; but how enforce his orders against the first prince of the blood, about to be allied, as the report now generally went, with the king's own family?

"Your highness's pleasure," he said, "is too great to be withstood by me. I trust your highness will bear me witness that I have done the duty of my post, so far as your will permitted."

"Go to—you shall have no blame, young soldier," said Orleans; and passing forwards, paid his compliments to the princess, with that air of constraint which always marked his courtesy when addressing her.

"He had been dining," he said, "with Dunois, and understanding there was society in Roland's Gallery, he had ventured on the freedom of adding one to the number."

The colour which mounted into the pale cheek of the unfortunate Joan, and which for the moment spread something of beauty over her features, evinced that this addition to the company was anything but indifferent to her. She hastened to present the prince to the two ladies of Croye, who received him with the respect due to his eminent rank; and the princess, pointing to a chair, requested him to join their conversation party.

The duke declined the freedom of assuming a seat in such society; but taking a cushion from one of the settles, he laid it at the feet of the beautiful young Countess of Croye, and so seated himself, that, without appearing to neglect the princess, he was enabled to bestow the greater share of his attention on her beautiful neighbour.

At first, it seemed as if this arrangement rather pleased than offended his destined bride. She encouraged the duke in his gallantries towards the fair stranger, and seemed to regard them as complimentary to herself. But the Duke of Orleans, though accustomed to subject his mind to the stern yoke of his uncle when in the king's presence, had enough of princely nature to induce him to follow his own inclinations whenever that restraint was withdrawn; and his high rank giving him a right to overstep the ordinary ceremonies, and advance at once to familiarity, his praises of the Countess Isabelle's beauty became so energetic, and flowed with such unrestrained freedom, owing perhaps to his having drunk a little more wine than usual—for Dupois was no enemy to the worship of Bacchus—that at length he seemed almost impassioned, and the presence of the princess appeared well nigh forgotten.

The tone of compliment which he indulged was grateful only to one individual in the circle; for the Countess Hameline already anticipated the dignity of an alliance with the first prince of the blood, by means of her whose birth, beauty, and large possessions, rendered such an ambitious consummation by no means impossible, even in the eyes of a less sanguine projector, could the views of Louis XI. have been left out of the calculation of chances. The younger countess listened to the duke's gallantries with anxiety and embarrassment, and ever and anon turned an entreating look towards the princess, as if requesting her to come to her relief. But the wounded feelings, and the timidity of Joan of France, rendered her incapable of an effort to make the conversation more general; and at length, excepting a few interjectional civilities of the Lady Hameline, it was maintained almost exclusively by the duke himself, though at the expense of the younger Countess of Croye, whose beauty formed the theme of his high-flown eloquence.

Nor must I forget that there was a third person, the unregarded sentinel, who saw his fair visions melt away like wax before the sun, as the duke persevered in the warm tenor of his passionate discourse. At length the Countess Isabelle de Croye made a determined effort to cut short what was becoming intolerably disagreeable to her, especially from the pain to which the conduct of the duke was apparently subjecting the princess.

Addressing the latter, she said, modestly, but

with some firmness, that the first boon she had to claim from her promised protection was, "that her highness would undertake to convince the Duke of Orleans, that the ladies of Burgundy, though inferior in wit and manners to those of France, were not such absolute fools, as to be pleased with no other conversation than that of extravagant compliment."

"I grieve, lady," said the duke, preventing the princess's answer, "that you will satirize, in the same sentence, the beauty of the dames of Burgundy, and the sincerity of the knights of France. If we are hasty and extravagant in the expression of our admiration, it is because we love as we fight, without letting cold deliberation come into our bosoms, and surrender to the fair with the same rapidity with which we defeat the valiant."

"The beauty of our countrywomen," said the young countess, with more of reproof than she had yet ventured to use towards the high-born suitor, "is as unfit to claim such triumphs, as the valour of the men of Burgundy is incapable of yielding them."

"I respect your patriotism, countess," said the duke; "and the last branch of your theme shall not be impugned by me, till a Burgundian knight shall offer to sustain it with lance in rest. But for the injustice which you have done to the charms which your land produces, I appeal from yourself to yourself.—Look there," he said, pointing to a large mirror, the gift of the Venetian republic, and then of the highest rarity and value, "and tell me, as you look, what is the heart that can resist the charms there represented?"

The princess, unable to sustain any longer the neglect of her lover, here sunk backwards on her chair, with a sigh, which at once recalled the duke from the land of romance, and induced the Lady Hameline to ask whether her highness found herself ill.

"A sudden pain shot through my forehead," said the princess, attempting to smile; "but I shall be presently better."

Her increasing paleness contradicted her words, and induced the Lady Hameline to call for assistance, as the princess was about to faint.

The duke, biting his lip, and cursing the folly which could not keep guard over his tongue, ran to summon the princess's attendants, who were in the next chamber; and when they came hastily, with the usual remedies, he could not but, as a cavalier and gentleman, give assistance to support and to recover her. His voice rendered almost tender by pity and self-reproach, was the most powerful means of recalling her to herself, and just as the swoon was passing away, the king himself entered the apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

THE POLITICIAN.

This is a lecturer so skill'd in policy,
That (no disparagement to Satan's cunning)
He well might read a lesson to the devil,
And teach the old seducer new temptations.

Old Play.

As Louis entered the gallery, he bent his brows in the manner we have formerly described as peculiar to him, and sent, from under his gathered and gloomy eye-brows, a keen look on all around; in darting which, as Quentin afterwards declared, his eyes seemed to turn so small, so fierce, and so piercing, as to resemble those of an aroused adder looking through the bush of heath in which he lies coiled.

When, by this momentary and sharpened glance, the king had reconnoitred the cause of the bustle which was in the apartment, his first address was to the Duke of Orleans.

"You here, my fair cousin?" he said;—and turning to Quentin, added sternly, "Had you not charge?"

"Forgive the young man, sire," said the duke; "he did not neglect his duty; but I was informed that the princess was in this gallery."

"And I warrant you would not be withstood when you came hither to pay your court," said the king, whose detestable hypocrisy persisted in representing the duke as participating in a passion which was felt only on the side of his unhappy daughter; "and it is thus you debauch the sentinels of my guard, young man?—But what cannot be pardoned to a gallant who lives *par amours*!"

The Duke of Orleans raised his head, as if about to reply, in some manner which might correct the opinion conveyed in the king's observation; but the instinctive reverence, not to say fear, of Louis, in which he had been bred from childhood, chained up his voice.

"And Joan hath been ill?" said the king; "but do not be grieved, Louis; it will soon pass away; lend her your arm to her apartment, while I will conduct these strange ladies to theirs."

The order was given in a tone which amounted to a command, and Orleans accordingly made his exit with the princess at one extremity of the gallery, while the king, ungloving his right hand, courteously handed the Countess Isabelle and her kinswoman to their apartment, which opened from the other. He bowed profoundly as they entered, and remained standing on the threshold for a minute after they had disappeared; then, with great composure, shut the door by which they had retired, and turning the huge key, took it from the lock and put it into his girdle,—an appendage which gave him still more perfectly the air of some old miser, who cannot journey in comfort unless he bear with him the key of his treasure-chest.

With slow and pensive pace, and eyes fixed on the ground, Louis now paced towards Quentin Durward, who, expecting his share of the royal displeasure, viewed his approach with no little anxiety.

"Thou hast done wrong," said the king, raising

his eyes, and fixing them firmly on him when he had come within a yard of him,—“thou hast done foul wrong, and deservest to die.—Speak not a word in defence!—What hadst thou to do with dukes or princesses?—what with *any* thing but my order?”

“So please your majesty,” said the young soldier, “what could I do?”

“What couldst thou do when thy post was forcibly passed?” answered the king, scornfully.—“What is the use of that weapon on thy shoulder?—Thou shouldst have levelled thy piece, and if the presumptuous rebel did not retire on the instant, he should have died within this very hall! Go—pass into these farther apartments. In the first thou wilt find a large staircase, which leads to the inner bailley; there thou wilt find Oliver Dain. Send him to me—do thou begone to thy quarters.—As thou dost value thy life, be not so loose of thy tongue as thou hast been this day slack of thy hand.”

Well pleased to escape so easily, yet with a soul which revolted at the cold-blooded cruelty which the king seemed to require from him in the execution of his duty, Durward took the road indicated, hastened down stairs, and communicated the royal pleasure to Oliver, who was waiting in the court beneath. The wily tonsor bowed, sighed, and smiled, as, with a voice even softer than ordinary, he wished the youth a good evening; and they parted, Quentin to his quarters, and Oliver to attend the king.

In this place, the memoirs which we have chiefly followed in compiling this true history, were unhappily defective; for, founded chiefly on information supplied by Quentin, they conveyed no information concerning the dialogue which, in his absence, took place between the king and his secret counsellor. Fortunately, the library of Hautlieu contained a manuscript copy of the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of Jean de Troyes, much more full than that which has been printed; to which are added several curious memoranda, which we incline to think were written down by Oliver himself after the death of his master, and before he had the happiness to be rewarded with the halter which he had so long merited. From this we have been able to extract a very full account of his conversation with Louis upon the present occasion, which throws a light upon the policy of that prince, which we might otherwise have sought for in vain.

When the favourite attendant entered the Gallery of Roland, he found the king pensively seated upon the chair which his daughter had left some minutes before. Well acquainted with his temper, he glided on with his noiseless step until he had just crossed the line of the king's sight, so as to make him aware of his presence, then shrank modestly backward and out of sight, until he should be summoned to speak or to listen. The monarch's first address was an unpleasant one:—“So, Oliver, your fine schemes are melting like snow before the south wind!—I pray to our Lady of Embrun that they resemble not the ice-heaps of which the Switzer churls tell such stories, and come rushing down upon our heads.”

“I have heard with concern that all is not well, sire,” answered Oliver.

“Not well!” exclaimed the king, rising and has-

tily marching up and down the gallery,—All is ill, man—and as ill nearly as possible;—so much for thy fond romantic advice, that I, of all men, should become a protector of distressed damsels! I tell thee Burgundy is arming, and on the eve of closing an alliance with England. And Edward, who hath his hand idle at home, will pour his thousands upon us through that unhappy gate of Calais. Singly, I might cajole or defy them; but united—united, and with the discontent and treachery of that villain Saint Paul!—All thy fault, Oliver, who counseled me to receive the women, and to use the services of that damned Bohemian to carry messages to their vassals.”

“My lord,” said Oliver, “you know my reasons. The countess’s domains lie between the frontiers of Burgundy and Flanders—her castle is almost impregnable—her rights over neighbouring estates are such as, if well supported, cannot but give much annoyance to Burgundy, were the lady but wedded to one who should be friendly to France.”

“It is, it is a tempting bait,” said the king; “and could we have concealed her being here we might have arranged such a marriage for this rich heiress.—But that cursed Bohemian, how couldst thou recommend such a heathen hound for a commission which required trust?”

“Please you,” said Oliver, “to remember, it was your grace’s self who trusted him too far—much farther than I recommended. He would have borne a letter trustily enough to the countess’s kinsman, telling him to hold out her castle, and promising speedy relief; but your highness must needs put his prophetic powers to the test; and thus he became possessed of secrets which were worth betraying.”

“I am ashamed, I am ashamed,” said Louis.—“And yet, Oliver, they say that these heathen people are descended from the sage Chaldeans, who did read the mysteries of the stars in the plains of Shinar.”

Well aware that his master, with all his acuteness and sagacity, was the more prone to be deceived by soothsayers, astrologers, diviners, and all that race of pretenders to occult science, that he conceived himself to have some skill in these arts, Oliver dared to press this point no farther; and only observed that the Bohemian had been a bad prophet on his own account, else he would have avoided returning to Tours, and saved himself from the gallows he had merited.

“It often happens that those who are gifted with prophetic knowledge,” answered Louis, with much gravity, “have not the power of foreseeing those events in which they themselves are personally interested.”

“Under your majesty’s favour,” replied the confidant, “that seems as if a man could not see his own hand by means of the candle which he holds, and which shows him every other object in the apartment.”

“He cannot see his own features by the light which shows the faces of others,” replied Louis; “and that is the more faithful illustration of the case.—But this is foreign to my purpose at present. The Bohemian hath had his reward, and peace be with him.—But these ladies—Not only does Burgundy

threaten us with war for harbouring them, but their presence is like to interfere with my projects in my own family. My simple cousin of Orleans hath seen this damsel, and I prophesy that the sight of her is like to make him less pliable in the matter of his alliance with Joan.”

“Your majesty,” answered the counsellor, “may send the ladies of Croye back to Burgundy, and so make your peace with the duke. Many might murmur at this as dishonourable; but if necessity demands the sacrifice”——

“If profit demanded the sacrifice, Oliver, the sacrifice should be made without hesitation,” answered the king. “I am an old experienced salmon, and use not to gulp the angler’s hook because it is busked up with a feather called honour. But what is worse than a lack of honour, there were in returning those ladies to Burgundy, a forfeiture of those views of advantage which moved us to give them an asylum. It were heart-breaking to renounce the opportunity of planting a friend to ourselves, and an enemy to Burgundy, in the very centre of his dominions, and so near to the discontented cities of Flanders. Oliver, I cannot relinquish the advantages which our scheme of marrying the maiden to a friend of our own house seems to hold out to us.”

“Your majesty,” said Oliver, after a moment’s thought, “might confer her hand on some right trusty friend, who would take all blame on himself, and serve your majesty secretly, while in public you might disown him.”

“And where am I to find such a friend?” said Louis. “Were I to bestow her upon any one of our mutinous and ill-ruled nobles, would it not be rendering him independent? and hath it not been my policy for years to prevent them from becoming so?—Dunois indeed—him, and him only, I might perchance trust.—He would fight for the crown of France, whatever were his condition. But honours and wealth change men’s natures—Even Dunois I will not trust.”

“Your majesty may find others,” said Oliver, in his smoothest manner, and in a tone more insinuating than that which he usually employed in conversing with the king, who permitted him considerable freedom; “men dependent entirely on your own grace and favour, and who could no more exist without your countenance, than without sun or air—men rather of head than of action—men who”——

“Men who resemble thyself, ha!” said King Louis.—“No, Oliver, by my faith that arrow was rashly shot!—What! because I indulge thee with my confidence, and let thee, in reward, poll my lieges a little now and then, doest thou think it makes thee fit to be the husband of that beautiful vision, and a count of the highest class to the boot?—thee—thee, I say, low-born and lower-bred, whose wisdom is at best a sort of cunning, and whose courage is more than doubtful?”

“Your majesty imputes to me a presumption of which I am not guilty,” said Oliver.

“I am glad to hear it, man,” replied the king; “and truly, I hold your judgment the healthier that you disown such a reverie. But methinks thy speech sounded strangely in that key.—Well, to return.—I dare not wed this beauty to one of my

subjects—I dare not return her to Burgundy—I dare not transmit her to England, or to Germany, where she is likely to become the prize of one more likely to unite with Burgundy than with France, and who would be more ready to discourage the honest malcontents in Ghent and Liege, than to yield them that wholesome countenance which might always find Charles the Hardy enough to exercise his valour on, without stirring from his own domains—and they were in so ripe a humour for insurrection, the men of Liege in especial, that they alone, well heated and supported, would find my fair cousin work for more than a twelvemonth;—and backed by a warlike Count of Croye,—O, Oliver! the plan is too hopeful to be resigned without a struggle.—Cannot thy fertile brain devise some scheme?”

Oliver paused for a long time—then at last replied, “What if a bridal could be accomplished betwixt Isabelle of Croye, and young Adolphus, the duke of Gueldres?”

“What!” said the king, in astonishment; “sacrifice her, and she, too, so lovely a creature, to the furious wretch who deposed, imprisoned, and has often threatened to murder, his own father!—No, Oliver, no—that were too unutterably cruel even for you and me, who look so steadfastly to our excellent end, the peace and the welfare of France, and respect so little the means by which it is attained. Besides, he lies distant from us, and is detested by the people of Ghent and Liege.—No, no—I will none of Adolphus of Gueldres—think on some one else.”

“My invention is exhausted, sire,” said the counsellor; “I can remember no one who, as husband to the Countess of Croye, would be likely to answer your majesty’s views. He must unite such various qualities—a friend to your majesty—an enemy to Burgundy—of policy enough to conciliate the Gauntois and Liegeois, and of valour sufficient to defend his little dominions against the power of Duke Charles—Of noble birth besides—that your highness insists upon; and of excellent and most virtuous character, to the boot of all.”

“Nay, Oliver,” said the king, “I leaned not so much—that is, so *very* much, on character; but methinks Isabelle’s bridegroom should be something less publicly and generally abhorred than Adolphus of Gueldres.—For example, since I myself must suggest some one,—why not William de la Marck?”

“On my halidome, sire,” said Oliver, “I cannot complain of your demanding too high a standard of moral excellence in the happy man, if the Wild Boar of Ardennes can serve your turn. De la Marck!—why, he is the most notorious robber and murderer on all the frontiers—excommunicated by the pope for a thousand crimes.”

“We will have him relaxed, friend Oliver—holy church is merciful.”

“Almost an outlaw,” continued Oliver, “and under the ban of the empire, by an ordinance of the chamber at Ratisbon.”

“We will have the ban taken off, friend Oliver,” continued the king, in the same tone; “the Imperial Chamber will hear reason.”

“And admitting him to be of noble birth,” said

Oliver, “he hath the manners, the face, and the outward form, as well as the heart, of a Flemish butcher—She will never accept of him.”

“His mode of wooing, if I mistake him not,” said Louis, “will render it difficult for her to make a choice.”

“I was far wrong indeed, when I taxed your majesty with being over scrupulous,” said the counsellor. “On my life, the crimes of Adolphus are but virtues to those of De la Marck!—And then how is he to meet with his bride?—Your majesty knows he dare not stir far from his own forest of Ardennes.”

“That must be cared for,” said the king; “and, in the first place, the two ladies must be acquainted privately that they can be no longer maintained at this court, excepting at the expense of a war between France and Burgundy, and that, unwilling to deliver them up to my fair cousin of Burgundy, I am desirous they should secretly depart from my dominions.”

“They will demand to be conveyed to England,” said Oliver; “and we will have her return with an island lord, with a round fair face, long brown hair, and three thousand archers at his back.”

“No—no,” replied the king; “we dare not (you understand me) so far offend our fair cousin of Burgundy as to let her pass to England—It would bring his displeasure as certainly as our maintaining her here. No, no—to the safety of the church alone we will venture to commit her; and the utmost we can do is to connive at the ladies Hameline and Isabelle de Croye departing in disguise, and with a small retinue, to take refuge with the Bishop of Liege, who will place the fair Isabelle, for the time, under the safeguard of a convent.”

“And if that convent protect her from William de la Marck, when he knows of your majesty’s favourable intentions, I have mistaken the man.”

“Why, yes,” answered the king, “thanks to our secret supplies of money, De la Marck hath together a handsome handful of as unscrupulous soldiery as ever were outlawed; with which he contrives to maintain himself among the woods, in such a condition as makes him formidable both to the duke and Bishop of Liege. He lacks nothing but some territory which he may call his own; and this being so fair an opportunity to establish himself by marriage, I think that, *Pasques-Dieu*! he will find means to win and wed, without more than a hint on our part. The Duke of Burgundy will then have such a thorn in his side, as no lancet of our time will easily cut out from him. The Boar of Ardennes, whom he has already outlawed, strengthened by the possession of that fair lady’s lands, castles, and seignory, with the discontented Liegeois to boot, who, by my faith, will not be in that case unwilling to chuse him for their captain and their leader—let him then think of wars with France when he will, or rather let him bless his stars if she war not with him. How dost like the scheme, Oliver, ha?”

“Rarely,” said Oliver, “save and except the doom which confers that lady on the Wild Boar of Ardennes.—By my halidome, saving in a little outward show of gallantry, Tristan the provost-marshal were the more proper bridegroom of the two.”

"Anon thou didst propose Master Oliver the barber," said Louis; "but friend Oliver and gossip Tristan, excellent men in the way of counsel and execution, are not the stuff that men make counts of. Know you not that the burghers of Flanders value birth in other men, precisely because they want it themselves?—A plebeian mob ever desire an aristocratic leader. Yonder Ked, or Cade, or—how called they him?—in England, was fain to lure his rascal rout after him, by pretending to the blood of the Mortimers. William de la Marck comes of the blood of the princes of Sedan.—And now to business. I must determine the ladies of Croye to a speedy and secret flight, under sure guidance. This will be easily done—we have but to hint the alternative of surrendering them to Burgundy. Thou must find means to let William de la Marck know of their motions, and let him chuse his own time and place to push his suit. I know a fit person to travel with them."

"May I ask to whom your majesty commits such an important charge?" asked the tonsor.

"To a foreigner, be sure," replied the king; "one who has neither kin nor interest in France, to interfere with the execution of my pleasure; and who knows too little of the country, and its factions, to suspect more of my purpose than I chuse to tell him.—In a word, I design to employ the young Scot who sent you hither but now."

Oliver paused in a manner which seemed to imply a doubt of the prudence of the choice, and then added, "Your majesty has reposed confidence in that stranger boy earlier than is your wont."

"I have my reasons," answered the king.—"Thou knowest (and he crossed himself) my devotion for the blessed Saint Julian. I had been saying my orisons to that holy saint late in the night before last, and I made it my humble petition that he would augment my household with such wandering foreigners, as might best establish throughout our kingdom unlimited devotion to our will; and I vowed to the good saint in guerdon, that I would, in his name, receive, and relieve, and maintain them."

"And did Saint Julian," said Oliver, "send your majesty this long-legged importation from Scotland in answer to your prayers?"

Although the barber, who well knew that his master had superstition in a large proportion to his want of religion, and that on such topics nothing was more easy than to offend him—although, I say, he knew the royal weakness, and therefore carefully put the preceding question in the softest and most simple tone of voice, Louis felt the innuendo which it contained, and regarded the speaker with high displeasure.

"Sirrah," he said, "thou art well called Oliver the Devil, who darest thus to sport at once with thy master and with the blessed saints. I tell thee, wert thou a grain less necessary to me, I would have thee hung up on yonder oak before the castle, as an example to all who scoff at things holy!—Know, thou infidel slave, that mine eyes were no sooner closed, than the blessed Saint Julian was visible to me, leading a young man, whom he presented to me, saying, that his fortune should be to escape the sword, the cord, the river, and to bring

good fortune to the side which he should espouse, and to the adventures in which he should be engaged. I walked out on the succeeding morning, and I met with this youth. In his own country he hath escaped the sword, amid the massacre of his whole family, and here, within the brief compass of two days, he hath been strangely rescued from drowning and from the gallows, and hath already, on a particular occasion, as I but lately hinted to thee, been of the most material service to me. I receive him as sent hither by Saint Julian, to serve me in the most difficult, the most dangerous, and even the most desperate services."

The king, as he thus expressed himself, doffed his hat, and, selecting from the numerous little leaden figures with which the hat-band was garnished, that which represented Saint Julian, he placed it on the table, as was often his wont when some peculiar feeling of hope, or perhaps of remorse, happened to thrill across his mind, and kneeling down before it, muttered, with an appearance of profound devotion, "*Sancte Juliane, adsis precibus nostris! Ora, ora, pro nobis!*"

This was one of those ague-fits of superstitious devotion which often seized on Louis in such extraordinary times and places, that they gave one of the most sagacious monarchs who ever reigned, the appearance of a madman, or at least of one whose mind was shaken by some deep consciousness of guilt.

While he was thus employed, his favourite looked at him with an expression of sarcastic contempt, which he scarce attempted to disguise. Indeed it was one of this man's peculiarities, that, in his whole intercourse with his master, he laid aside that fondling, purring affectation of officiousness and humility, which distinguished his conduct to others; and if he still bore some resemblance to a cat, it was when the animal is on its guard,—watchful, animated, and alert for sudden exertion. The cause of this change was probably Oliver's consciousness, that his master was himself too profound a hypocrite not to see through the hypocrisy of others.

"The features of this youth, then, if I may presume to speak," said Oliver, "resemble those of him whom your dream exhibited?"

"Closely and intimately," said the king, whose imagination, like that of superstitious people in general, readily imposed upon itself—"I have had his horoscope cast, besides, by Galeotti Martivalle, and I have plainly learned, through his art and mine own observation, that, in many respects, this unfriended youth has his destiny under the same constellation with mine."

Whatever Oliver might think of the causes thus boldly assigned for the preference of an inexperienced stripling, he dared make no further objections, well knowing that Louis, who, while residing in exile, had bestowed much of his attention on the supposed science of astrology, would listen to no raillery of any kind which impeached his skill. He therefore only replied, that he trusted the youth would prove faithful in the discharge of a task so delicate.

"We will take care he hath no opportunity to be otherwise," said Louis; "for he shall be privy to nothing—save that he is sent to escort the ladies of

Croye to the residence of the Bishop of Liege. Of the probable interference of William de la Marck he shall know as little as they themselves. None shall know that secret save the guide, and Tristan or thou must find one fit for our purpose."

"But in that case," said Oliver, "judging of him from his country and his appearance, the young man is like to stand to his arms so soon as the Wild Boar comes on them, and may not come off so easily from the tusks as he did this morning."

"If they rend his heart-strings," said Louis, composedly, "Saint Julian—blessed be his name!—can send me another in his stead. It skills as little that the messenger is slain after his duty is executed, as that the flask is broken when the wine is drunk out. Meanwhile, we must expedite the ladies' departure, and then persuade the Count de Crevecoeur that it has taken place without our connivance—we having been desirous to restore them to the custody of our fair cousin, which their sudden departure has unhappily prevented."

"The count is perhaps too wise and his master too prejudiced to believe it."

"Holy Mother!" said Louis, "what unbelief would that be in christian men! But, Oliver, they *shall* believe us. We will throw into our whole conduct towards our fair cousin, Duke Charles, such thorough and unlimited confidence, that not to believe we have been sincere with him in every respect he must be worse than an infidel. I tell thee, so convinced am I that I could make Charles of Burgundy think of me in every respect as I would have him, that, were it necessary for silencing his doubts, I would ride unarmed and on a palfrey to visit him in his tent, with no better guard about me than thine own simple person, friend Oliver."

"And I," said Oliver, "though I pique not myself upon managing steel in any other shape than that of a razor, would rather charge a Swiss battalion of pikes, than I would accompany your highness upon such a visit of friendship to Charles of Burgundy, when he hath so many grounds to be well assured that there is enmity in your majesty's bosom against him."

"Thou art a fool, Oliver," said the king—"and that with all thy pretensions to wisdom—and art not aware that deep policy must often assume the appearance of the most extreme simplicity, as courage occasionally shrouds itself under the show of modest timidity. Were it needful, full surely would I do what I have said—the saints always blessing our purpose, and the heavenly constellations bringing round, in their course, a proper conjuncture for such an exploit."

In these words did King Louis XI. give the first hint of the extraordinary resolution which he afterwards adopted, of duping his great rival, that had very nearly proved his own ruin.

He parted with his counsellor, and presently afterwards went to the apartment of the ladies of Croye. Few persuasions beyond his mere license would have been necessary to determine their retreat from the court of France, upon the first hint that they might not be eventually protected against the Duke of Burgundy; but it was not so easy to induce them to chuse Liege for the place of their retreat.

They entreated and requested to be transferred to Bretagne, or Calais, where, under protection of the Duke of Bretagne, or King of England, they might remain in a state of safety, until the sovereign of Burgundy should relent in his rigorous purpose towards them. But neither of these places of safety at all suited the plans of Louis, and he was at last successful in inducing them to adopt that which did coincide with them.

The power of the Bishop of Liege for their defence was not to be questioned, since his ecclesiastical dignity gave him the means of protecting the fugitives against all christian princes; while, on the other hand, his secular forces, if not numerous, were at least sufficient to defend his person, and all under his protection, from any sudden violence. The difficulty was to reach the little court of the bishop in safety; but for this Louis promised to provide, by spreading a report that the ladies of Croye had escaped from Tours by night, under fear of being delivered up to the Burgundian envoy, and had taken their flight towards Bretagne. He also promised them the attendance of a small, but faithful retinue, and letters to the commanders of such towns and fortresses as they might pass, with instructions to use every means for protecting and assisting them in their journey.

The ladies of Croye, although internally resenting the ungenerous and discourteous manner in which Louis thus deprived them of the promised asylum in his court, were so far from objecting to the hasty departure which he proposed, that they even anticipated his project, by entreating to be permitted to set forward that same night. The Lady Hameline was already tired of a place where there were neither admiring courtiers, nor festivities to be witnessed; and the Lady Isabelle thought she had seen enough to conclude, that were the temptation to become a little stronger, Louis XI., not satisfied with expelling them from his court, would not hesitate to deliver her up to her irritated suzerain, the Duke of Burgundy. Lastly, Louis himself readily acquiesced in their hasty departure, anxious to preserve peace with Duke Charles, and alarmed lest the beauty of Isabelle should interfere with and impede the favourite plan which he had formed, for bestowing the hand of his daughter Joan upon his cousin of Orleans.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JOURNEY.

Talk not of kings—I scorn the poor comparison;
I am a *sage*, and can command the elements—
At least men think I can; and on that thought
I found unbounded empire.

Albumazar.

OCCUPATION and adventure might be said to crowd upon the young Scotchman with the force of a spring-tide; for he was speedily summoned to the apartment of his captain, the Lord Crawford, where, to his astonishment, he again beheld the king. After a few words respecting the honour and trust which were about to be reposed in him, which made Quen-

tin internally afraid that they were again about to propose to him such a watch as he had kept upon the Count of Crevecoeur, or perhaps some duty still more repugnant to his feelings, he was not relieved merely, but delighted, with hearing that he was selected, with the assistance of four others under his command, one of whom was a guide, to escort the ladies of Croye to the little court of their relative, the Bishop of Liege, in the safest and most commodious, and, at the same time, in the most secret manner possible. A scroll was given him, in which were set down directions for his guidance for the places of halt (generally chosen in villages, monasteries, and places remote from towns), and for the general precautions which he was to attend to, especially on approaching the frontier of Burgundy. He was sufficiently supplied with instructions what he ought to say and do to sustain the personage of the maître d'hôtel of two English ladies of rank, who had been on a pilgrimage to Saint Martin of Tours, and were to visit the holy city of Cologne, and worship the reliques of the sage eastern monarchs, who came to adore the nativity of Bethlehem; for under that character the ladies of Croye were to journey.

Without having any defined notions of the cause of his delight, Quentin Durward's heart leapt for joy at the idea of approaching thus nearly to the person of the Beauty of the Turret, and in a situation which entitled him to her confidence, since her protection was in so great a degree intrusted to his conduct and courage. He felt no doubt in his own mind, that he should be her successful guide through the hazards of her pilgrimage. Youth seldom thinks of dangers, and, bred up free, and fearless, and self-confiding, Quentin, in particular, only thought of them to defy them. He longed to be exempted from the restraint of the royal presence, that he might indulge the secret glee with which such unexpected tidings filled him, and which prompted him to bursts of delight which would have been totally unfitting for that society.

But Louis had not yet done with him. That cautious monarch had to consult a counsellor of a different stamp from Oliver le Diable, and who was supposed to derive his skill from the superior and astral intelligences, as men, judging from their fruits, were apt to think the counsels of Oliver sprung from the devil himself.

Louis therefore led the way, followed by the impatient Quentin, to a separate tower of the Castle of Plessis, in which was installed, in no small ease and splendour, the celebrated astrologer, poet, and philosopher, Galeotti Marti, or Martius, or Martivalle, a native of Narni, in Italy, the author of the famous Treatise, *De Vulgo Incognitis*,* and the subject of his age's admiration, and of the panegyrics of Paulus Jovius. He had long flourished at the court of the celebrated Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, from whom he was in some measure decoyed by Louis, who grudged the Hungarian monarch the society and the counsels of a sage, accounted so skilful in reading the decrees of Heaven.

Martivalle was none of those ascetic, withered,

pale professors of mystic learning, who bleared their eyes over the midnight furnace, and macerated their bodies by outwatching the polar bear. He indulged in all courtly pleasures, and, until he grew corpulent, had excelled in all martial sports and gymnastic exercises, as well as in the use of arms; insomuch, that Janus Pannonius has left a Latin epigram, upon a wrestling match betwixt Galeotti and a renowned champion of that art, in the presence of the Hungarian king and court, in which the astrologer was completely victorious.

The apartments of this courtly and martial sage were far more splendidly furnished than any which Quentin had yet seen in the royal palace; and the carving and ornamented wood-work of his library, as well as the magnificence displayed in the tapestries, showed the elegant taste of the learned Italian. Out of his study one door opened to his sleeping apartment, another led to the turret which served as his observatory. A large oaken table, in the midst of the apartment, was covered with a rich Turkey carpet, the spoils of the tent of a pacha after the great battle of Jaiza, where the astrologer had fought abreast with the valiant champion of Christendom, Matthias Corvinus. On the table lay a variety of mathematical and astrological instruments, all of the most rich materials and curious workmanship. His astrolabe of silver was the gift of the Emperor of Germany, and his Jacob's staff of ebony, jointed with gold, and curiously inlaid, was a mark of esteem from the reigning pope.

There were various other miscellaneous articles disposed on the table, or hanging around the walls; amongst others, two complete suits of armour, one of mail, the other of plate, both of which, from their great size, seemed to call the gigantic astrologer their owner; a Spanish Toledo, a Scottish broad-sword, a Turkish scymitar, with bows, quivers, and other warlike weapons; musical instruments of several different kinds; a silver crucifix, a sepulchral antique vase, and several of the little brazen penates of the ancient heathens, with other curious non-descript articles, some of which, in the superstitious opinions of that period, seemed to be designed for magical purposes. The library of this singular character was of the same miscellaneous description with his other effects. Curious manuscripts of classical antiquity lay mingled with the voluminous labours of christian divines, and of those pains-taking sages who professed the chemical science, and proffered to guide their students into the most secret recesses of nature, by means of the hermetical philosophy. Some were written in the eastern character, and others concealed their sense or nonsense under the veil of hieroglyphics and cabalistic characters. The whole apartment, and its furniture of every kind, formed a scene very impressive on the fancy, considering the general belief then indisputably entertained, concerning the truth of the occult sciences; and that effect was increased by the manners and appearance of the individual himself, who, seated in a huge chair, was employed in curiously examining a specimen, just issued from the Frankfort press, of the newly-invented art of printing.

Galeotti Martivalle was a tall, bulky, yet stately

* Concerning things unknown to the generality of mankind.

man, considerably past his prime, and whose youthful habits of exercise, though still occasionally resumed, had not been able to contend with a natural tendency to corpulence, increased by sedentary study, and indulgence in the pleasures of the table. His features, though rather overgrown, were dignified and noble, and a santon might have envied the dark and downward sweep of his long-descending beard. His dress was a chamber-robe of the richest Genoa velvet, with ample sleeves, clasped with frogs of gold, and lined with sables. It was fastened round his middle by a broad belt of virgin parchment, round which were represented, in crimson characters, the signs of the zodiac. He rose and bowed to the king, yet with the air of one to whom such exalted society was familiar, and who was not at all likely to compromise the dignity then especially affected by the pursuers of science.

"You are engaged, father," said the king, "and, as I think, with this new-fashioned art of multiplying manuscripts, by the intervention of machinery. Can things of such mechanical and terrestrial import interest the thoughts of one, before whom Heaven has unrolled her own celestial volumes?"

"My brother," replied Martivalle,—"for so the tenant of this cell must term even the King of France, when he deigns to visit him as a disciple,—believe me that, in considering the consequences of this invention, I read with as certain augury, as by any combination of the heavenly bodies, the most awful and portentous changes. When I reflect with what slow and limited supplies the stream of science hath hitherto descended to us; how difficult to be obtained by those most ardent in its search; how certain to be neglected by all who regard their ease; how liable to be diverted, or altogether dried up, by the invasions of barbarism; can I look forward without wonder and astonishment, to the lot of a succeeding generation, on whom knowledge will descend like the first and second rain, uninterrupted, unabated, unbounded; fertilizing some grounds, and overflowing others; changing the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms"—

"Hold, Galeotti," said Louis,—"shall these changes come in our time?"

"No, my brother," replied Martivalle; "this invention may be likened to a young tree, which is newly planted, but shall, in succeeding generations, bear fruit as fatal, yet as precious, as that of the garden of Eden; the knowledge, namely, of good and evil."

Louis answered, after a moment's pause, "Let futurity look to what concerns them—we are men of this age, and to this age we will confine our care. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.—Tell me, hast thou proceeded farther in the horoscope which I sent to thee, and of which you made me some report? I have brought the party hither, that you may use palmistry, or chiromancy, if such is your pleasure. The matter is pressing."

The bulky sage arose from his seat, and, approaching the young soldier, fixed on him his keen large dark eyes, as if he were in the act of internally spelling and dissecting every lineament and feature.—Blushing and borne down by this close

examination on the part of one whose expression was so reverential at once and commanding, Quentin bent his eyes on the ground, and did not again raise them, till in the act of obeying the sonorous command of the astrologer, "Look up and be not afraid, but hold forth thy hand."

When Martivalle had inspected his palm, according to the form of the mystic arts which he practised, he led the king some steps aside.—"My royal brother," he said, "the physiognomy of this youth, together with the lines impressed on his hand, confirm, in a wonderful degree, the report which I founded on his horoscope, as well as that judgment which your own proficiency in our sublime arts induced you at once to form of him. All promises that this youth will be brave and fortunate."

"And faithful?" said the king; "for valour and fortune square not always with fidelity."

"And faithful also," said the astrologer; "for there is manly firmness in look and eye, and his *linea vitæ* is deeply marked and clear, which indicates a true and upright adherence to those who do benefit or lodge trust in him. But yet"—

"But what?" said the king; "Father Galeotti, wherefore do you now pause?"

"The ears of kings," said the sage, "are like the palates of those dainty patients, which are unable to endure the bitterness of the drugs necessary for their recovery."

"My ears and my palate have no such niceness," said Louis,—"Let me hear what is useful counsel, and swallow what is wholesome medicine. I quarrel not with the rudeness of the one, or the harsh taste of the other. I have not been cockered in wantonness or indulgence; my youth was one of exile and suffering. My ears are used to harsh counsel, and take no offence at it."

"Then plainly, sire," replied Galeotti, "if you have aught in your proposed commission, which—which, in short, may startle a scrupulous conscience—intrust it not to this youth—at least, not till a few years' exercise in your service has made him as unhesitating as others."

"And is this what you hesitated to speak, my good Galeotti? and didst thou think thy speaking it would offend me?" answered the king. "Alack, I know that thou art well sensible, that the path of royal policy cannot be always squared (as that of private life ought invariably to be) by the abstract maxims of religion, and of morality. Wherefore do we, the princes of the earth, found churches and monasteries, make pilgrimages, undergo penances, and perform devotions, with which others may dispense, unless it be because the benefit of the public, and the welfare of our kingdoms, force us upon measures which grieve our consciences as christians? But Heaven has mercy—the church an unbounded stock of merits, and the intercession of Our Lady of Embrun, and the blessed saints, is urgent, everlasting, and omnipotent."—He laid his hat on the table, and devoutly kneeling before the images stuck into the hat-band, repeated, in an earnest tone, "*Sancte Huberte, Sancte Juliane, Sancte Martine, Sancta Rosalia, Sancti quotquot adestis, orate pro me peccatore!*" He then smote his breast, arose, reassumed his hat, and

continued,—“Be assured, good father, that whatever there may be in our commission, of the nature at which you have hinted, the execution shall not be intrusted to this youth, nor shall he be privy to such part of our purpose.”

“In this,” said the astrologer, “you, my royal brother, will walk wisely.—Something may be apprehended likewise from the rashness of this your young commissioner; a failing inherent in those of sanguine complexion. But I hold that, by the rules of art, this chance is not to be weighed against the other properties discovered from his horoscope and otherwise.”

“Will this next midnight be a propitious hour in which to commence a perilous journey?” said the king.—“See, here is your ephemerides—you see the position of the moon in regard to Saturn, and the ascendance of Jupiter—That should argue, methinks, in submission to your better art, success to him who sends forth the expedition at such an hour.”

“To him who *sends forth* the expedition,” said the astrologer, after a pause, “this conjunction does indeed promise success; but, methinks, that Saturn being combust, threatens danger and infortune to the party *sent*; whence I infer that the errand may be perilous, or even fatal, to those who are to journey. Violence and captivity, methinks, are intimated in that adverse conjunction.”

“Violence and captivity to those who are sent,” answered the king, “but success to the wishes of the sender—Runs it not thus, my learned father?”

“Even so,” replied the astrologer.

The king paused without giving any further indication how far this presaging speech (probably hazarded by the astrologer from his knowledge that the commission related to some dangerous purpose) squared with his real object, which, as the reader is aware, was to betray the Countess Isabelle of Croye into the hands of William de la Marck, a leader distinguished for his turbulent disposition and ferocious bravery.

The king then pulled forth a paper from his pocket, and, ere he gave it to Martivalle, said, in a tone which resembled that of an apology—“Learned Galeotti, be not surprised, that possessing in you an oracular treasure, superior to that lodged in the breast of any now alive, not excepting the great Nostradamus himself, I am desirous frequently to avail myself of your skill in those doubts and difficulties, which beset every prince who hath to contend with rebellion within his land, and with external enemies, both powerful and inveterate.”

“When I was honoured with your request, sire,” said the philosopher, “and abandoned the court of Buda for that of Plessis, it was with the resolution to place at the command of my royal patron whatever my art had, that might be of service to him.”

“Enough, good Martivalle—I pray thee attend to the import of this question.”—He proceeded to read from the paper in his hand:—“A person having on hand a weighty controversy, which is like to draw to debate either by law or by force of arms, is desirous, for the present, to seek accommodation by a personal interview with his antagonist. He desires to know what day will be propitious for the execution of such a purpose; also what is likely to be the

success of such a negotiation, and whether his adversary will be moved to answer the confidence thus reposed in him, with gratitude and kindness, or may rather be likely to abuse the opportunity and advantage which such meeting may afford him?”

“It is an important question,” said Martivalle, when the king had done reading, “and requires that I should set a planetary figure, and give it instant and deep consideration.”

“Let it be so, my good father in the sciences, and thou shalt know what it is to oblige a king of France. We are determined, if the constellations forbid not,—and our own humble art leads us to think that they approve our purpose,—to hazard something, even in our own person, to stop these anti-christian wars.”

“May the saints forward your majesty’s pious intent,” said the astrologer, “and guard your sacred person!”

“Thanks, learned father.—Here is something, the while, to enlarge your curious library.”

He placed under one of the volumes a small purse of gold; for, economical even in his superstitions, Louis conceived the astrologer sufficiently bound to his service by the pensions he had assigned him, and thought himself entitled to the use of his skill at a moderate rate, even upon great exigencies.

Louis, having thus, in legal phrase, added a refreshing fee to his general retainer, turned from him to address Durward.—“Follow me,” he said, “my bonny Scot, as one chosen by destiny and a monarch to accomplish a bold adventure. All must be got ready, that thou mayst put foot in stirrup the very instant the bell of Saint Martin’s tolls twelve. One minute sooner, one minute later, were to forfeit the favourable aspect of the constellations which smile on your adventure.”

Thus saying, the king left the apartment, followed by his young guardsman; and no sooner were they gone, than the astrologer gave way to very different feelings from those which seemed to animate him during the royal presence.

“The niggardly slave!” he said, weighing the purse in his hand,—for, a man of unbounded expense, he had almost constant occasion for money—“The base sordid scullion!—A coxswain’s wife would give more to know that her husband had crossed the narrow seas in safety. *He* acquire any tincture of humane letters!—yes, when prowling foxes and yelling wolves become musicians. *He* read the glorious blazoning of the firmament!—ay, when sordid moles shall become lynxes.—*Post tot promissa*—after so many promises made, to entice me from the court of the magnificent Matthias, where Hun and Turk, christian and infidel, the Czar of Muscovia and the Cham of Tartary themselves, contended to load me with gifts,—doth he think I am to abide in this old castle, like a bulfinch in a cage, fain to sing as oft as he chuses to whistle, and all for seed and water?—Not so—*aut inveniam viam, aut faciam*—I will discover or contrive a remedy. The Cardinal Balue is politic and liberal—this query shall to him, and it shall be his eminence’s own fault if the stars speak not as he would have them.”

He again took the despised guerdon, and weighed it in his hand. "It may be," he said, "there is some jewel, or pearl of price, concealed in this paltry case—I have heard he can be liberal even to lavishness, when it suits his caprice or interest."

He emptied the purse, which contained neither more nor less than ten gold pieces. The indignation of the astrologer was extreme.—"Thinks he that for this paltry hire I will practise that celestial science which I have studied with the Armenian Abbot of Istrahoff, who had not seen the sun for forty years,—with the Greek Dubravius, who is said to have raised the dead,—and have even visited the Scheik Eba Hali in his cave in the deserts of Thebais?—No, by Heaven!—he that contemns art shall perish through his own ignorance. Ten pieces!—a pittance which I am half ashamed to offer to Toinette, to buy her new breast-laces."

So saying, the indignant sage nevertheless plunged the contemned pieces of gold into a large pouch which he wore at his girdle, which Toinette and other abettors of lavish expense generally contrived to empty fully faster than the philosopher, with all his art, could find the means of filling it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE JOURNEY.

I see thee yet, fair France—thou favour'd land
Of art and nature—thou art still before me;
Thy sons, to whom their labour is a sport,
So well thy grateful soil returns its tribute;
Thy sun-burnt daughters, with their laughing eyes
And glossy raven-locks. But, favour'd France,
Thou hast had many a tale of woe to tell,
In ancient times as now.

Anonymous.

AVOIDING all conversation with any one—for such was his charge—Quentin Durward proceeded hastily to array himself in a strong but plain cuirass with thigh and arm-pieces, and placed on his head a good steel-cap without any visor. To these was added a handsome cassock of chamois leather, finely dressed, and laced down the seams with some embroidery, such as might become a superior officer in a noble household.

These things were brought to his apartment by Oliver, who, with his quiet insinuating smile and manner, acquainted him that his uncle had been summoned to mount guard, purposely that he might make no inquiries concerning these mysterious movements.

"Your excuse will be made to your kinsman," said Oliver, smiling again; "and, my dearest son, when you return safe from the execution of this pleasing trust, I doubt not you will be found worthy of such promotion as will dispense with your accounting for your motions to any one, while it will place you at the head of those who must render an account of theirs to you."

So spoke Oliver le Diable, calculating, probably, in his own mind, the great chance there was that the poor youth, whose hand he squeezed affectionately as he spoke, must necessarily encounter death

VOL. III.

or captivity in the commission intrusted to his charge.

At a few minutes before twelve at midnight, Quentin, according to his directions, proceeded to the second court-yard, and paused under the Dauphin's Tower, which, as the reader knows, was assigned for the temporary residence of the Countesses of Croye. He found at this place of rendezvous the men and horses appointed to compose the retinue, leading two sumpter mules already loaded with baggage, and holding three palfreys for the two countesses and a faithful waiting-woman, with a stately war-horse for himself, whose steel-plated saddle glanced in the pale moon-light. Not a word of recognition was spoken on either side. The men sat still in their saddles, as if they were motionless; and by the same imperfect light Quentin saw with pleasure that they were all armed, and held long lances in their hands. They were only three in number, but one of them whispered to Quentin, in a strong Gascon accent, that their guide was to join them beyond Tours.

Meantime, lights glanced to and fro at the lattices of the tower, as if there was bustle and preparation among its inhabitants. At length, a small door, which led from the bottom of the tower to the court, was unclosed, and three females came forth, attended by a man wrapped in a cloak. They mounted in silence the palfreys which stood prepared for them, while their attendant on foot led the way, and gave the pass-words and signals to the watchful guards, whose posts they passed in succession. Thus they at length reached the exterior of these formidable barriers. Here the man on foot, who had hitherto acted as their guide, paused, and spoke low and earnestly to the two foremost females.

"May Heaven bless you, sire," said a voice which thrilled upon Quentin Durward's ear, "and forgive you, even if your purposes be more interested than your words express! To be placed under the protection of the good Bishop of Liege is the utmost extent of my desire."

The person whom she thus addressed, muttered an inaudible answer, and retreated back through the barrier-gate, while Quentin thought, that, by the moon-glimpse, he recognized in him the king himself, whose anxiety for the departure of his guests had probably induced him to give his presence, in case scruples should arise on their part, or difficulties on that of the guards of the castle.

When the riders were beyond the castle, it was necessary for some time to ride with great precaution, in order to avoid the pitfalls, snares, and similar contrivances, which were placed for the annoyance of strangers. The Gascon was, however, completely possessed of the clew to this labyrinth, and in a quarter of an hour's riding, they found themselves beyond the limits of Plessis le Parc, and not far distant from the city of Tours.

The moon, which had now extricated herself from the clouds through which she was formerly wading, shed a full sea of glorious light upon a landscape equally glorious. They saw the princely Loire rolling his majestic tide through the richest plain in France, and sweeping along between banks ornamented with towers and terraces, and with olives and vineyards. They saw the walls of the ancient capi-

tal of Touraine raising their portal towers and embatlements white in the moon-light, while, from within their circle, rose the immense Gothic mass which the devotion of the sainted Bishop Perpetuus erected as early as the fifth century, and which the zeal of Charlemagne and his successors had enlarged with such architectural splendour, as rendered it the most magnificent church in France. The towers of the church of Saint Gatien were also visible, and the gloomy strength of the castle, which was said to have been, in ancient times, the residence of the Emperor Valentinian.

Even the circumstances in which he was placed, though of a nature so engrossing, did not prevent the wonder and delight with which the young Scotchman, accustomed to the waste though impressive landscape of his own mountains, and the poverty even of his country's most stately scenery, looked on a scene, which art and nature seemed to have vied in adorning with their richest splendour. But he was recalled to the business of the moment by the voice of the elder lady (pitched at least an octave higher than those soft tones which bid adieu to King Louis), demanding to speak with the leader of the band. Spurring his horse forward, Quentin reverently presented himself to the ladies in that capacity, and thus underwent the interrogatories of the Lady Hameline.

"What was his name, and what his degree?"

He told both.

"Was he perfectly acquainted with the road?"

"He could not," he replied, "pretend to much knowledge of the route, but he was furnished with full instructions, and he was, at their first resting-place, to be provided with a guide, in all respects competent to the task of directing their farther journey; meanwhile, a horseman who had just joined them, and made the number of their guard four, was to be their guide for the first stage."

"And wherefore were you selected for such a duty, young gentleman?" said the lady—"I am told you are the same youth who was lately upon guard in the gallery in which we met the Princess of France. You seem young and inexperienced for such a charge—a stranger, too, in France, and speaking the language as a foreigner."

"I am bound to obey the commands of the king, madam, but not to reason on them," answered the young soldier.

"Are you of noble birth?" demanded the same querist.

"I may safely affirm so, madam," replied Quentin.

"And are you not," said the younger lady, addressing him in her turn, but with a timorous accent, "the same whom I saw when I was called to wait upon the king at yonder inn?"

Lowering his voice, perhaps from similar feelings of timidity, Quentin answered in the affirmative.

"Then, methinks, my cousin," said the Lady Isabelle, addressing the Lady Hameline, "we must be safe under this young gentleman's safeguard; he looks not, at least, like one to whom the execution of a plan of treacherous cruelty upon two helpless women could be with safety intrusted."

"On my honour, madam," said Durward, "by the fame of my house, by the bones of my ancestry, I

could not, for France and Scotland laid into one, be guilty of treachery or cruelty towards you!"

"You speak well, young man," said the Lady Hameline; "but we are accustomed to hear fair speeches from the King of France and his agents. It was by these that we were induced, when the protection of the Bishop of Liege might have been attained with less risk than now, or when we might have thrown ourselves on that of Wincelans of Germany, or of Edward of England, to seek refuge in France. And in what did the promises of the king result? In an obscure and shameful concealing of us, under plebeian names, as a sort of prohibited wares, in yonder paltry hostelry, when we,—who, as thou knowest, Marthon (addressing her domestic), never put on our head-tire save under a canopy, and upon a dais of three degrees,—were compelled to attire ourselves, standing on the simple floor, as if we had been two milk-maids."

Marthon admitted that her lady spoke a most melancholy truth.

"I would that had been the sorest evil, dear kinswoman," said the Lady Isabelle; "I could gladly have dispensed with state."

"But not with society," said the other countess; "that, my sweet cousin, was impossible."

"I would have dispensed with all, my dearest kinswoman," answered Isabelle, in a voice which penetrated to the very heart of her young conductor and guard, "with all, for a safe and honourable retirement. I wish not—God knows, I never wished—to occasion war betwixt France and my native Burgundy, or that lives should be lost for such as I. I only implored permission to retire to the Convent of Marmoutier, or to any other holy sanctuary."

"You spoke then like a fool, my cousin," answered the elder lady, "and not like a daughter of my noble brother. It is well there is still one alive, who hath some of the spirit of the noble house of Croye. How should a high-born lady be known from a sun-burnt milk-maid, save that spears are broken for the one, and only hazel poles for the other? I tell you, maiden, that while I was in the very earliest bloom, scarcely older than yourself, the famous Passage of Arms at Haflingham was held in my honour; the challengers were four, the assailants so many as twelve. It lasted three days; and cost the lives of two adventurous knights, the fracture of one back-bone, one collar-bone, three legs and two arms, besides flesh-wounds and bruises beyond the heralds' counting; and thus have the ladies of our house ever been honoured. Ah! had you but half the heart of your noble ancestry, you would find means at some court, where ladies' love and fame in arms are still prized, to maintain a tournament, at which your hand should be the prize, as was that of your great-grandmother of blessed memory, at the spear-running of Strasbourg; and thus should you gain the best lance in Europe, to maintain the rights of the house of Croye, both against the oppression of Burgundy and the policy of France."

"But, fair kinswoman," answered the younger countess, "I have been told by my old nurse, that although the rhingrave was the best lance at the great tournament at Strasbourg, and so won the hand

of my respected ancestor, yet the match was no happy one, as he used often to scold, and sometimes to beat, my great grandmother of blessed memory."

"And wherefore not?" said the elder countess, in her romantic enthusiasm for the profession of chivalry; "why should those victorious arms, accustomed to blows abroad, be bound to restrain their energies at home? A thousand times rather would I be beaten twice-a-day, by a husband whose arm was as much feared by others as by me, than be the wife of a coward, who dared neither to lift hand to his wife, nor to any one else!"

"I should wish you joy of such a restless mate, fair aunt," replied Isabelle, "without envying you; for if broken bones be lovely in tourneys, there is nothing less amiable in ladies' bower."

"Nay, but the beating is no necessary consequence of wedding with a knight of fame in arms; though it is true that our ancestor of blessed memory, the Rhingrave Gottfried, was something rough-tempered, and addicted to the use of Rheinwein.—The very perfect knight is a lamb among ladies, and a lion among lances. There was Thibault of Montigni—God be with him!—he was the kindest soul alive, and not only was he never so discourteous as to lift hand against his lady, but, by our good dame, he who beat all enemies without doors, found a fair foe who could belabour him within.—Well, 'twas his own fault—he was one of the challengers at the Passage of Haflingham, and so well bestirred himself, that, if it had pleased Heaven, and your grandfather, there might have been a Lady of Montigni, who had used his gentle nature more gently."

The Countess Isabelle, who had some reason to dread this Passage of Haflingham, it being a topic upon which her aunt was at all times very diffuse, suffered the conversation to drop; and Quentin, with the natural politeness of one who had been gently nurtured, dreading lest his presence might be a restraint on their conversation, rode forward to join the guide, as if to ask some questions concerning their route.

Meanwhile, the ladies continued their journey in silence, or in such conversation as is not worth narrating, until day began to break; and as they had then been on horseback for several hours, Quentin, anxious lest they should be fatigued, became impatient to know their distance from the nearest resting-place.

"I will show it you," answered the guide, "in half an hour."

"And then you leave us to other guidance?" continued Quentin.

"Even so, signior archer," replied the man; "my journeys are always short and straight.—When you and others, signior archer, go by the bow, I always go by the cord."

The moon had by this time long decayed, and the lights of dawn were beginning to spread bright and strong in the east, and to gleam on the bosom of a small lake, on the verge of which they had been riding for a short space of time. This lake lay in the midst of a wide plain, scattered over with single trees, groves, and thickets; but which might be yet termed open, so that objects began to be discerned

with sufficient accuracy. Quentin cast his eye on the person whom he rode beside, and, under the shadow of a slouched over-spreading hat, which resembled the sombrero of a Spanish peasant, he recognized the facetious features of the same Petit-André, whose fingers, not long since, had, in concert with those of his lugubrious brother, Trois Éschelles, been so unpleasantly active about his throat.—Impelled by aversion, not altogether unmixed with fear (for in his own country the executioner is regarded with almost superstitious horror), which his late narrow escape had not diminished, Durward instinctively moved his horse's head to the right, and, pressing him at the same time with the spur, made a demi-volte, which separated him eight feet from his hateful companion.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" exclaimed Petit-André; "by our Lady of the Grève, our young soldier remembers us of old.—What! comrade, you bear no malice, I trust?—every one wins his bread in this country. No man need be ashamed of having come through my hands, for I will do my work with any that ever tied a living weight to a dead tree.—And God hath given me grace to be such a merry fellow withal—Ha! ha! ha!—I could tell you such jests I have cracked between the foot of the ladder and the top of the gallows, that, by my halidome, I have been obliged to do my job rather hastily, for fear the fellows should die with laughing, and so shame my mystery!"

As he thus spoke, he edged his horse sideways, to regain the interval which the Scot had left between them, saying, at the same time, "Come, signior archer, let there be no unkindness betwixt us!—For my part, I always do my duty without malice, and with a light heart, and I never love a man better than when I have put my scant-of-wind collar about his neck, to dub him knight of the order of Saint Patibularius, as the provost's chaplain, the worthy Father Vaconeldiablo, is wont to call the patron saint of the provostry."

"Keep back, thou wretched object!" exclaimed Quentin, as the finisher of the law again sought to approach him closer, "or I will be tempted to teach you the distance that should be betwixt men of honour and such an outcast."

"La you there, how hot you are!" said the fellow; "had you said men of *honesty*, there had been some savour of truth in it;—but for men of *honour*, good lack, I have to deal with them every day, as nearly and closely as I was about to do business with you.—But peace be with you and keep your company to yourself. I would have bestowed a flagon of Auvernât upon you to wash away every unkindness—but you scorn my courtesy.—Well. Be as churlish as you list—I never quarrel with my customers—my jerry-come-tumbles, my merry dancers, my little play-fellows, as Jacques Butcher says to his lambs—those, in fine, who, like your signiorship, have H. E. M. P. written on their foreheads—No, no, let them use me as they list, they shall have my good service at last—and yourself shall see when you next come under Petit-André's hands, that he knows how to forgive an injury."

So saying, and summing up the whole with a provoking wink, and such an interjectional *tchick* as

men quicken a dull horse with, Petit-André drew off to the other side of the path, and left the youth to digest the taunts he had treated him with, as his proud Scotch stomach best might. A strong desire had Quentin to have belaboured him while the staff of his lance could hold together; but he put a restraint on his passion, recollecting that a brawl with such a character could be creditable at no time or place, and that a quarrel of any kind, on the present occasion, would be a breach of duty, and might involve the most perilous consequences. He therefore swallowed his wrath at the ill-timed and professional jokes of Mons. Petit-André, and contented himself with devoutly hoping that they had not reached the ears of his fair charge, on which they could not be supposed to make an impression in favour of himself, as one obnoxious to such sarcasms. But he was speedily roused from such thoughts by the cry of both the ladies at once, "Look back—look back!—For the love of Heaven, look to yourself and us—we are pursued!"

Quentin hastily looked back, and saw that two armed men were in fact following them, and riding at such a pace as must soon bring them up with their party. "It can," he said, "be only some of the provostry making their rounds in the forest.—Do thou look," he said to Petit-André, "and see what they may be."

Petit-André obeyed, and rolling himself jocosely in the saddle after he had made his observations, replied, "These, fair sir, are neither your comrades nor mine—neither archers nor marshmen—for I think they wear helmets, with visors lowered, and gorgets of the same.—A plague upon these gorgets of all other pieces of armour!—I have fumbled with them an hour before I could undo the rivets."

"Do you, gracious ladies," said Durward, without attending to Petit-André, "ride forward—not so fast as to raise an opinion of your being in flight, and yet fast enough to avail yourselves of the impediment which I shall presently place between you and these men who follow us."

The Countess Isabelle looked to their guide, and then whispered her aunt, who spoke to Quentin thus—"We have confidence in your care, fair archer, and will rather abide the risk of whatever may chance in your company, than we will go onward with that man, whose mien is, we think, of no good augury."

"Be it as you will, ladies," said the youth—"There are but two who come after us; and though they be knights, as their arms seem to show, they shall, if they have any evil purpose, learn how a Scotchman can do his devoir in the presence and defence of such as you are.—Which of you there," he continued, addressing the guards whom he commanded, "is willing to be my comrade, and to break a lance with these gallants?"

Two of the men obviously faltered in resolution; but the third, Bertrand Guyot, swore, "that, *cap de diou*, were they knights of King Arthur's Round Table, he would try their mettle, for the honour of Gascony."

While he spoke, the two knights, for they seemed of no less rank, came up with the rear of the party, in which Quentin, with his sturdy adherent, had by

this time stationed himself. They were fully accoutred in excellent armour of polished steel, without any device by which they could be distinguished.

One of them, as they approached, called out to Quentin, "Sir squire, give place—we come to relieve you of a charge which is above your rank and condition. You will do well to leave the ladies in our care, who are fitter to wait upon them, especially as we know that in yours they are little better than captives."

"In return to your demand, sirs," replied Durward, "know, in the first place, that I am discharging the duty imposed upon me by my present sovereign; and next, that, however unworthy I may be, the ladies desire to abide under my protection."

"Out, sirrah!" exclaimed one of the champions; "will you, a wandering beggar, put yourself on terms of resistance against belted knights?"

"They are indeed terms of resistance," said Quentin, "since they oppose your insolent and unlawful aggression; and if there be difference of rank between us, which as yet I know not, your discourtesy has done it away. Draw your sword, or, if you will use the lance, take ground for your career."

While the knights turned their horses, and rode back to the distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, Quentin, looking to the ladies, bent low on his saddle-bow, as if desiring their favourable regard; and as they streamed towards him their kerchiefs, in token of encouragement, the two assailants had gained the distance necessary for their charge.

Calling to the Gascon to bear himself like a man, Durward put his steed into motion; and the four horsemen met in full career in the midst of the ground which at first separated them. The shock was fatal to the poor Gascon; for his adversary, aiming at his face, which was undefended by a visor, ran him through the eye into the brain, so that he fell dead from his horse.

On the other hand, Quentin, though labouring under the same disadvantage, swayed himself in the saddle so dexterously, that the hostile lance, slightly scratching his cheek, passed over his right shoulder; while his own spear, striking his antagonist fair upon the breast, hurled him to the ground. Quentin jumped off, to unhelm his fallen opponent; but the other knight (who, by the way, had never yet spoken), seeing the fortune of his companion, dismounted still more speedily than Durward; and bestriding his friend, who lay senseless, exclaimed, "In the name of God and Saint Martin, mount, good fellow, and get thee gone with thy woman's ware!—*Ventre Saint Gris*, they have caused mischief enough this morning."

"By your leave, sir knight," said Quentin, who could not brook the menacing tone in which this advice was given, "I will first see whom I have had to do with, and learn who is to answer for the death of my comrade."

"That shalt thou never live to know or to tell," answered the knight. "Get thee back in peace, good fellow. If we were fools for interrupting your passage, we have had the worse, for thou hast done more evil than the lives of thou and thy whole band could repay.—Nay if thou *wilt* have it (for Quentin

now drew his sword, and advanced on him), take it with a vengeance!"

So saying, he dealt the Scot such a blow on the helmet, as, till that moment (though bred where good blows were plenty), he had only read of in romance. It descended like a thunderbolt, beating down the guard which the young soldier had raised to protect his head, and, reaching his helmet of proof, cut it through so far as to touch his hair, but without farther injury; while Durward, dizzy, stunned, and beaten down on one knee, was for an instant at the mercy of the knight, had it pleased him to second his blow. But compassion for Quentin's youth, or admiration of his courage, or a generous love of fair play, made him withhold from taking such advantage; while Quentin, collecting himself, sprung up and attacked his antagonist with the energy of one determined to conquer or die, and at the same time, with the presence of mind necessary for fighting the quarrel out to the best advantage. Resolved not again to expose himself to such dreadful blows as he had just sustained, he employed the advantage of superior agility, increased by the comparative lightness of his armour, to harass his antagonist, by traversing on all sides, with a suddenness of motion and rapidity of attack, against which the knight, in his heavy panoply, found it difficult to defend himself without much fatigue.

It was in vain that this generous antagonist called aloud to Quentin, "that there now remained no cause of fight betwixt them, and that he was loth to be constrained to do him injury." Listening only to the suggestions of a passionate wish to redeem the shame of his temporary defeat, Durward continued to assail him with the rapidity of lightning—now menacing him with the edge, now with the point of his sword—and ever keeping such an eye on the motions of his opponent, of whose superior strength he had had terrible proof, that he was ready to spring backward, or aside, from under the blows of his tremendous weapon.

"Now the devil be with thee for an obstinate and presumptuous fool," muttered the knight, "that cannot be quiet till thou art knocked on the head!" So saying, he changed his mode of fighting, collected himself as if to stand on the defensive, and seemed contented with parrying, instead of returning, the blows which Quentin unceasingly aimed at him, with the internal resolution, that the instant when either loss of breath, or any false or careless pass of the young soldier, should give an opening, he would put an end to the fight by a single blow. It is likely he might have succeeded in this artful policy, but fate had ordered it otherwise.

The duel was still at the hottest, when a large party of horse rode up, crying, "Hold, in the king's name!" Both champions stepped back—and Quentin saw, with surprise, that his captain, Lord Crawford, was at the head of the party who had thus interrupted their combat. There was also Tristan l'Hermite, with two or three of his followers; making, in all, perhaps twenty horse.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GUIDE.

He was a son of Egypt, as he told me,
And one descended from those dread magicians,
Who waged rash war, when Israel dwelt in Goshen,
With Israel and her prophet—matching rod
With his the son of Levi's—and encountering
Jehovah's miracles with incantations,
Till upon Egypt came the avenging angel,
And those proud sages wept for their first-born,
As wept the unletter'd peasant.

Anonymous.

THE arrival of Lord Crawford and his guard put an immediate end to the engagement which we endeavoured to describe in the last chapter; and the knight, throwing off his helmet, hastily gave the old lord his sword, saying, "Crawford, I render myself—But hither—and lend me your ear—a word, for God's sake,—save the Duke of Orleans!"

"How?—what? the Duke of Orleans!" exclaimed the Scottish commander.—"How came this, in the name of the foul fiend? It will ruin the callant with the king, for ever and a day."

"Ask no questions," said Dunois—for it was no other than he—"it was all my fault.—See, he stirs, I came forth but to have a snatch at yonder damsel, and make myself a landed and a married man—and see what is come on't. Keep back your canaille—let no man look upon him." So saying, he opened the visor of Orleans, and threw water on his face, which was afforded by the neighbouring lake.

Quentin Durward, meanwhile, stood like one planet-struck; so fast did new adventures pour in upon him. He had now, as the pale features of his first antagonist assured him, borne to the earth the first prince of the blood in France, and had measured swords with her best champion, the celebrated Dunois;—both of them achievements honourable in themselves; but whether they might be called good service to the king, was a very different question.

The duke had now recovered his breath, and was able to sit up and give attention to what passed betwixt Dunois and Crawford, while the former pleaded eagerly, that there was no occasion to mention in the matter the name of the most noble Orleans, while he was ready to take the whole blame on his own shoulders; and to avouch that the duke had only come thither in friendship to him.

Lord Crawford continued listening, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and from time to time he sighed and shook his head. At length he said, looking up, "Thou knowest, Dunois, that, for thy father's sake, as well as thine own, I would full fain do thee a service."

"It is not for myself I demand anything," answered Dunois. "Thou hast my sword, and I am your prisoner—what needs more?—But it is for this noble prince, the only hope of France, if God should call the dauphin. He only came hither to do me a favour—in an effort to make my fortune—in a matter which the king had partly encouraged."

"Dunois," replied Crawford, "if another had told me thou hadst brought the noble prince into this

jeopardy to serve any purpose of thine own, I had told him it was false. And now that thou doest thyself so, I can hardly believe it is for the sake of speaking the truth."

"Noble Crawford," said Orleans, who had now entirely recovered from his swoon, "you are too like in character to your friend Dunois not to do him justice. It was, indeed, I that dragged him hither, most unwillingly, upon an enterprise of hair-brained passion, suddenly and rashly undertaken. Look on me all who will," he added, rising up and turning to the soldiery—"I am Louis of Orleans, willing to pay the penalty of my own folly. I trust the king will limit his displeasure to me, as is but just. Meanwhile, as a Child of France must not give up his sword to any one—not even to you, brave Crawford—fare thee well, good steel."

So saying, he drew his sword from the scabbard and flung it into the lake. It went through the air like a stream of lightning, and sunk in the flashing waters, which speedily closed over it. All remained standing in irresolution and astonishment, so high was the rank and so much esteemed was the character of the culprit; while, at the same time, all were conscious that the consequences of his rash enterprise, considering the views which the king had upon him, were likely to end in his utter ruin.

Dunois was the first who spoke, and it was in the chiding tone of an offended and distrusted friend:—"So! your highness hath judged it fit to cast away your best sword in the same morning when it was your pleasure to fling away the king's favour and to slight the friendship of Dunois."

"My dearest kinsman," said the duke, "when or how was it in my purpose to slight your friendship, by telling the truth, when it was due to your safety and my honour?"

"What had you to do with my safety, my most princely cousin, I would pray to know?" answered Dunois, shortly—"What, in God's name, was it to you, if I had a mind to be hanged, or strangled, or flung into the Loire, or poinarded, or broke on the wheel, or hung up alive in an iron cage, or buried alive in a castle-fosse, or disposed of in any other way in which it might please King Louis to dispose of his faithful subject?—(You need not wink and frown, and point to Tristan l'Hermite—I see the scoundrel as well as you do.)—But it would not have stood so hard with me. And so much for my safety—and then for your own honour. By the blush of Saint Magdalene! I think the honour would have been to have missed this morning's work, or kept it out of sight. Here has your highness got yourself unhorsed by a wild Scottish boy."

"Tut, tut!" said Lord Crawford—"never shame thee for that. It is not the first time a Scottish boy hath broke a good lance—I am glad the youth hath borne him well."

"I will say nothing to the contrary," said Dunois—"yet, had your lordship come something later than you did, there might have been a vacancy in your band of archers."

"Ay, ay," answered Lord Crawford; "I can read your hand-writing in that cleft morion. Some one take it from the lad, and give him a bonnet, which, with its steel lining, will keep his head better than

that broken loom.—And, Dunois, I must now request the Duke of Orleans and you to take horse and accompany me, as I have power and commission to convey you to a place different from that which my good will might assign you."

"May I not speak one word, my Lord of Crawford, to yonder fair ladies?" said the Duke of Orleans.

"Not one syllable," answered Lord Crawford; "I am too much a friend of your highness to permit such an act of folly."—Then, addressing Quentin, he added, "You, young man, have done your duty. Go on to obey the charge with which you are intrusted."

"Under favour, my lord," said Tristan, with his usual brutality of manner, "the youth must find another guide. I cannot want Petit-André, when there is so like to be business on hand for him."

"The young man," said Petit-André, now coming forward, "has only to keep the path which lies straight before him, and it will conduct him to a place where he will find the man who is to act as his guide.—I would not for a thousand ducats be absent from my chief this day! I have handed knights and squires many a one, and wealthy échevins, and burgomasters to boot—even counts and marquesses have tasted of my handy-work—but, a-humph"—He looked at the duke, as if to intimate that he would have filled up the blank with "a prince of the blood!"—"Ho, ho, ho! Petit-André, thou wilt be read of in chronicle."

"Do you permit your ruffians to hold such language in such a presence?" said Crawford, looking sternly to Tristan.

"Why do you not correct him yourself, my lord?" said Tristan, sullenly.

"Because thy hand is the only one in this company that can beat him, without being degraded by such an action."

"Then rule your own men, my lord, and I will be answerable for mine," said the provost-marshal.

Lord Crawford seemed about to give a passionate reply; but, as if he had thought better of it, turned his back short upon Tristan, and, requesting the Duke of Orleans and Dunois to ride one on either hand of him, he made a signal of adieu to the ladies, and said to Quentin, "God bless thee, my child; thou hast begun thy service valiantly, though in an unhappy cause." He was about to go off—when Quentin could hear Dunois whisper to Crawford, "Do you carry us to Plessis?"

"No, my unhappy and rash friend," answered Crawford, with a sigh; "to Loches."

"To Loches!" The sound of a name yet more dreaded than Plessis itself, fell like a death-toll upon the ear of the young Scotchman. He had heard it described as a place destined to the workings of those secret acts of cruelty with which even Louis shamed to pollute the interior of his own residence. There were in this place of terror dungeons under dungeons, some of them unknown even to the keepers themselves; living graves, to which men were consigned, with little hope of farther employment during the rest of their life, than to breathe impure air, and feed on bread and water. At this formidable castle were also those dreadful places of con-

finement called *cages*, in which the wretched prisoner could neither stand upright, nor stretch himself at length, an invention, it is said, of the Cardinal Balue. It is no wonder that the name of this place of horrors, and the consciousness that he had been partly the means of dispatching thither two such illustrious victims, struck such sadness into the heart of the young Scot, that he rode for some time with his head dejected, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his heart filled with the most painful reflections.

As he was now again at the head of the little troop, and pursuing the road which had been pointed out to him, the Lady Hameline had an opportunity to say to him,—

“Methinks, fair sir, you regret the victory which your gallantry has attained in our behalf?”

There was something in the question which sounded like irony, but Quentin had tact enough to answer simply and with sincerity.

“I can regret nothing that is done in the service of such ladies as you are; but, methinks, had it consisted with your safety, I had rather have fallen by the sword of so good a soldier as Dunois, than have been the means of consigning that renowned knight and his unhappy chief, the Duke of Orleans, to yonder fearful dungeons.”

“It was, then, the Duke of Orleans,” said the elder lady, turning to her niece. “I thought so, even at the distance from which we beheld the fray.—You see, kinswoman, what we might have been, had this sly and avaricious monarch permitted us to be seen at his court. The first prince of the blood of France, and the valiant Dunois, whose name is known as wide as that of his heroic father—This young gentleman did his devoir bravely and well; but methinks ’tis pity that he did not succumb with honour, since his ill-advised gallantry has stood betwixt us and these princely rescuers.”

The Countess Isabelle replied in a firm and almost a displeased tone; with an energy, in short, which Quentin had not yet seen her use.

“Madam,” she said, “but that I know you jest, I would say your speech is ungrateful to our brave defender, to whom we owe more, perhaps, than you are aware of. Had these gentlemen succeeded so far in that rash enterprise as to have defeated our escort, is it not still evident, that, on the arrival of the royal guard, we must have shared their captivity? For my own part, I give tears, and will soon bestow masses, on the brave man who has fallen, and I trust (she continued, more timidly) that he who lives will accept my grateful thanks.”

As Quentin turned his face towards her, to return the fitting acknowledgments, she saw the blood which streamed down on one side of his face, and exclaimed, in a tone of deep feeling, “Holy Virgin, he is wounded! he bleeds!—Dismount, sir, and let your wound be bound up.”

In spite of all that Durward could say of the slowness of his hurt, he was compelled to dismount, and to seat himself on a bank, and unhelmet himself, while the ladies of Croye, who, according to a fashion not as yet antiquated, pretended some knowledge of leech-craft, washed the wound, staunched the blood, and bound it with the kerchief of the

younger countess, in order to exclude the air, for so their practice prescribed.

In modern times, gallants seldom or never take wounds for ladies’ sake, and damsels on their side never meddle with the cure of wounds. Each has a danger the less. That which the men escape will be generally acknowledged; but the peril of dressing such a slight wound as that of Quentin’s, which involved nothing formidable or dangerous, was perhaps as real in its way as that of encountering it.

We have already said the patient was eminently handsome; and the removal of his helmet, or, more properly, of his morion, had suffered his fair locks to escape in profusion, around a countenance in which the hilarity of youth was qualified by a blush of modesty at once and pleasure. And then the feelings of the younger countess, when compelled to hold the kerchief to the wound, while her aunt sought in their baggage for some vulnerary remedy, were mingled at once with a sense of delicacy and embarrassment; a thrill of pity for the patient, and of gratitude for his services, which exaggerated, in her eyes, his good mien and handsome features. In short, this incident seemed intended by fate to complete the mysterious communication which she had, by many petty and apparently accidental circumstances, established betwixt two persons, who, though far different in rank and fortune, strongly resembled each other in youth, beauty, and the romantic tenderness of an affectionate disposition. It was no wonder, therefore, that from this moment the thoughts of the Countess Isabelle, already so familiar to his imagination, should become paramount in Quentin’s bosom, nor that, if the maiden’s feelings were of a less decided character, at least so far as known to herself, she should think of her young defender, to whom she had just rendered a service so interesting, with more emotion than of any of the whole band of high-born nobles who had for two years past besieged her with their adoration. Above all, when the thought of Campo-basso, the unworthy favourite of Duke Charles, with his hypocritical mien, his base, treacherous spirit, his vry neck, and his squint, occurred to her, his portrait was more disgustingly hideous than ever, and deeply did she resolve no tyranny should make her enter into so hateful a union.

In the meantime, whether the good Lady Hameline of Croye understood and admired masculine beauty as much as when she was fifteen years younger (for the good countess was at least thirty-five, if the records of that noble house speak the truth), or whether she thought she had done their young protector less justice than she ought, in the first view which she had taken of his services, it is certain that he began to find favour in her eyes.

“My niece,” she said, “has bestowed on you a kerchief for the binding of your wound; I will give you one to grace your gallantry, and to encourage you in your farther progress in chivalry.”

So saying, she gave him a richly embroidered kerchief of blue and silver, and pointing to the housing of her palfrey, and the plumes in her riding-cap, desired him to observe that the colours were the same.

The fashion of the time prescribed one absolute

mode of receiving such a favour, which Quentin followed accordingly, by tying the napkin around his arm; yet his manner of acknowledgment had more of awkwardness, and less of gallantry in it, than perhaps it might have had at another time, and in another presence; for though the wearing of a lady's favour, given in such a manner, was merely matter of general compliment, he would much rather have preferred the right of displaying on his arm that which bound the wound inflicted by the sword of Dunois.

Meantime they continued their pilgrimage, Quentin now riding abreast of the ladies, into whose society he seemed to be tacitly adopted. He did not speak much, however, being filled by the silent consciousness of happiness, which is afraid of giving too strong vent to its feelings. The Countess Isabelle spoke still less, so that the conversation was chiefly carried on by the Lady Hameline, who showed no inclination to let it drop; for, to initiate the young archer, as she said, into the principles and practice of chivalry, she detailed to him, at full length, the Passage of Arms at Haflingham, where she had distributed the prizes among the victors.

Not much interested, I am sorry to say, in the description of this splendid scene, or in the heraldic bearings of the different Flemish and German knights, which the lady blazoned with pitiless accuracy, Quentin began to entertain some alarm lest he should have passed the place where his guide was to join him—a most serious disaster, and from which, should it really have taken place, the very worst consequences were to be apprehended.

While he hesitated whether it would be better to send back one of his followers, to see whether this might not be the case, he heard the blast of a horn, and looking in the direction from which the sound came, beheld a horseman riding very fast towards them. The low size, and wild, shaggy, untrained state of the animal, reminded Quentin of the mountain breed of horses in his own country; but this was much more finely limbed, and, with the same appearance of hardiness, was more rapid in its movements. The head particularly, which, in the Scottish pony, is often lumpish and heavy, was small and well placed in the neck of this animal, with thin jaws, full sparkling eyes, and expanded nostrils.

The rider was even more singular in his appearance than the horse which he rode, though that was extremely unlike the horses of France. Although he managed his palfrey with great dexterity, he sat with his feet in broad stirrups, something resembling a shovel, so short, that his knees were well nigh as high as the pommel of his saddle. His dress was a red turban of small size, in which he wore a sullied plume, secured by a clasp of silver; his tunic, which was shaped like those of the Estradiots (a sort of troops whom the Venetians at that time levied in the provinces on the eastern side of their gulf), was green in colour, and tawdrily laced with gold; he wore very wide drawers or trowsers of white, though none of the cleanest, which gathered beneath the knee, and his swarthy legs were quite bare, unless for the complicated laces which bound a pair of sandals on his feet; he had no spurs, the edge of his large stirrups being so sharp as to serve to goad

the horse in a very severe manner. In a crimson sash this singular horseman wore a dagger on the right side, and on the left a short crooked Moorish sword; and by a tarnished baldric over the shoulder hung the horn which announced his approach. He had a swarthy and sun-burnt visage, with a thin beard, and piercing dark eyes, a well-formed mouth and nose, and other features which might have been pronounced handsome, but for the black elf-locks which hung around his face, and the air of wildness and emaciation, which rather seemed to indicate a savage than a civilized man.

"He also is a Bohemian!" said the ladies to each other; "Holy Mary, will the king again place confidence in these outcasts?"

"I will question the man, if it be your pleasure," said Quentin, "and assure myself of his fidelity as I best may."

Durward, as well as the ladies of Croye, had recognized in this man's dress and appearance, the habit and the manners of those vagrants with whom he had nearly been confounded by the hasty proceeding of Trois-Éschelles and Petit-André, and he, too, entertained very natural apprehensions concerning the risk of reposing trust in one of that vagrant race.

"Art thou come hither to seek us?" was his first question.

The stranger nodded.

"And for what purpose?"

"To guide you to the palace of Him of Liege."

"Of the bishop?"

The Bohemian again nodded.

"What token canst thou give me, that we should yield credence to thee?"

"Even the old rhyme, and no other," answered the Bohemian,—

"The page slew the boar,
The peer had the gloire."

"A true token," said Quentin; "Lead on, good fellow—I will speak further with thee presently." Then falling back to the ladies, he said, "I am convinced this man is the guide we are to expect, for he hath brought me a pass-word, known, I think, but to the king and me. But I will discourse with him further, and endeavour to ascertain how far he is to be trusted."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VAGRANT.

I am as free as Nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

DRYDEN'S *Conquest of Granada*.

WHILE Quentin held the brief communication with the ladies, necessary to assure them that this extraordinary addition to their party was the guide whom they were to expect on the king's part, he noticed (for he was as alert in observing the motions of the stranger, as the Bohemian could be on his part), that the man not only turned his head as far back as he could, to peer at them, but that, with a

singular sort of agility, more resembling that of a monkey than of a man, he had screwed his whole person around on the saddle, so as to sit almost sidelong upon the horse, for the convenience, as it seemed, of watching them more attentively.

Not greatly pleased with this manœuvre, Quentin rode up to the Bohemian, and said to him, as he suddenly assumed his proper position on the horse, "Methinks, friend, you will prove but a blind guide, if you look at the tail of your horse rather than his ears."

"And if I were actually blind," answered the Bohemian, "I could guide you through any county in this realm of France, or in those adjoining to it."

"Yet you are no Frenchman born," said the Scot.

"I am not," answered the guide.

"What countryman, then, are you?" demanded Quentin.

"I am of no country," answered the guide.

"How! of no country?" repeated the Scot.

"No," answered the Bohemian, "of none. I am a Zingaro, a Bohemian, an Egyptian, or whatever the Europeans, in their different languages, may chuse to call our people; but I have no country."

"Are you a christian?" asked the Scotchman.

The Bohemian shook his head.

"Dog!" said Quentin (for there was little toleration in the spirit of catholicism in those days), "doest thou worship Mahoun?"

"No," was the indifferent and concise answer of the guide, who neither seemed offended or surprised at the young man's violence of manner.

"Are you a pagan then, or what are you?"

"I have no religion," answered the Bohemian.

Durward started back; for, though he had heard of Saracens and idolaters, it had never entered into his ideas or belief, that any body of men could exist who practised no mode of worship whatsoever. He recovered from his astonishment, to ask where his guide usually dwelt.

"Wherever I chance to be for the time," replied the Bohemian. "I have no home."

"How do you guard your property?"

"Excepting the clothes which I wear, and the horse I ride on, I have no property?"

"Yet you dress gaily, and ride gallantly," said Durward. "What are your means of subsistence?"

"I eat when I am hungry, drink when I am thirsty, and have no other means of subsistence than chance throws in my way," replied the vagabond.

"Under whose laws do you live?"

"I acknowledge obedience to none, but as it suits my pleasure," said the Bohemian.

"Who is your leader, and commands you?"

"The father of our tribe—if I chuse to obey him," said the guide—"otherwise I have no commander."

"You are then," said the wondering querist, "destitute of all that other men are combined by—you have no law, no leader, no settled means of subsistence, no house or home. You have, may Heaven compassionate you, no country—and, may Heaven enlighten and forgive you, you have no God! What is it that remains to you, deprived of government, domestic happiness, and religion?"

VOL. III.

"I have liberty," said the Bohemian—"I crouch to no one—obey no one—respect no one.—I go where I will—live as I can—and die when my day comes."

"But you are subject to instant execution, at the pleasure of the judge."

"Be it so," returned the Bohemian; "I can but die so much the sooner."

"And to imprisonment also," said the Scot; "and where, then, is your boasted freedom?"

"In my thoughts," said the Bohemian, "which no chains can bind; while yours, even when your limbs are free, remain fettered by your laws and your superstitions, your dreams of local attachment, and your fantastic visions of civil policy. Such as I am free in spirit when our limbs are chained—You are imprisoned in mind, even when your limbs are most at freedom."

"Yet the freedom of your thoughts," said the Scot, "relieves not the pressure of the gyves on your limbs."

"For a brief time that may be endured; and if within that period I cannot extricate myself, and fail of relief from my comrades, I can always die, and death is the most perfect freedom of all."

There was a deep pause of some duration, which Quentin at length broke by resuming his queries.

"Yours is a wandering race, unknown to the nations of Europe—Whence do they derive their origin?"

"I may not tell you," answered the Bohemian.

"When will they relieve this kingdom from their presence, and return to the land from whence they came?" said the Scot.

"When the day of their pilgrimage shall be accomplished," replied his vagrant guide.

"Are you not sprung from those tribes of Israel, which were carried into captivity beyond the great river Euphrates?" said Quentin, who had not forgotten the lore which had been taught him at Aberbrothock.

"Had we been so," answered the Bohemian, "we had followed their faith, and practised their rites."

"What is thine own name?" said Durward.

"My proper name is only known to my brethren—The men beyond our tent call me Hayraddin Maugrabin, that is, Hayraddin the African Moor."

"Thou speakest too well for one who hath lived always in thy filthy horde," said the Scot.

"I have learned some of the knowledge of this land," said Hayraddin—"When I was a little boy, our tribe was chased by the hunters after human flesh. An arrow went through my mother's head, and she died. I was entangled in the blanket on her shoulders, and was taken by the pursuers. A priest begged me from the provost's archers, and trained me up in Frankish learning for two or three years."

"How came you to part with him?" demanded Durward.

"I stole money from him—even the god which he worshipped," answered Hayraddin, with perfect composure; "he detected me, and beat me—I stabbed him with my knife, fled to the woods, and was again united to my people."

"Wretch!" said Durward, "did you murder your benefactor?"

"What had he to do to burden me with his benefits?—The Zingaro boy was no house-bred cur, to dog the heels of his master, and crouch beneath his blows, for scraps of food—He was the imprisoned wolf-whelp, which at the first opportunity broke his chain, rended his master, and returned to his wilderness."

There was another pause, when the young Scot, with a view of still farther investigating the character and purpose of this suspicious guide, asked Hayraddin, "Whether it was not true that his people, amid their ignorance, pretended to a knowledge of futurity, which was not given to the sages, philosophers, and divines of more polished society?"

"We pretend to it," said Hayraddin, "and it is with justice."

"How can it be, that so high a gift is bestowed on so abject a race?" said Quentin.

"Can I tell you?" answered Hayraddin—"Yes, I may indeed; but it is when you shall explain to me why the dog can trace the footsteps of a man, while man, the nobler animal, hath not power to trace those of the dog. These powers, which seem to you so wonderful, are instinctive in our race. From the lines on the face and on the hand, we can tell the future fate of those who consult us, even as surely as you know from the blossom of the tree in spring, what fruit it will bear in the harvest."

"I doubt of your knowledge, and defy you to the proof."

"Defy me not, sir squire," said Maugrabin Hayraddin—"I can tell thee, that, say what you will of your religion, the goddess whom you worship rides in this company."

"Peace!" said Quentin, in astonishment; "on thy life, not a word farther, but in answer to what I ask thee.—Canst thou be faithful?"

"I can—all men can," said the Bohemian.

"But wilt thou be faithful?"

"Wouldst thou believe me the more should I swear it?" answered Maugrabin, with a sneer.

"Thy life is in my hand," said the young Scot.

"Strike, and see whether I fear to die," answered the Bohemian.

"Will money render thee a trusty guide?" demanded Durward.

"If I be not such without it, No," replied the heathen.

"Then what will bind thee?" asked the Scot.

"Kindness," replied the Bohemian.

"Shall I swear to show thee such, if thou art true guide to us on this pilgrimage?"

"No," replied Hayraddin, "it were extravagant waste of a commodity so rare. To thee I am bound already."

"How?" exclaimed Durward, more surprised than ever.

"Remember the chesnut-trees on the banks of the Cher! The victim, whose body thou didst cut down, was my brother, Zamet the Maugrabin."

"And yet," said Quentin, "I find you in correspondence with those very officers by whom your brother was done to death; for it was one of them who directed me where to meet with you—the

same, doubtless, who procured yonder ladies your services as a guide."

"What can we do?" answered Hayraddin, gloomily—"these men deal with us as the sheep-dogs do with the flock; they protect us for a while, drive us hither and thither at their pleasure, and always end by guiding us to the shambles."

Quentin had afterwards occasion to learn that the Bohemian spoke truth in this particular, and that the provost-guard, employed to suppress the vagabond bands by which the kingdom was infested, entertained correspondence among them, and forbore, for a certain time, the exercise of their duty, which always at last ended in conducting their allies to the gallows. This is a sort of political relation between thief and officer, for the profitable exercise of their mutual professions, which has subsisted in all countries, and is by no means unknown to our own.

Durward, parting from the guide, fell back to the rest of the retinue, very little satisfied with the character of Hayraddin, and entertaining little confidence in the professions of gratitude which he had personally made to him. He proceeded to sound the other two men who had been assigned him for attendants, and he was concerned to find them stupid, and as unfit to assist him with counsel, as in the rencounter they had shown themselves reluctant to use their weapons.

"It is all the better," said Quentin to himself, his spirit rising with the apprehended difficulties of his situation; "that lovely young lady shall owe all to me.—What one hand—ay, and one head can do,—methinks I can boldly count upon. I have seen my father's house on fire, and him and my brothers lying dead amongst the flames—I gave not an inch back, but fought it out to the last. Now I am two years older, and have the best and fairest cause to bear me well, that ever kindled mettle within a brave man's bosom."

Acting upon this resolution, the attention and activity which Quentin bestowed during the journey, had in it something that gave him the appearance of ubiquity. His principal and most favourite post was of course by the side of the ladies; who, sensible of his extreme attention to their safety, began to converse with him in almost the tone of familiar friendship, and appeared to take great pleasure in the naïveté, yet shrewdness, of his conversation. Yet Quentin did not suffer the fascination of this intercourse to interfere with the vigilant discharge of his duty.

If he was often by the side of the countesses, labouring to describe to the natives of a level country the Grampian mountains, and, above all, the beauties of Glen-houlakin,—he was as often riding with Hayraddin, in the front of the cavalcade, questioning him about the road, and the resting-places, and recording his answers in his mind, to ascertain whether, upon cross-examination, he could discover anything like meditated treachery. As often he was in the rear, endeavouring to secure the attachment of the two horsemen, by kind words, gifts, and promises of additional recompence when their task should be accomplished.

In this way they travelled for more than a week,

through by-paths and unfrequented districts, and by circuitous routes, in order to avoid large towns. Nothing remarkable occurred, though they now and then met strolling gangs of Bohemians, who respected them, as under the conduct of one of their tribe,—straggling soldiers, or perhaps banditti, who deemed their party too strong to be attacked,—or parties of the *maréchaussée*, as they would now be termed, whom Louis, who searched the wounds of the land with steel and cautery, employed to suppress the disorderly bands which infested the interior. These last suffered them to pursue their way unmolested, by virtue of a pass-word, with which Quentin had been furnished for that purpose by the king himself.

Their resting-places were chiefly the monasteries, most of which were obliged by the rules of their foundation to receive pilgrims, under which character the ladies travelled, with hospitality, and without any troublesome inquiries into their rank and character, which most persons of distinction were desirous of concealing while in the discharge of their vows. The pretence of weariness was usually employed by the Countesses of Croye, as an excuse for instantly retiring to rest, and Quentin, as their major-domo, arranged all that was necessary betwixt them and their entertainers, with a shrewdness which saved them all trouble, and an alacrity that failed not to excite a corresponding degree of good will on the part of those who were thus sedulously attended to.

One circumstance gave Quentin peculiar trouble, which was the character and nation of his guide, who, as a heathen, and an infidel vagabond, addicted besides to occult arts (the badge of all his tribe), was looked upon as a very improper guest for the holy resting-places at which the company usually halted, and was with the utmost reluctance admitted within even the outer circuit of their walls. This was very embarrassing; for, on the one hand, it was necessary to keep in good humour a man who was possessed of the secret of their expedition; and on the other, Quentin deemed it indispensable to maintain a vigilant though secret watch on Hayraddin's conduct, in order that, as far as might be, he should hold no communication with any one without being observed. This of course was impossible, if the Bohemian was lodged without the precincts of the convent at which they stopped, and Durward could not help thinking that Hayraddin was desirous of bringing about this latter arrangement; for, instead of keeping himself still and quiet in the quarters allotted to him, his conversation, tricks, and songs, were, at the same time, so entertaining to the novices and younger brethren, and so unedifying in the opinion of the seniors of the fraternity, that, in more cases than one, it required all the authority, supported by threats, which Quentin could exert over him, to restrain his irreverent and untimely jocularities, and all the interest he could make with the superiors, to prevent the heathen hound from being thrust out of doors. He succeeded, however, by the adroit manner in which he apologized for the indecorums committed by their attendant, and the skill with which he hinted the hope of his being brought to a better sense of principles and behaviour,

by the neighbourhood of holy relics, consecrated buildings, and, above all, of men dedicated to religion.

But upon the tenth or twelfth day of their journey, after they had entered Flanders, and were approaching the town of Namur, all the efforts of Quentin became inadequate to suppress the consequences of the scandal given by his heathen guide. The scene was a Franciscan convent, and of a strict and reformed order, and the prior a man who afterwards died in the odour of sanctity. After rather more than the usual scruples (which were indeed in such a case to be expected) had been surmounted, the obnoxious Bohemian at length obtained quarters in an out-house inhabited by a lay-brother, who acted as gardener. The ladies retired to their apartment, as usual, and the prior, who chanced to have some distant alliances and friends in Scotland, and who was fond of hearing foreigners tell of their native countries, invited Quentin, with whose mien and conduct he seemed much pleased, to a slight monastic refectory in his own cell. Finding the father a man of intelligence, Quentin did not neglect the opportunity of making himself acquainted with the state of affairs in the country of Liege, of which, during the last two days of their journey, he had heard such reports, as made him very apprehensive for the security of his charge during the remainder of their route, nay, even of the bishop's power to protect them, when they should be safely conducted to his residence. The replies of the prior were not very consolatory.

He said, that "the people of Liege were wealthy burghers, who, like Jehurun of old, had waxed fat and kicked—that they were uplifted in heart because of their wealth and their privileges—that they had divers disputes with the Duke of Burgundy, their liege lord, upon the subject of imposts and immunities—and that they had repeatedly broken out into open mutiny, whereat the duke was so much incensed, as being a man of a hot and fiery nature, that he had sworn, by Saint George, on the next provocation, he would make the city of Liege like to the desolation of Babylon, and the downfall of Tyre, a hissing and a reproach to the whole territory of Flanders."

"And he is a prince, by all report, like to keep such a vow," said Quentin; "so the men of Liege will probably beware how they give him occasion."

"It were to be so hoped," said the prior; "and such are the prayers of the godly in the land, who would not that man's blood were poured forth like water, and that they should perish, even as utter cast-aways, ere they make their peace with Heaven. Also the good bishop labours night and day to preserve peace, as well becometh a servant of the altar; for it is written in holy scripture, *Beati pacifici*. But"—here the good prior stopped, with a deep sigh.

Quentin modestly urged the great importance of which it was to the ladies whom he attended, to have some assured information respecting the internal state of the country, and what an act of christian charity it would be, if the worthy and reverend father would enlighten them upon that subject.

"It is one," said the prior, "on which no man speaks with willingness; for those who speak evil

of the powerful, *etiam in cubiculo*, may find that a winged thing shall carry the matter to his ears. Nevertheless, to render you, who seem an ingenuous youth; and your ladies, who are devout votaresses accomplishing a holy pilgrimage, the little service that is in my power, I will be plain with you."

He then looked cautiously round, and lowered his voice, as if afraid of being overheard.

"The people of Liege," he said, "are privily instigated to their frequent mutinies by men of Belial, who pretend, but, as I hope, falsely, to have commission to that effect from our most christian king; whom, however, I hold to deserve that term better than were consistent with his thus disturbing the peace of a neighbouring state. Yet so it is, that his name is freely used by those who uphold and inflame the discontents at Liege. There is, moreover, in the land, a nobleman of good descent, and fame in warlike affairs; but otherwise, so to speak, *Lapis offensionis et petra scandali*,—a stumbling-block of offence to the countries of Burgundy and Flanders. His name is William de la Marck."

"Called William with the Beard," said the young Scotchman, "or the Wild Boar of Ardennes?"

"And rightly so called, my son," said the prior; "because he is as the wild boar of the forest, which treadeth down with his hoofs, and rendeth with his tusks. And he hath formed to himself a band of more than a thousand men, all, like himself, contempters of civil and ecclesiastical authority, and holds himself independent of the Duke of Burgundy, and maintains himself and his followers by rapine and wrong, wrought, without distinction, upon churchmen and laymen. *Imposuit manus in christos Domini*,—he hath stretched forth his hand upon the anointed of the Lord, regardless of what is written,—'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no wrong.'—Even to our poor house did he send for sums of gold and sums of silver, as a ransom for our lives, and those of our brethren; to which we returned a Latin supplication, stating our inability to answer his demand, and exhorting him in the words of the preacher, *Ne moliaris amico tuo malum, cum habet in te fiduciam*. Nevertheless, this Gulielmus Barbatus, this William de la Marck, as completely ignorant of humane letters as of humanity itself, replied, in his ridiculous jargon, '*Si non payatis, brulabo monasterium vestrum*.'"

"Of which rude Latin, however, you, my good father," said the youth, "were at no loss to conceive the interpretation?"

"Alas, my son," said the prior, "fear and necessity are shrewd interpreters; and we were obliged to melt down the silver vessels of our altar to satisfy the rapacity of this cruel chief—May Heaven requite it to him seven-fold! *Pereat improbus—Amen, amen, anathema esto!*"

"I marvel," said Quentin, "that the Duke of Burgundy, who is so strong and powerful, doth not bait this boar, of whose ravages I have already heard so much."

"Alas! my son," said the prior, "he is now at Peronne, assembling his captains of hundreds and his captains of thousands, to make war against France; and thus, while Heaven hath set discord between the hearts of those great princes, the

country is misused by such subordinate oppressors. But it is in evil time that the duke neglects the cure of these internal gangrenes; for this William de la Marck hath of late entertained open communication with Rouslaer and Pavillon, the chiefs of the discontented at Liege, and it is to be feared he will soon stir them up to some desperate enterprise."

"But the Bishop of Liege," said Quentin, "he hath still power to subdue this disquieted and turbulent spirit—hath he not, good father?—Your answer to this question concerns me much."

"The bishop, my child," replied the prior, "hath the sword of Saint Peter, as well as the keys. He hath power as a secular prince, and he hath the powerful protection of the house of Burgundy; he hath also spiritual authority as a prelate, and he supports both with a reasonable force of good soldiers and men-at-arms. This William de la Marck was bred in his household, and bound to him by many benefits. But he gave vent, even in the court of the bishop, to his fierce and blood-thirsty temper, and was expelled thence for a homicide, committed on one of the bishop's chief domestics. From thenceforward, being banished from the good prelate's presence, he hath been his constant and unrelenting foe; and now, I grieve to say, he hath girded his loins, and strengthened his horn against him."

"You consider, then, the situation of the worthy prelate as being dangerous?" said Quentin, very anxiously.

"Alas! my son," said the good Franciscan, "what or who is there in this weary wilderness, whom we may not hold as in danger? But Heaven forefend, I should speak of the reverend prelate as one whose peril is imminent. He has much treasure, true counsellors, and brave soldiers; and, moreover, a messenger who passed hither to the eastward yesterday, saith that the duke hath dispatched, upon the bishop's request, an hundred men-at-arms, who, with the retinue belonging to each lance, are enough to deal with William de la Marck, on whose name be sorrow!—Amen."

At this crisis their conversation was interrupted by the sacristan, who, in a voice almost inarticulate with anger, accused the Bohemian of having practised the most abominable arts of delusion among the younger brethren. He had added to their nightly meal cups of a heady and intoxicating cordial, of ten times the strength of the most powerful wine, under which several of the fraternity had succumbed,—and indeed, although the sacristan had been strong to resist its influence, they might yet see, from his inflamed countenance and thick speech, that even he, the accuser himself, was in some degree affected by this unhallowed potation. Moreover, the Bohemian had sung songs of worldly vanity and impure pleasures; he had derided the cord of Saint Francis, made jest of his miracles, and termed his votaries fools and lazy knaves. Lastly, he had practised palmistry, and foretold to the young father Cherubim, that he was beloved by a beautiful lady, who should make him father to a thriving boy.

The father prior listened to these complaints for

some time in silence, as struck with mute horror by their enormous atrocity. When the sacristan had concluded, he rose up, descended to the court of the convent, and ordered the lay brethren, on pain of the worst consequences of spiritual disobedience, to beat Hayraddin out of the sacred precincts, with their broom-staves and cart-whips.

This sentence was executed accordingly, in the presence of Quentin Durward, who, howsoever vexed at the occurrence, easily saw that his interference would be of no avail.

The discipline inflicted upon the delinquent, notwithstanding the exhortations of the superior, was more ludicrous than formidable. The Bohemian ran hither and thither through the court, amongst the clamour of voices, and noise of blows, some of which reached him not, because purposely mis-aimed; others, designed for his person, were eluded by his activity; and the few that fell upon his back and shoulders, he took without either complaint or reply. The noise and riot was the greater, that the inexperienced cudgel-players, among whom Hayraddin run the gauntlet, hit each other more frequently than they did him; till at length, desirous of ending a scene which was more scandalous than edifying, the prior commanded the wicket to be flung open, and the Bohemian, darting through it with the speed of lightning, fled forth into the moon-light.

During this scene, a suspicion which Durward had formerly entertained recurred with additional strength. Hayraddin had, that very morning, promised to him more modest and discreet behaviour than he was wont to exhibit, when they rested in a convent on their journey; yet he had broken his engagement, and had been even more offensively obstreperous than usual. Something probably lurked under this; for whatever were the Bohemian's deficiencies, he lacked neither sense, nor, when he pleased, self-command; and might it not be probable that he wished to hold some communication, either with his own horde or some one else, from which he was debarred in the course of the day, by the vigilance with which he was watched by Quentin, and had recourse to this stratagem in order to get himself turned out of the convent?

No sooner did this suspicion dart once more through Quentin's mind, than, alert as he always was in his motions, he resolved to follow his cudgeled guide, and observe (secretly, if possible) how he disposed of himself. Accordingly, when the Bohemian fled, as already mentioned, out at the gate of the convent, Quentin, hastily explaining to the prior the necessity of keeping sight of his guide, followed in pursuit of him.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ESPIED SPY.

What, the rude ranger? and spied spy?—hands off—
You are for no such rustics.

BEN JONSON'S *Tale of Robin Hood*.

WHEN Quentin sallied from the convent, he could mark the precipitate retreat of the Bohemian, whose dark figure was seen in the far moon-light, flying with

the speed of a flogged hound quite through the street of the little village, and across the level meadow that lay beyond.

"My friend runs fast," said Quentin to himself; "but he must run faster yet, to escape the fleetest foot ever pressed the heather of Glen-houlakin."

Being fortunately without his cloak and armour, the Scottish mountaineer was at liberty to put forth a speed which was unrivaled in his own glens, and which, notwithstanding the rate at which the Bohemian ran, was like soon to bring his pursuer up with him. This was not, however, Quentin's object; for he considered it more essential to watch his motions than to interrupt them. He was the rather led to this by the steadiness with which the Bohemian directed his course; and which, continuing even after the impulse of the violent expulsion had subsided, seemed to indicate that his career had some more certain goal for its object than could have suggested itself to a person unexpectedly turned out of good quarters, when midnight was approaching, to seek a new place of repose. He never even looked behind him; and consequently Durward was enabled to follow him unobserved. At length, the Bohemian having traversed the meadow and attained the side of a little stream, the sides of which were clothed with alders and willows, Quentin observed that he stood still and blew a low note on his horn, which was answered by a whistle at some little distance.

"This is a rendezvous," thought Quentin; "but how shall I come near enough to overhear the import of what passes? The sound of my steps and the rustling of the boughs through which I must force my passage will betray me, unless I am cautious. I will stalk them, by Saint Andrew! as if they were Glen-Isla deer—they shall learn that I have not conned wood-craft for nought. Yonder they meet, the two shadows—and two of them there are—odds against me if I am discovered, and if their purpose be unfriendly, as is much to be doubted. And then the Countess Isabelle loses her poor friend! Well—and he were not worthy to be called such if he were not ready to meet a dozen in her behalf.—Have I not crossed swords with Dunois, the best knight in France, and shall I fear a tribe of yonder vagabonds?—Pshaw!—God and Saint Andrew to friend, they will find me both stout and wary."

Thus resolving, and with a degree of caution taught him by his sylvan habits, our friend descended into the channel of the little stream, which varied in depth, sometimes scarce covering his shoes, sometimes coming up to his knees, and so crept along, his form concealed by the boughs overhanging the bank, and his steps unheard by the ripple of the water.—(We have ourselves, in the days of yore, thus approached the nest of the wakeful raven.)—In this manner the Scot drew near, unperceived, until he distinctly heard the voices of those who were the subject of his observation, though he could not distinguish the words. Being at this time under the drooping branches of a magnificent weeping willow, which almost swept the surface of the water, he caught hold of one of its boughs, by the assistance of which, exerting at once much agility,

dexterity, and strength, he raised himself up into the body of the tree, and sat, secure from discovery, among the central branches.

From this situation he could discover that the person with whom Hayraddin was now conversing was one of his own tribe, and, at the same time, he perceived, to his great disappointment, that no approximation could enable him to comprehend their language, which was totally unknown to him. They laughed much, and as Hayraddin made a sign of skipping about, and ended by rubbing his shoulder with his hand, Durward had no doubt that he was relating the story of the bastinading which he had sustained previous to his escape from the convent.

On a sudden, a whistle was again heard in the distance, which was once more answered by a low tone or two of Hayraddin's horn. Presently afterwards, a tall, stout, soldierly-looking man, a strong contrast in point of thewes and sinews to the small and slender-limbed Bohemians, made his appearance. He had a broad baldric over his shoulder, which sustained a sword that hung almost across his person; his hose were much slashed, through which slashes was drawn silk or tiffany, of various colours; they were tied by at least five hundred points or strings made of ribbon, to the tight buff-jacket which he wore, and the right sleeve of which displayed a silver boar's head, the crest of his captain. A very small hat sat jauntily on one side of his head, from which descended a quantity of curled hair, which fell on each side of a broad face, and mingled with as broad a beard, about four inches long. He held a long lance in his hand; and his whole equipment was that of one of the German adventurers, who were known by the name of lanzknechts, in English, spearmen, who constituted a formidable part of the infantry of the period. These mercenaries were, of course, a fierce and rapacious soldiery, and having an idle tale current among themselves, that a lanzknecht was refused admittance into heaven on account of his vices, and into hell on the score of his tumultuous, mutinous, and insubordinate disposition, they manfully acted as if they neither sought the one, nor eschewed the other.

"Donner and blitz!" was his first salutation, in a sort of German-French, which we can only imperfectly imitate, "Why have you kept me dancing in attendance dis drie nights?"

"I could not see you sooner, meinherr," said Hayraddin, very submissively; "there is a young Scot, with as quick an eye as the wild-cat, who watches my least motions. He suspects me already, and, should he find his suspicion confirmed, I were a dead man on the spot, and he would carry back the women into France again."

"Was henker!" said the lanzknecht; "we are three—we will attack them to-morrow, and carry the women off without going farther. You said the two valets were cowards—you and your comrade may manage them, and the teufel shall hold me, but I match your Scots wild-cat."

"You will find that fool-hardy," said Hayraddin; "for, besides that we ourselves count not much in fighting, this spark hath matched himself with the best knight in France, and come off with honour—

I have seen those who saw him press Dunois hard enough."

"Hagel and sturmwetter! It is but your cowardice that speaks," said the German soldier.

"I am no more a coward than yourself," said Hayraddin; "but my trade is not fighting.—If you keep the appointment where it was laid, it is well—if not, I guide them safely to the bishop's palace, and William de la Marck may easily possess himself of them there, providing he is half as strong as he pretended a week since."

"Poz tausend!" said the soldier, "we are as strong and stronger; but we hear of a hundreds of the lances of Burgund,—das ist,—see you,—five men to a lance do make five hundreds, and then, hold me the devil, they will be fainer to seek for us, than we to seek for them; for der bischoff hath a goot force on footing—ay, indeed!"

"You must then hold to the ambuscade at the Cross of the Three Kings, or give up the adventure," said the Bohemian.

"Geb up—geb up the adventure of the rich bride for our noble hauptman—Teufel! I will charge through hell first.—Mein soul, we will be all princes and hertzogs, whom they call dukes, and we will hab a snab at the wein-kellar, and at the mouldy French crowns, and it may be at the pretty garces too, when he with de beard is weary on them."

"The ambuscade at the Cross of the Three Kings then still holds?" said the Bohemian.

"Mein Got, ay,—you will swear to bring them there; and when they are on their knees before the cross, and down from off their horses, which all men do, except such black heathens as thou, we will make in on them, and they are ours."

"Ay; but I promised this piece of necessary villany only on one condition," said Hayraddin.—"I will not have a hair of the young man's head touched. If you swear this to me, by your three dead men of Cologne, I will swear to you, by the seven night walkers, that I will serve you truly as to the rest. And if you break your oath, the night walkers shall wake you seven nights from your sleep, between night and morning, and, on the eighth, they shall strangle and devour you."

"But, donner and hagel, what need you be so curious about the life of this boy, who is neither your blood nor kin?" said the German.

"No matter for that, honest Heinrich; some men have pleasure in cutting throats, some in keeping them whole—So swear to me, that you will spare him life and limb, or, by the bright star Aldeboran, this matter shall go no further—Swear, and by the three kings, as you call them, of Cologne—I know you care for no other oath."

"Du bist ein comische man," said the lanzknecht. "I swear"—

"Not yet," said the Bohemian—"Faces about, brave lanzknecht, and look to the east, else the kings may not hear you."

The soldier took the oath in manner prescribed, and then declared that he would be in readiness, observing the place was quite convenient, being scarce five miles from their present leaguer.

"But, were it not making sure work to have a fahnlein of riders on the other road, by the left side

of the inn, which might trap them if they go that way?"

The Bohemian considered a moment, and then answered, "No—the appearance of their troops in that direction might alarm the garrison of Namur, and then they would have a doubtful fight, instead of assured success. Besides, they shall travel on the right bank of the Maes, for I can guide them which way I will; for, sharp as this same Scottish mountaineer is, he hath never asked any one's advice, save mine, upon the direction of their route.—Undoubtedly, I was assigned to him by an assured friend, whose word no man mistrusts till they come to know him a little."

"Hark ye, friend Hayraddin," said the soldier, "I would ask you somewhat.—You and your bruder were, as you say yourself, gross sternen-deuter, that is, star-lookers and geister-seers—Now, what henker was it made you not foresee him to be hanged?"

"I will tell you, Heinrick," said Hayraddin;—"if I could have known my brother was such a fool as to tell the counsel of King Louis to Duke Charles of Burgundy, I could have foretold his death as sure as I can foretel fair weather in July. Louis hath both ears and hands at the court of Burgundy, and Charles's counsellors love the chink of French gold as well as thou doest the clatter of a wine-pot.—But fare thee well, and keep appointment—I must await my early Scot a bow-shot without the gate of the den of the lazy swine yonder, else will he think me about some excursion which bodes no good to the success of his journey."

"Take a draught of comfort first," said the lanz-knecht, tendering him a flask,—“but I forgot; thou art beast enough to drink nothing but water, like a vile vassal of Mahound and Termagund."

"Thou art thyself a vassal of the wine-measure and the flagon," said the Bohemian,—“I marvel not that thou art only trusted with the blood-thirsty, and the violent part of executing what better heads have devised.—He must drink no wine, who would know the thoughts of others, or hide his own. But why preach to thee, who hast a thirst as eternal as a sand-bank in Arabia?—Fare thee well.—Take my comrade Tuisco with thee—his appearance about the monastery may breed suspicion."

The two worthies parted, after each had again pledged himself to keep the rendezvous at the Cross of the Three Kings.

Quentin Durward watched until they were out of sight, and then descended from his place of concealment, his heart throbbing at the narrow escape which he and his fair charge had made—if, indeed, it could yet be achieved—from a deep-laid plan of villany. Afraid, on his return to the monastery, of stumbling upon Hayraddin, he made a long détour, at the expense of traversing some very rough ground, and was thus enabled to return to his asylum on a different point from that on which he left it.

On the route, he communed earnestly with himself concerning the safest plan to be pursued. He had formed the resolution, when he first heard Hayraddin avow his treachery, to put him to death so soon as the conference broke up, and his companions were at a sufficient distance; but when he heard the

Bohemian express so much interest in saving his own life, he felt it would be difficult for him to execute upon him, in its rigour, the punishment his treachery had deserved. He therefore resolved to spare his life, and even, if possible, still to use his services as a guide, under such precautions as should ensure the security of the precious charge, to the preservation of which his own life was internally devoted.

But whither were they to turn—the Countesses of Croye could neither obtain shelter in Burgundy, from which they had fled, nor in France, from which they had been in a manner expelled. The violence of Duke Charles in the one country, was scarce more to be feared than the cold and tyrannical policy of King Louis in the other. After deep thought, Durward could form no better or safer plan for their safety, than that, evading the ambuscade, they should take the road to Liege by the left hand of the Maes, and throw themselves, as the ladies originally designed, upon the protection of the excellent bishop. That prelate's will to protect them could not be doubted, and, if reinforced by this Burgundian party of men-at-arms, he might be considered as having the power. At any rate, if the dangers to which he was exposed from the hostility of William de la Marck, and from the troubles in the city of Liege, appeared imminent, he could still protect the unfortunate ladies until they could be dispatched to Germany with a suitable escort.

To sum up this reasoning,—for when is a mental argument conducted without some reference to selfish considerations?—Quentin imagined that the death or captivity to which King Louis had, in cold blood, consigned him, set him at liberty from his engagements to the crown of France; which, therefore, it was his determined purpose to renounce. The Bishop of Liege was likely, he concluded, to need soldiers, and he thought that, by the interposition of his fair friends, who now, especially the elder countess, treated him with much familiarity, he might get some command, and perhaps might have the charge of conducting the ladies of Croye to some place more safe than the neighbourhood of Liege. And, to conclude, the ladies had talked, although almost in a sort of jest, of raising the countess's own vassals, and, as others did in these stormy times, fortifying her strong castle against all assailants whatsoever; they had jestingly asked Quentin, whether he would accept the perilous office of their seneschal; and, on his accepting the office with ready glee and devotion, they had in the same spirit, permitted him to kiss both their hands on that confidential and honourable appointment. Nay, he thought that the hand of the Countess Isabelle, one of the best formed and most beautiful to which true vassal ever did such homage, trembled when his lips rested on it a moment longer than ceremony required, and that some confusion appeared on her cheek and in her eye as she withdrew it. Something might come of all this; and what brave man, at Quentin Durward's age, but would gladly have taken the thoughts which it awakened into the considerations which were to determine his conduct?

This point settled, he had next to consider in what degree he was to use the further guidance of

the faithless Bohemian. He had renounced his first thought of killing him in the wood, and, if he took another guide, and dismissed him alive, it would be sending the traitor to the camp of William de la Marck, with intelligence of their motions. He thought of taking the prior into his councils, and requesting him to detain the Bohemian by force, until they should have time to reach the bishop's castle; but, on reflection, he dared not hazard such a proposition to one who was timid both as an old man and a friar, who held the safety of his convent the most important object of his duty, and who trembled at the mention of the Wild Boar of Ardennes.

At length Durward settled a plan of operation, on which he could the better reckon, as the execution rested entirely upon himself; and, in the cause in which he was engaged, he felt himself capable of everything. With a firm and bold heart, though conscious of the dangers of his situation, Quentin might be compared to one walking under a load, of the weight of which he is conscious, but which yet is not beyond his strength and power of endurance. Just as his plan was determined, he reached the convent.

Upon knocking gently at the gate, a brother, considerably stationed for that purpose by the prior, opened it, and acquainted him that the brethren were to be stationed in the choir till day-break, praying Heaven to forgive to the community the various scandals which had that evening taken place among them.

The worthy friar offered Quentin permission to attend their devotions; but his clothes were in such a wet condition, that the young Scot was obliged to decline the opportunity, and request permission, instead, to sit by the kitchen fire, in order to his attire being dried before morning; as he was particularly desirous that the Bohemian, when they should next meet, should observe no traces of his having been abroad during the night. The friar not only granted his request, but afforded him his own company, which fell in very happily with the desire which Durward had to obtain information concerning the two routes which he had heard mentioned by the Bohemian in his conversation with the lanzknecht. The friar, intrusted upon many occasions with the business of the convent abroad, was the person in the fraternity best qualified to afford him the information he requested, but observed, that, as true pilgrims, it became the duty of the ladies whom Quentin escorted, to take the road on the right side of the Maes, by the Cross of the Kings, where the blessed relics of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar (as the catholic church has named the eastern Magi who came to Bethlehem with their offerings), had rested as they were transported to Cologne, and on which spot they had wrought many miracles.

Quentin replied, that the ladies were determined to observe all the holy stations with the utmost punctuality, and would certainly visit that of the cross, either in going to or returning from Cologne, but they had heard reports that the road by the right side of the river was at present rendered unsafe by the soldiers of the ferocious William de la Marck.

"Now may Heaven forbid," said Father Francis, "that the Wild Boar of Ardennes should again make his lair so near us!—Nevertheless, the broad Maes will be a good barrier betwixt us, even should it so chance."

"But it will be no barrier between my ladies and the marauder, should we cross the river, and travel on the right bank," answered the Scot.

"Heaven will protect its own, young man," said the friar; "for it were hard to think that the kings of yonder blessed city of Cologne, who will not endure that a Jew or infidel should even enter within the walls of their town, could be oblivious enough to permit their worshipers, coming to their shrine as true pilgrims, to be plundered and misused by such a miscreant dog as this Boar of Ardennes, who is worse than a whole desert of Saracen heathens, and all the ten tribes of Israel to boot."

Whatever reliance Quentin, as a sincere catholic, was bound to rest upon the special protection of Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar, he could not but recollect, that the pilgrim habits of the ladies being assumed out of mere earthly policy, he and his charge could scarce expect their countenance on the present occasion; and therefore resolved, as far as possible, to avoid placing the ladies in any predicament where miraculous interposition might be necessary; whilst, in the simplicity of his good faith, he himself vowed a pilgrimage to the three kings of Cologne in his own proper person, providing the simulate design of those over whose safety he was now watching, should be permitted by those reasonable and royal, as well as sainted personages, to attain the desired effect.

That he might enter into this obligation with all solemnity, he requested the friar to show him into one of the various chapels which opened from the main body of the church of the convent, where, upon his knees, and with sincere devotion, he ratified the vow which he had made internally. The distant sound of the choir, the solemnity of the deep and dead hour which he had chosen for this act of devotion, the effect of the glimmering lamp with which the little Gothic building was illuminated—all contributed to throw Quentin's mind into the state when it most readily acknowledges its human frailty, and seeks that supernatural aid and protection, which, in every worship, must be connected with repentance for past sins, and resolutions of future amendment. That the object of his devotion was misplaced, was not the fault of Quentin; and, its purpose being sincere, we can scarce suppose it unacceptable to the only true Deity, who regards the motives, and not the form of prayer, and in whose eyes the sincere devotion of a heathen is more estimable than the specious hypocrisy of a pharisee.

Having commended himself and his helpless companions to the saints, and to the keeping of Providence, Quentin at length retired to rest, leaving the friar much edified by the depth and sincerity of his devotion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PALMISTRY.

When many a merry tale and many a song
Cheer'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long.
The rough road, then, returning in a round,
Mock'd our enchanted steps, for all was fairy ground.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

By peep of day Quentin Durward had forsaken his little cell, had roused the sleepy grooms, and, with more than his wonted care, seen that everything was prepared for the day's journey. Girths and bridles, the horse-furniture, and the shoes of the horses themselves, were carefully inspected with his own eyes, that there might be as little chance as possible of the occurrence of any of those casualties which, petty as they seem, often interrupt or disconcert a journey. The horses were also, under his own inspection, carefully fed, so as to render them fit for a long day's journey, or, if that should be necessary, for a hasty flight.

Quentin then betook himself to his own chamber, armed himself with unusual care, and belted on his sword with the feeling at once of approaching danger, and of stern determination to dare it to the uttermost.

These generous feelings gave him a loftiness of step, and a dignity of manner, which the ladies of Croye had not yet observed in him, though they had been highly pleased and interested by the grace, yet naïveté, of his general behaviour and conversation, and the mixture of shrewd intelligence which naturally belonged to him, with the simplicity arising from his secluded education and distant country. He let them understand, that it would be necessary that they should prepare for their journey this morning rather earlier than usual; and accordingly, they left the convent immediately after a morning repast, for which, as well as the other hospitalities of the house, the ladies made acknowledgment by a donation to the altar, befitting rather their rank than appearance. But this excited no suspicion, as they were supposed to be Englishwomen; and the attribute of superior wealth attached at that time to the insular character as strongly as in our own day.

The prior blessed them as they mounted to depart, and congratulated Quentin on the absence of his heathen guide; "for," said the venerable man, "better stumble in the path, than be upheld by the arm of a thief or robber."

Quentin was not quite of his opinion; for, dangerous as he knew the Bohemian to be, he thought he could use his services, and, at the same time, baffle his treasonable purpose, now that he saw clearly to what it tended. But his anxiety upon this subject was soon at an end, for the little cavalcade was not an hundred yards from the monastery and the village before Maugrabin joined it, riding as usual on his little active and wild-looking jennet. Their road led them along the side of the same brook where Quentin had overheard the mysterious conference of the preceding evening, and Hayraddin had not long rejoined them, ere they passed under the very

willow-tree which had afforded Durward the means of concealment, when he became an unsuspected hearer of what then passed betwixt that false guide and the lanzknecht.

The recollections which the spot brought back stirred Quentin to enter abruptly into conversation with his guide, whom hitherto he had scarce spoken to.

"Where hast thou found night-quarter, thou profane knave?" said the Scot.

"Your wisdom may guess, by looking on my garb-dine," answered the Bohemian, pointing to his dress, which was covered with the seeds of hay.

"A good haystack," said Quentin, "is a convenient bed for an astrologer, and a much better than a heathen scoffer at our blessed religion, and its ministers, ever deserves."

"It suited my Klepper better than me though," said Hayraddin, patting his horse on the neck; "for he had food and shelter at the same time. The old bald fools turned him loose, as if a wise man's horse could have infected with wit or sagacity a whole convent of asses. Lucky that Klepper knows my whistle, and follows me as truly as a hound, or we had never met again, and you in your turn might have whistled for a guide."

"I have told thee more than once," said Durward, sternly, "to restrain thy ribaldry when thou chancest to be in worthy men's company, a thing which, I believe, hath rarely happened to thee in thy life before now; and I promise thee, that, did I hold thee as faithless a guide as I esteem thee a blasphemous and worthless caitiff, my Scottish dirk and thy heathenish heart had ere now been acquainted, although the doing such a deed were as ignoble as the sticking of swine."

"A wild-boar is near akin to a sow," said the Bohemian, without flinching from the sharp look with which Quentin regarded him, or altering, in the slightest degree, the caustic indifference which he affected in his language; "and many men," he subjoined, "find both pride, pleasure, and profit, in sticking them."

Astonished at the man's ready confidence, and uncertain whether he did not know more of his own history and feelings than was pleasant for him to converse upon, Quentin broke off a conversation in which he had gained no advantage over Maugrabin, and fell back to his accustomed post beside the ladies.

We have already observed, that a considerable degree of familiarity had begun to establish itself between them. The elder countess treated him (being once well assured of the nobility of his birth) like a favoured equal; and though her niece showed her regard to their protector less freely, yet, under every disadvantage of bashfulness and timidity, Quentin thought he could plainly perceive, that his company and conversation were not by any means indifferent to her.

Nothing gives such life and soul to youthful gaiety as the consciousness that it is successfully received; and Quentin had accordingly, during the former period of their journey, amused his fair charge with the liveliness of his conversation, and the songs and tales of his native country, the former of which he

sung in his native language, while his efforts to render the latter into his foreign and imperfect French, gave rise to a hundred little mistakes and errors of speech, as diverting as the narratives themselves. But on this anxious morning, he rode beside the ladies of Croye without any of his usual attempts to amuse them, and they could not help observing his silence as something remarkable.

"Our young companion has seen a wolf," said the Lady Hameline, alluding to an ancient superstition, "and he has lost his tongue in consequence."

"To say I had tracked a fox were nearer the mark," thought Quentin, but gave the reply no utterance.

"Are you well, Signior Quentin?" said the Countess Isabelle, in a tone of interest at which she herself blushed, while she felt that it was something more than the distance between them warranted.

"He hath sat up carousing with the jolly friars," said the Lady Hameline; "the Scots are like the Germans, who spend all their mirth over the Rheinwein, and bring only their staggering steps to the dance in the evening, and their aching heads to the ladies' bower in the morning."

"Nay, gentle ladies," said Quentin, "I deserve not your reproach. The good friars were at their devotions almost all night; and for myself, my drink was barely a cup of their thinnest and most ordinary wine."

"It is the badness of his cheer that has put him out of humour," said the Countess Isabelle. "Cheer up, Signior Quentin; and should we ever visit my ancient Castle of Bracquemont together, if I myself should stand your cup-bearer, and hand it to you, you shall have a generous cup of wine, that the like never grew upon the vines of Hochheim or Johannisberg."

"A glass of water, noble lady, from your hand"—Thus far did Quentin begin, but his voice trembled; and Isabelle continued, as if she had been insensible of the tenderness of the accentuation upon the personal pronoun.

"The wine was stocked in the deep vaults of Bracquemont, by my great-grandfather the Rhingrave Godfrey"—

"Who won the hand of her great-grandmother," said the Lady Hameline, interrupting her niece, "by proving himself the best son of chivalry, at the great tournament of Strasbourg—ten knights were slain in the lists. But these days are now over, and no one now thinks of encountering peril for the sake of honour, or to relieve distressed beauty."

To this speech, which was made in the tone in which a modern beauty, whose charms are rather on the wane, may be heard to condemn the rudeness of the present age, Quentin took upon himself to reply, "that there was no lack of that chivalry which the Lady Hameline seemed to consider as extinct, and that, were it eclipsed everywhere else, it would still glow in the bosoms of the Scottish gentlemen."

"Hear him!" said the Lady Hameline; "he would have us believe, that in his cold and bleak country still lives the noble fire which has decayed in France and Germany! The poor youth is like a

Swiss mountaineer, mad with partiality to his native land—he will next tell us of the vines and olives of Scotland."

"No, madam," said Durward; "of the wine and the oil of our mountains I can say little more, than that our swords can compel these rich productions, as tribute from our wealthier neighbours. But for the unblemished faith and unfaded honour of Scotland, I must now put to the proof how far you can repose trust in them, however mean the individual who can offer nothing more as a pledge of your safety."

"You speak mysteriously—you know of some pressing and present danger," said the Lady Hameline.

"I have read it in his eye for this hour past," exclaimed the Lady Isabelle, clasping her hands. "Sacred Virgin, what will become of us?"

"Nothing, I hope, but what you would desire," answered Durward. "And now I am compelled to ask—Gentle ladies, can you trust me?"

"Trust you?" answered the Countess Hameline—"certainly—But why the question? Or how far do you ask our confidence?"

"I, on my part," said the Countess Isabelle, "trust you implicitly, and without condition. If you can deceive us, Quentin, I will no more look for truth, save in Heaven."

"Gentle lady," replied Durward, highly gratified, "you do me but justice. My object is to alter our route, by proceeding directly by the left bank of the Maes to Liege, instead of crossing at Namur. This differs from the order assigned by King Louis, and the instructions given to the guide. But I heard news in the monastery, of marauders on the right bank of the Maes, and of the march of Burgundian soldiers to suppress them. Both circumstances alarm me for your safety. Have I your permission so far to deviate from the route of your journey?"

"My ample and full permission," said the younger lady.

"Cousin," said the Lady Hameline, "I believe with you, that the youth means us well;—but bethink you—we transgress the instructions of King Louis, so positively iterated."

"And why should we regard his instructions?" said the Lady Isabelle. "I am, I thank Heaven for it, no subject of his; and, as a suppliant, he has abused the confidence he induced me to repose in him. I would not dishonour this young gentleman by weighing his word for an instant against the injunctions of yonder crafty and selfish despot."

"Now, may God bless you for that very word, lady," said Quentin, joyously; "and if I deserve not the trust it expresses, tearing with wild-horses in this life, and eternal tortures in the next, were e'en too good for my deserts."

So saying, he spurred his horse, and rejoined the Bohemian. This worthy seemed of a remarkably passive, if not a forgiving temper. Injury or threat never dwelt, or at least seemed not to dwell, on his recollection; and he entered into the conversation which Durward presently commenced, just as if there had been no unkindly word betwixt them in the course of the morning.

The dog, thought the Scotchman, snarls not now,

because he intends to clear scores with me at once and for ever, when he can snatch me by the very throat; but we will try for once whether we cannot foil a traitor at his own weapons.—“Honest Hayraddin,” he said, “thou hast travelled with us for ten days, yet hast never shown us a specimen of your skill in fortune-telling; which you are, nevertheless, so fond of practising, that you must needs display your gifts in every convent at which we stop, at the risk of being repaid by a night’s lodging under a haystack.”

“You have never asked me for a specimen of my skill,” said the gipsy. “You are like the rest of the world, content to ridicule those mysteries which they do not understand.”

“Give me a proof of your skill,” said Quentin; and, ungloving his hand, he held it out to the gipsy.

Hayraddin carefully regarded all the lines which crossed each other on the Scotchman’s palm, and noted, with equally scrupulous attention, the little risings or swellings at the roots of the fingers, which were then believed as intimately connected with the disposition, habits, and fortunes of the individual, as the organs of the brain are pretended to be in our own time.

“Here is a hand,” said Hayraddin, “which speaks of toils endured, and dangers encountered. I read in it an early acquaintance with the hilt of the sword; and yet some acquaintance also with the clasps of the mass-book.”

“This of my past life you have learned elsewhere,” said Quentin; “tell me something of the future.”

“This line from the hill of Venus,” said the Bohemian, “not broken off abruptly, but attending and accompanying the line of life, argues a certain and large fortune by marriage, whereby the party shall be raised among the wealthy and the noble by the influence of successful love.”

“Such promises you make to all who ask your advice,” said Quentin; “they are part of your art.”

“What I tell you is as certain,” said Hayraddin, “as that you shall in brief space be menaced with mighty danger; which I infer from this bright blood-red line cutting the table-line transversely, and intimating stroke of sword, or other violence, from which you shall only be saved by the attachment of a faithful friend.”

“Thyself, ha?” said Quentin, somewhat indignant that the chiromantist should thus practise on his credulity, and endeavour to found a reputation by predicting the consequences of his own treachery.

“My art,” replied the Zingaro, “tells me nought that concerns myself.”

“In this, then, the seers of my land,” said Quentin, “excel your boasted knowledge; for their skill teaches them the dangers by which they are themselves beset. I left not my hills without having felt a portion of the double vision with which their inhabitants are gifted; and I will give thee a proof of it, in exchange for thy specimen of palmistry. Hayraddin, the danger which threatens me lies on the right bank of the river—I will avoid it by travelling to Liege on the left bank.”

The guide listened with an apathy, which, knowing the circumstances in which Hayraddin stood,

Quentin could not by any means comprehend. “If you accomplish your purpose,” was the Bohemian’s reply, “the dangerous crisis will be transferred from your lot to mine.”

“I thought,” said Quentin, “that you said but now, that you could not presage your own fortune?”

“Not in the manner in which I have but now told you yours,” answered Hayraddin; “but it requires little knowledge of Louis of Valois, to presage that he will hang your guide, because your pleasure was to deviate from the road which he recommended.”

“The attaining with safety the purpose of the journey, and ensuring its happy termination,” said Quentin, “must atone for a deviation from the exact line of the prescribed route.”

“Ay,” replied the Bohemian, “if you are sure that the king thought of the same termination of the pilgrimage which he insinuated to you.”

“And of what other termination is it possible that he could have been meditating? or why should you suppose he had any purpose in his thought, other than was avowed in his direction?” answered Quentin.

“Simply,” replied the Zingaro, “that those who know aught of the most christian king, are aware, that the purpose about which he seems most anxious, is always that which he is least willing to declare. Let our gracious Louis send twelve embassies, and I will forfeit my neck to the gallows a year before it is due, if in eleven of them there is not something at the bottom of the ink-horn more than the pen has written in the letters of credence.”

“I regard not your foul suspicions,” replied Quentin; “my duty is plain and peremptory—to convey these ladies in safety to Liege; and I take it on me to think that I best discharge that duty in changing our prescribed route, and keeping the left side of the river Maes. It is likewise the direct road to Liege. By crossing the river we should lose time and incur fatigue to no purpose;—wherefore should we do so?”

“Only because pilgrims, as they call themselves, destined for Cologne,” said Hayraddin, “do not usually descend the Maes so low as Liege; and that the route of the ladies will be accounted contradictory of their professed destination.”

“If we are challenged on that account,” said Quentin, “we will say that alarms of the wicked Duke of Gueldres, or of William de la Marck, or of the *éscorcheurs* and *lanzknecchts*, on the right side of the river, justify our holding by the left, instead of our intended route.”

“As you will, my good signior,” replied the Bohemian. “I am, for my part, equally ready to guide you down the left as down the right side of the Maes—your excuse to your master you must make out for yourself.”

Quentin, although rather surprised, was, at the same time, delighted with the ready, or, at least, the unrepugnant, acquiescence of Hayraddin in their change of route; for he needed his assistance as a guide, and yet had feared that the disconcerting of his intended act of treachery would have driven him to extremity. Besides, to expel the Bohemian from

their society would have been the ready mode to bring down William de la Marck, with whom he was in correspondence, upon their intended route; whereas, while with them, Quentin thought he could manage to prevent Hayraddin having any communication with strangers, unless he was himself aware of it.

Leaving off, therefore, all thoughts of their original route, the little party followed that by the left bank of the broad Maes so speedily and successfully, that the next day early brought them to the purposed end of their journey. They found that the Bishop of Liege—for the sake of his health, as he himself alleged, but rather, perhaps, to avoid being surprised by the numerous and mutinous population of the city—had established his residence in his beautiful castle of Schonwaldt, about a mile without Liege.

Just as they approached the castle, they saw the prelate returning in long procession from the neighbouring city, in which he had been officiating at the performance of high mass. He was at the head of a splendid train of religious, civil, and military men mingled together—or, as the old ballad-maker expresses it,

With many a cross-bearer before,
And many a spear behind.

The procession made a noble appearance as, winding along the verdant banks of the broad Maes, it wheeled into, and was as it were devoured by, the huge Gothic portal of the episcopal residence.

But when the party came more near, they found that circumstances around the castle argued a doubt and sense of insecurity, which contradicted that display of pomp and power which they had just witnessed. Strong guards of the bishop's soldiers were heedfully maintained all around the mansion and its immediate vicinity; and the prevailing appearances in an ecclesiastical court seemed to argue a sense of danger in the reverend prelate, who found it necessary thus to surround himself with all the defensive precautions of war. The ladies of Croye, when announced by Quentin, were reverently ushered into the great hall, where they met with the most cordial reception from the bishop, who met them there at the head of his little court. He would not permit them to kiss his hand, but welcomed them with a salute which had something in it of gallantry on the part of a prince to fine women, and something also of the holy affection of a pastor to the sisters of his flock.

Louis of Bourbon, the reigning Bishop of Liege, was in truth a generous and a kind-hearted prince; whose life had not indeed been always confined, with precise strictness, within the bounds of his clerical character; but who, notwithstanding, had uniformly maintained the frank and honourable character of the house of Bourbon, from which he was descended.

In latter times, as age advanced, the prelate had adopted a life more befitting a member of the hierarchy than his early reign had exhibited, and was loved among the neighbouring princes, as a noble ecclesiastic, generous and magnificent in his

ordinary mode of life, though preserving no very severe rectitude of character, and governing with an easy indifference, which, amid his wealthy and mutinous subjects, rather encouraged than subdued rebellious purposes.

The bishop was so fast an ally of the Duke of Burgundy, that the latter claimed almost a joint sovereignty in his bishopric, and repaid the good-natured ease with which the prelate admitted claims which he might easily have disputed, by taking his part on all occasions, with the determined and furious zeal which was a part of his character. He used to say, he considered Liege as his own, the bishop as his brother (indeed they might be accounted such, in consequence of the duke having married, to his first wife, the bishop's sister), and that he who annoyed Louis of Bourbon, had to do with Charles of Burgundy; a threat which, considering the character and the power of the prince who used it, would have been powerful with any but the rich and discontented city of Liege, where much wealth had, according to the ancient proverb, made wit waver.

The prelate, as we have said, assured the ladies of Croye of such intercession as his interest at the court of Burgundy, used to the uttermost, might gain for them, and which, he hoped, might be the more effectual, as Campo-basso, from some late discoveries, stood rather lower than formerly in the duke's personal favour. He promised them also such protection as it was in his power to afford; but the sigh with which he gave the warrant, seemed to allow that his power was more precarious than in words he was willing to admit.

"At every event, my dearest daughters," said the bishop, with an air in which, as in his previous salute, a mixture of spiritual unction qualified the hereditary gallantry of the house of Bourbon, "Heaven forbid I should abandon the lamb to the wicked wolf, or noble ladies to the oppression of faitours. I am a man of peace, though my abode now rings with arms; but be assured I will care for your safety as for my own; and should matters become yet more distracted here, which, with Our Lady's grace, we trust will be rather pacified than inflamed, we will provide for your safe-conduct to Germany; for not even the will of our brother and protector, Charles of Burgundy, shall prevail with us to dispose of you in any respect contrary to your own inclinations. We cannot comply with your request of sending you to a convent; for, alas! such is the influence of the sons of Belial among the inhabitants of Liege, that we know no retreat to which our authority extends, beyond the bounds of our own castle, and the protection of our soldiery. But here you are most welcome, and your train shall have all honourable entertainment; especially this youth, whom you recommend so particularly to our countenance, and on whom we bestow our blessing."

Quentin kneeled, as in duty bound, to receive the episcopal benediction.

"For yourselves," proceeded the good prelate, "you shall reside here with my sister Isabella, a canoness of Triers, and with whom you may dwell in all honour, even under the roof of so gay a bachelor as the Bishop of Liege."

He gallantly conducted the ladies to his sister's

apartment, as he concluded the harangue of welcome; and his master of the household, an officer, who, having taken deacon's orders, held something between a secular and ecclesiastical character, entertained Quentin with the hospitality which his master enjoined, while the other personages of the retinue of the ladies of Croye were committed to the inferior departments.

In this arrangement Quentin could not help remarking, that the presence of the Bohemian, so much objected to in country convents, seemed, in the household of this wealthy, and perhaps we might say worldly, prelate, to attract neither objection nor remark.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CITY.

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To any sudden act of mutiny!

Julius Cæsar.

SEPARATED from the Lady Isabelle, whose looks had been for so many days his load-star, Quentin felt a strange vacancy and chillness of the heart, which he had not yet experienced in any of the vicissitudes to which his life had subjected him. No doubt the cessation of the close and unavoidable intercourse and intimacy betwixt them was the necessary consequence of the countess having obtained a place of settled residence; for, under what pretext could she, had she meditated such an impropriety, have had a gallant young squire, such as Quentin, in constant attendance upon her?

But the shock of the separation was not the more welcome that it seemed unavoidable, and the proud heart of Quentin swelled at finding he was parted with like an ordinary postilion, or an escort whose duty is discharged; while his eyes sympathized so far as to drop a secret tear or two over the ruins of all those airy castles, so many of which he had employed himself in constructing during their too interesting journey. He made a manly, but, at first, a vain effort, to throw off this mental dejection; and so, yielding to the feelings he could not suppress, he sat him down in one of the deep recesses formed by a window which lighted the great Gothic hall of Schonwaldt, and there mused upon his hard fortune, which had not assigned him rank or wealth sufficient to prosecute his daring suit. At length his natural buoyancy of temper returned, much excited by the title of an old romaunt which had been just printed at Strasbourg, and which lay beside him in the window, the title of which set forth,

How the squire of lowe degree
Loved the king's daughter of Hongarie.

While he was tracing the "letteres blake" of the ditty so congenial to his own situation, Quentin was interrupted by a touch on the shoulder, and, looking up, beheld the Bohemian standing by him.

Hayraddin, never a welcome sight, was odious from his late treachery, and Quentin sternly asked him, why he dared take the freedom to touch a christian and a gentleman?

"Simply," answered the Bohemian, "because I wished to know if the christian gentleman had lost his feeling as well as his eyes and ears. I have stood speaking to you these five minutes, and you have stared on that scrap of yellow parchment, as if it were a spell to turn you into a statue, and had already wrought half its purpose."

"Well, what doest thou want? Speak, and be gone!"

"I want what all men want, though few are satisfied with it," said Hayraddin; "I want my due; my ten crowns of gold for guiding the ladies hither."

"With what face darrest thou ask any guerdon beyond my sparing thy worthless life?" said Durward, fiercely; "thou knowest that it was thy purpose to have betrayed them on the road."

"But I did *not* betray them," said Hayraddin; "if I had, I would have asked no guerdon from you or from them, but from him whom their keeping upon the right hand side of the river might have benefited. The party that I have served is the party who must pay me."

"Thy guerdon perish with thee, then, traitor!" said Quentin, telling out the money; for he had been, in his capacity of major-domo, furnished with a sum for all such expenses. "Get thee to the Boar of Ardennes, or to the devil! but keep hereafter out of my sight, lest I send thee thither before thy time."

"The Boar of Ardennes!" repeated the Bohemian, with a stronger emotion of surprise than his features usually expressed; "it was then no vague guess—no general suspicion—which made you insist on changing the road? Can it be—are there really in other lands arts of prophecy more sure than those of our wandering tribes? The willow-tree under which we spoke could tell no tales. But no—no—no—Dolt that I was!—I have it—I have it!—The willow by the brook near yonder convent—I saw you look towards it as you passed it, about half a mile from yon hive of drones—that could not indeed speak, but it might hide one who could hear! I will hold my counsels in an open plain henceforth; not a bunch of thistles shall be near me for a Scot to shroud amongst—Ha! ha! the Scot hath beat the Zingaro at his own subtle weapons. But know, Quentin Durward, that you have foiled me to the marring of thine own fortune—Yes! the fortune I told thee of, from the lines on thy hand, had been richly accomplished but for thine own obstinacy."

"By Saint Andrew," said Quentin, "thy impudence makes me laugh in spite of myself—How, or in what, should thy successful villany have been of service to me? I heard, indeed, that you did stipulate to save my life, which condition your worthy allies would speedily have forgotten, had we once come to blows—but in what thy betrayal of these ladies could have served me, but by exposing me to death or captivity, is a matter beyond human brains to conjecture."

"No matter thinking of it, then," said Hayraddin, "for I mean still to surprise you with my gratitude. Had you kept back my hire, I should have held that we were quit, and left you to your own foolish guidance. As it is, I remain your debtor for yonder matter on the banks of the Cher."

"Methinks I have already taken out the payment in cursing and abusing thee," said Quentin.

"Hard words, or kind ones," said the Zingaro, "are but wind, which make no weight in the balance. Had you struck me, indeed, instead of threatening"—

"I am like enough to take out payment in that way, if you provoke me longer."

"I would not advise it," said the Zingaro; "such payment, made by a rash hand, might exceed the debt, and unhappily leave a balance on your side, which I am not one to forget or forgive. And now farewell, but not for a long space—I go to bid adieu to the ladies of Croye."

"Thou!" said Quentin in astonishment—"thou be admitted to the presence of the ladies, and here, where they are in a manner recluses, under the protection of the bishop's sister, a noble canoness! It is impossible."

"Marthon, however, waits to conduct me to their presence," said the Zingaro, with a sneer; "and I must pray your forgiveness if I leave you something abruptly."

He turned as if to depart, but instantly coming back, said, with a tone of deep and serious emphasis, "I know your hopes—they are daring, yet not vain if I aid them. I know your fears—they should teach prudence, not timidity. Every woman may be won. A count is but a nickname, which will befit Quentin as well as the other nickname of duke befits Charles, or that of king befits Louis."

Ere Durward could reply, the Bohemian had left the hall. Quentin instantly followed; but, better acquainted than the Scot with the passages of the house, Hayraddin kept the advantage which he had gotten; and the pursuer lost sight of him as he descended a small back staircase. Still Durward followed, though without exact consciousness of his own purpose in doing so. The staircase terminated by a door opening into the alley of a garden, in which he again beheld the Zingaro hastening down a pleached walk.

On two sides, the garden was surrounded by the buildings of the castle—a huge old pile, partly castellated, and partly resembling an ecclesiastical building; on the other two sides, the enclosure was a high embattled wall. Crossing the alleys of the garden to another part of the building, where a postern-door opened behind a large massive buttress, overgrown with ivy, Hayraddin looked back, and waved his hand in signal of an exulting farewell to his follower, who saw that in effect the postern-door was opened by Marthon, and that the vile Bohemian was admitted into the precincts, as he naturally concluded, of the apartment of the Countesses of Croye. Quentin bit his lips with indignation, and blamed himself severely that he had not made the ladies sensible of the full infamy of Hayraddin's character, and acquainted with his machinations against their safety. The arrogating manner in which the Bohemian had promised to back his suit, added to his anger and his disgust; and he felt as if even the hand of the Countess Isabelle would be profaned, were it possible to attain it by such patronage. "But it is all a deception," he said—"a turn of his base juggling artifice. He has procured

access to these ladies upon some false pretence, and for some mischievous intention. It is well I have learned where they lodge. I will watch Marthon, and solicit an interview with them, were it but to place them on their guard. It is hard that I must use artifice and brook delay, when such as he have admittance openly and without scruple. They shall find, however, that though I am excluded from their presence, Isabelle's safety is still the subject of my vigilance."

While the young lover was thus meditating, an aged gentleman of the bishop's household approached him from the same door by which he had himself entered the garden, and made him aware, though with the greatest civility of manner, that the garden was private, and reserved only for the use of the bishop, and guests of the very highest distinction.

Quentin heard him repeat this information twice ere he put the proper construction upon it; and then starting as from a reverie, he bowed and hurried out of the garden, the official person following him all the way, and overwhelming him with formal apologies for the necessary discharge of his duty. Nay, so pertinacious was he in his attempts to remove the offence which he conceived Durward to have taken, that he offered to bestow his own company upon him, to contribute to his entertainment; until Quentin, internally cursing his formal foppery, found no better way of escape, than pretending a desire of visiting the neighbouring city, and setting off thither at such a round pace as speedily subdued all desire in the gentleman-usher to accompany him farther than the draw-bridge. In a few minutes, Quentin was within the walls of the city of Liege, then one of the richest in Flanders, and of course in the world.

Melancholy, even love-melancholy, is not so deeply seated, at least in minds of a manly and elastic character, as the soft enthusiasts who suffer under it are fond of believing. It yields to unexpected and striking impressions upon the senses, to change of place, to such scenes as create new trains of association, and to the influence of the busy hum of mankind. In a few minutes, Quentin's attention was as much engrossed by the variety of objects presented in rapid succession by the busy streets of Liege, as if there had neither been a Countess Isabelle, nor a Bohemian, in the world.

The lofty houses,—the stately, though narrow and gloomy streets,—the splendid display of the richest goods, and most gorgeous armour, in the warehouses and shops around,—the walks crowded by busy citizens of every description, passing and repassing with faces of careful importance or eager bustle,—the huge wains, which transported to and fro the subjects of export and import, the former consisting of broadcloths and serge, arms of all kinds, nails and iron-work, while the latter comprehended every article of use or luxury, intended either for the consumption of an opulent city, or received in barter, destined to be transported elsewhere,—all these objects combined to form an engrossing picture of wealth, bustle and splendour, to which Quentin had been hitherto a stranger. He admired also the various streams and canals drawn

from and communicating with the Maes, which, traversing the city in various directions, offered to every quarter the commercial facilities of water-carriage, and he failed not to hear a mass in the venerable old church of Saint Lambert, said to have been founded in the eighth century.

It was upon leaving this place of worship that Quentin began to observe, that he, who had been hitherto gazing on all around him with the eagerness of unrestrained curiosity, was himself the object of attention to several groups of substantial-looking burghers, who seemed assembled to look upon him as he left the church, and amongst whom arose a buzz and whisper, which spread from one party to another; while the number of gazers continued to augment rapidly, and the eyes of each who added to it were eagerly directed to Quentin, with a stare which expressed much interest and curiosity, mingled with a certain degree of respect.

At length he now formed the centre of a considerable crowd, which yet yielded before him while he continued to move forward; while those who followed or kept pace with him, studiously avoided pressing on him, or impeding his motions. Yet his situation was too embarrassing to be long endured, without making some attempt to extricate himself, and to obtain some explanation.

Quentin looked around him, and fixing upon a jolly, stout-made, respectable man, whom, by his velvet cloak and gold chain, he concluded to be a burgher of eminence, and perhaps a magistrate, he asked him, "Whether he saw anything particular in his appearance, to attract public attention in a degree so unusual? or whether it was the ordinary custom of the people of Liege thus to throng around strangers who chanced to visit their city?"

"Surely not, good signior," answered the burgher; "the Liegeois are neither so idly curious as to practise such a custom, nor is there anything in your dress or appearance, saving that which is most welcome to this city, and which our town's-men are both delighted to see, and desirous to honour."

"This sounds very polite, worthy sir," said Quentin; "but, by the Cross of Saint Andrew, I cannot even guess at your meaning."

"Your oath, sir," answered the merchant of Liege, "as well as your accent, convinces me that we are right in our conjecture."

"By my patron Saint Quentin!" said Durward, "I am farther off from your meaning than ever."

"There again now," rejoined the Liegeois, looking, as he spoke, most provokingly, yet most civilly, politic, and intelligent.—"It is surely not for us to see that which you, worthy signior, deem it proper to conceal. But why swear by Saint Quentin, if you would not have me construe your meaning?—We know the good Count of Saint Paul, who lies there at present, wishes well to our cause."

"On my life," said Quentin, "you are under some delusion—I know nothing of Saint Paul."

"Nay, we question you not," said the burgher; "although, hark ye—I say, hark in your ear—my name is Pavillon."

"And what is my business with that, Signior Pavillon?" said Quentin.

"Nay, nothing—only methinks it might satisfy you that I am trust-worthy.—Here is my colleague Rouslaer, too."

Rouslaer advanced, a corpulent dignitary, whose fair round belly, like a battering-ram, "did shake the press before him," and who, whispering caution to his neighbour, said, in a tone of rebuke, "You forget, good colleague, the place is too open—the signior will retire to your house or mine, and drink a glass of Rhenish and sugar, and then we shall hear more of our good friend and ally, whom we love with all our honest Flemish hearts."

"I have no news for any of you," said Quentin, impatiently; "I will drink no Rhenish; and I only desire of you, as men of account and respectability, to disperse this idle crowd, and allow a stranger to leave your town as quietly as he came into it."

"Nay, then, sir," said Rouslaer, "since you stand so much on your incognito, and with us, too, who are men of confidence, let me ask you roundly, wherefore wear you the badge of your company if you would remain unknown in Liege?"

"What badge, and what order?" said Quentin; "you look like reverend men and grave citizens, yet, on my soul, you are either mad yourselves, or desire to drive me so."

"Sapperment!" said the other burgher, "this youth would make Saint Lambert swear! Why, who wear bonnets with the Saint Andrew's cross and *fleur-de-lys*, save the Scottish archers of King Louis's guards?"

"And supposing I am an archer of the guard, why should you make a wonder of my wearing the badge of my company?" said Quentin, impatiently.

"He has avowed it, he has avowed it!" said Rouslaer and Pavillon, turning to the assembled burghers in attitudes of congratulation, with waving arms, extended palms, and large round faces radiating with glee. "He hath avowed himself an archer of Louis's guard—of Louis, the guardian of the liberties of Liege!"

A general shout and cry now arose from the multitude, in which were mingled the various sounds of "Long live Louis of France! Long live the Scottish Guard! Long live the valiant archer! Our liberties, our privileges, or death! No imposts! Long live the valiant Boar of Ardennes! Down with Charles of Burgundy! and confusion to Bourbon and his bishopric!"

Half-stunned by the noise, which began anew in one quarter so soon as it ceased in another, rising and falling like the billows of the sea, and augmented by thousands of voices which roared in chorus from distant streets and market-places, Quentin had yet time to form a conjecture concerning the meaning of the tumult, and a plan for regulating his own conduct.

He had forgotten that, after his skirmish with Orleans and Dunois, one of his comrades had, at Lord Crawford's command, replaced the morion, cloven by the sword of the latter, with one of the steel-lined bonnets, which formed a part of the proper and well-known equipment of the Scotch Guards. That an individual of this body, which was always kept very close to Louis's person, should have appeared in the streets of a city, whose civil

discontents had been aggravated by the agents of that king, was naturally enough interpreted by the burghers of Liege into a determination on the king's part openly to assist their cause; and the apparition of an individual archer was magnified into a pledge of immediate and active support from Louis—nay, into an assurance that his auxiliary forces were actually entering the town at one or other, though no one could distinctly tell which, of the city-gates.

To remove a conviction so generally adopted, Quentin easily saw was impossible—nay, that any attempt to undeceive men so obstinately prepossessed in their belief, would be attended with personal risk, which, in this case, he saw little use of incurring. He therefore hastily resolved to temporize, and to get free the best way he could; and this resolution he formed while they were in the act of conducting him to the Stadthouse, where the notables of the town were fast assembling, in order to hear the tidings which he was presumed to have brought, and to regale him with a splendid banquet.

In spite of all his opposition, which was set down to modesty, he was on every side surrounded by the donors of popularity, the unsavoury tide of which now floated around him. His two burgomaster friends, who were *Schoppen*, or syndics of the city, had made fast both his arms. Before him Nikkel Blok, the chief of the butchers' incorporation, hastily summoned from his office in the shambles, brandished his death-doing axe, yet smeared with blood and brains, with a courage and grace which *brantwein* alone could inspire. Behind came the tall, lean, raw-boned, very drunk, and very patriotic figure of Claus Hammerlein, president of the mystery of the workers in iron, and followed by at least a thousand unwashed artificers of his class. Weavers, nailers, ropemakers, artisans of every degree and calling, thronged forward to join the procession from every gloomy and narrow street. Escape seemed a desperate and impossible adventure.

In this dilemma, Quentin appealed to Rouslaer, who held one arm, and to Pavillon, who had secured the other, and who were conducting him forward at the head of the ovation, of which he had so unexpectedly become the principal object. He hastily acquainted them "with his having thoughtlessly adopted the bonnet of the Scottish Guard, on an accident having occurred to the head-piece in which he had proposed to travel; he regretted that, owing to this circumstance, and the sharp wit with which the Liegeois drew the natural inference of his quality and the purpose of his visit, these things had been publicly discovered; and he intimated, that, if just now conducted to the Stadthouse, he might unhappily feel himself under the necessity of communicating to the assembled notables certain matters, which he was directed by the king to reserve for the private ears of his excellent gossips, Meinherrs Rouslaer and Pavillon of Liege."

This last hint operated like magic on the two citizens, who were the two most distinguished leaders of the insurgent burghers, and were, like all demagogues of their kind, desirous to keep everything within their own management so far as possible. They therefore hastily agreed that Quentin should

leave the town for the time, and return by night to Liege, and converse with them privately in the house of Rouslaer, near the gate opposite to Schönewaldt. Quentin hesitated not to tell them, that he was at present residing in the bishop's palace, under pretence of bearing dispatches from the French court, although his real errand was, as they had well conjectured, designed to the citizens of Liege; and this tortuous mode of conducting a communication, as well as the character and rank of the person to whom it was supposed to be entrusted, was so consonant to the character of Louis, as neither to excite doubt nor surprise.

Almost immediately after this *éclaircissement* was completed, the progress of the multitude brought them opposite to the door of Pavillon's house, in one of the principal streets, but which communicated from behind with the Maes, by means of a garden, as well as an extensive manufactory of tan-pits, and other conveniences for dressing hides; for the patriotic burgher was a felt-dresser, or currier.

It was natural that Pavillon should desire to do the honours of his dwelling to the supposed envoy of Louis, and a halt before his house excited no surprise on the part of the multitude; who, on the contrary, greeted Meinherr Pavillon with a loud *vivat*, as he ushered in his distinguished guest. Quentin speedily laid aside his remarkable bonnet for the cap of a felt-maker, and flung a long cloak over his other apparel. Pavillon then furnished him with a passport to pass the gates of the city, and to return by night or day as should suit his convenience; and lastly, committed him to the charge of his daughter, a fair and smiling Flemish lass, with instructions how he was to be disposed of, while he himself hastened back to his colleague, to amuse their friends at the Stadthouse, with the best excuses which they could invent for the disappearance of King Louis's envoy. We cannot, as the footman says in the play, recollect the exact nature of the lie which the bell-wethers told the flock; but no task is so easy as that of imposing upon a multitude whose eager prejudices have more than half done the business, ere the impostor has spoken a word.

The worthy burgess was no sooner gone, than his plump daughter Trudchen, with many a blush, and many a wreathed smile, which suited very prettily with lips like cherries, laughing blue eyes, and a skin transparently pure, escorted the handsome stranger through the pleached alleys of the Sieur Pavillon's garden, down to the water-side, and there saw him fairly embarked in a boat, which two stout Flemings, in their trunk-hose, fur caps, and many-buttoned jerkins, had got in readiness with as much haste as their Low-Country nature would permit.

As the pretty Trudchen spoke nothing but German, Quentin,—no disparagement to his loyal affection to the Countess of Croye,—could only express his thanks by a kiss on those same cherry lips, which was very gallantly bestowed, and accepted with all modest gratitude; for gallants with a form and face like our Scottish archer, were not of every-day occurrence among the *bourgeoisie* of Liege.

While the boat was rowed up the sluggish waters of the Maes, and passed the defences of the town,

Quentin had time enough to reflect, what account he ought to give of his adventure in Liege, when he returned to the bishop's palace of Schonwaldt; and disdaining alike to betray any person who had reposed confidence in him, although by misapprehension, or to conceal from the hospitable prelate the mutinous state of his capital, he resolved to confine himself to so general an account as might put the bishop upon his guard, while it should point out no individual to his vengeance.

He was landed from the boat, within half a mile of the castle, and rewarded his rowers with a guilder, to their great satisfaction. Yet, short as was the space which divided him from Schonwaldt, the castle-bell had tolled for dinner, and Quentin found, moreover, that he had approached the castle on a different side from that of the principal entrance, and that to go round would throw his arrival considerably later. He, therefore, made straight towards the side that was nearest him, as he discerned that it presented an embattled wall, probably that of the little garden already noticed, with a postern opening upon the moat, and a skiff moored by the postern, which might serve, as he thought, upon summons, to pass him over. As he approached, in hopes to make his entrance this way, the postern opened, a man came out, and, jumping into the boat, made his way to the farther side of the moat, and then, with a long pole, pushed the skiff back towards the place where he had embarked. As he came near, Quentin discerned that this person was the Bohemian, who, avoiding him, as was not difficult, held a different path towards Liege, and was presently out of his ken.

Here was new subject for meditation. Had this vagabond heathen been all this while with the ladies of Croye, and for what purpose should they so far have graced him with their presence? Tormented with this thought, Durward became doubly determined to seek an explanation with them, for the purpose at once of laying bare the treachery of Hayraddin, and announcing to them the perilous state in which their protector, the bishop, was placed, by the mutinous state of his town of Liege.

As Quentin thus resolved, he entered the castle by the principal gate, and found that part of the family who assembled for dinner in the great hall, including the bishop's attendant clergy, officers of the household, and strangers below the rank of the very first nobility, were already placed at their meal. A seat at the upper end of the board had, however, been reserved beside the bishop's domestic chaplain, who welcomed the stranger with the old college jest of, *Sero venientibus ossa*, while he took care so to load his plate with dainties, as to take away all appearance of that reality, which, in Quentin's country, is said to render a joke either no joke, or at best an unpalatable one.

In vindicating himself from the suspicion of ill breeding, Quentin briefly described the tumult which had been occasioned in the city by his being discovered to belong to the Scottish archer-guard of Louis, and endeavoured to give a ludicrous turn to the narrative, by saying, that he had been with difficulty extricated by a fat burgher of Liege and his pretty daughter.

VOL. III.

But the company were too much interested in the story to taste the jest. All operations of the table were suspended while Quentin told his tale; and when he had ceased, there was a solemn pause, which was only broken by the major-domo saying, in a low and melancholy tone, "I would to God that we saw those hundred lances of Burgundy!"

"Why should you think so deeply on it?" said Quentin—"You have many soldiers here, whose trade is arms; and your antagonists are only the rabble of a disorderly city, who will fly before the first flutter of a banner with men-at-arms arrayed beneath it."

"You do not know the men of Liege," said the chaplain, "of whom it may be said, that, not even excepting those of Ghent, they are at once the fiercest and the most untameable in Europe. Twice has the Duke of Burgundy chastised them for their repeated revolts against their bishop, and twice hath he suppressed them with much severity, abridged their privileges, taken away their banners, and established rights and claims to himself, which were not before competent over a free city of the empire—Nay, the last time he defeated them with much slaughter near Saint Tron, where Liege lost nearly six thousand men, what with the sword, what with those drowned in the flight; and thereafter, to disable them from farther mutiny, Duke Charles refused to enter at any of the gates which they had surrendered, but, beating to the ground forty cubits' breadth of their city wall, marched into Liege as a conqueror, with visor closed, and lance in rest, at the head of his chivalry, by the breach which he had made. Nay, well were the Liegeois then assured, that, but for the intercession of Duke Philip the Good, this Charles, then called Count of Charolais, would have given their town up to spoil. And yet, with all these fresh recollections, with their breaches unrepaired, and their arsenals scarcely supplied, the sight of an archer's bonnet is sufficient again to stir them to uproar. May God amend all! but I fear there will be bloody work between so fierce a population and so fiery a sovereign; and I would my excellent and kind master had a see of lesser dignity and more safety, for his mitre is lined with thorns instead of ermine. This much I say to you, signior stranger, to make you aware, that if your affairs detain you not at Schonwaldt, it is a place from which each man of sense should depart as speedily as possible. I apprehend that your ladies are of the same opinion; for one of the grooms who attended them on the route, has been sent back by them to the Court of France with letters, which, doubtless, are intended to announce their going in search of a safer asylum."

CHAPTER XX.

THE BILLET.

Go to—thou art made, if thou desirest to be so—If not, let me see thee still the fellow of servants, and not fit to touch Fortune's fingers.

Twelfth Night.

WHEN the tables were drawn, the chaplain, who seemed to have taken a sort of attachment to Quen-

tin Durward's society, or who perhaps desired to extract from him farther information concerning the meeting of the morning, led him into a withdrawing apartment, the windows of which, on one side, projected into the garden; and as he saw his companion's eye gaze rather eagerly upon the spot, he proposed to Quentin to go down and take a view of the curious foreign shrubs with which the bishop had enriched its parterres.

Quentin excused himself, as unwilling to intrude, and therewithal communicated the check which he had received in the morning. The chaplain smiled, and said, "That there was indeed some ancient prohibition respecting the bishop's private garden; but this," he added, with a smile, "was when our reverend father was a princely young prelate of not more than thirty years of age, and when many fair ladies frequented the castle for ghostly consolation. Need there was," he said, with a downcast look, and a smile, half simple and half intelligent, "that these ladies, pained in conscience, who were ever lodged in the apartments now occupied by the noble canoness, should have some space for taking the air, secure from the intrusion of the profane. But of late years," he added, "this prohibition, although not formally removed, has fallen entirely out of observance, and remains but as the superstition which haunts the brain of a superannuated gentleman-usher. If you please," he added, "we will presently descend, and try whether the place be haunted or no."

Nothing could have been more agreeable to Quentin than the prospect of a free communication with the garden, through means of which, according to a chance which had hitherto attended his passion, he hoped to communicate with, or at least obtain sight of, the object of his affections, from some such turret or balcony-window, or similar "coign of vantage," as at the hostelry of the Fleur-de-Lys, near Plessis, or the Dauphin's Tower, within that castle itself. Isabelle seemed still destined, wherever she made her abode, to be the Lady of the Turret.

When Durward descended with his new friend into the garden, the latter seemed a terrestrial philosopher, entirely busied with the things of the earth; while the eyes of Quentin, if they did not seek the heavens, like those of an astrologer, ranged, at least, all around the windows, balconies, and especially the turrets, which projected on every part from the inner front of the old building, in order to discover that which was to be his cynosure.

While thus employed, the young lover heard with total neglect, if indeed he heard at all, the enumeration of plants, herbs, and shrubs, which his reverend conductor pointed out to him; of which this was choice because of prime use in medicine; and that more choice, for yielding a rare flavour to potage; and a third, choicest of all, because possessed of no merit but its extreme scarcity. Still it was necessary to preserve some semblance at least of attention; which the youth found so difficult, that he fairly wished at the devil the officious naturalist and the whole vegetable kingdom. He was relieved at length by the striking of a clock, which summoned the chaplain to some official duty.

The reverend man made many unnecessary apologies for leaving his new friend, and concluded by giving him the agreeable assurance, that he might walk in the garden till supper without much risk of being disturbed.

"It is," said he, "the place where I always study my own homilies, as being most sequestered from the resort of strangers. I am now about to deliver one of them in the chapel, if you please to favour me with your audience.—I have been thought to have some gift—But the glory be where it is due."

Quentin excused himself for this evening, under pretence of a severe headache, which the open air was likely to prove the best cure for; and at length the well-meaning priest left him to himself.

It may be well imagined, that in the curious inspection which he now made, at more leisure, of every window or aperture which looked into the garden, those did not escape which were in the immediate neighbourhood of the small door by which he had seen Marthon admit Hayraddin, as he pretended, to the apartment of the countesses. But nothing stirred or showed itself, which could either confute or confirm the tale which the Bohemians had told, until it was becoming dusky; and Quentin began to be sensible, he scarce knew why, that his sauntering so long in the garden might be subject of displeasure or suspicion.

Just as he had resolved to depart, and was taking what he had destined for his last turn under the windows which had such attraction for him, he heard above him a slight and cautious sound, like that of a cough, as intended to call his attention, and to avoid the observation of others. As he looked up in joyful surprise, a casement opened—a female hand was seen to drop a billet, which fell into a rosemary-bush that grew at the foot of the wall. The precaution used in dropping this letter, prescribed equal prudence and secrecy in reading it. The garden, surrounded, as we have said, upon two sides, by the buildings of the palace, was commanded, of course, by the windows of many apartments; but there was a sort of grotto of rock-work, which the chaplain had shown Durward with much complacency. To snatch up the billet, thrust it into his bosom, and hie to this place of secrecy, was the work of a single minute. He there opened the precious scroll, and blessed, at the same time, the memory of the monks of Aberbrothock, whose nurture had rendered him capable of deciphering its contents.

The first line contained the injunction, "Read this in secret,"—and the contents were as follows:—"What your eyes have too holdly said, mine have perhaps too rashly understood. But unjust persecution makes its victims bold, and it were better to throw myself on the gratitude of one, than to remain the object of pursuit to many. Fortune has her throne upon a rock; but brave men fear not to climb. If you dare do aught for one that hazards much, you need but pass into this garden at prime to-morrow, wearing in your cap a blue-and-white feather; but expect no farther communication. Your stars have, they say, destined you for greatness, and disposed you to gratitude.—Farewell—be faithful, prompt, and resolute, and doubt not thy fortune." Within

this letter was enclosed a ring with a table diamond, on which were cut, in form of a lozenge, the ancient arms of the house of Croye.

The first feeling of Quentin upon this occasion was unmingled ecstasy—a pride and joy which seemed to raise him to the stars,—a determination to do or die, influenced by which, he treated with scorn the thousand obstacles that placed themselves betwixt him and the goal of his wishes.

In this mood of rapture, and unable to endure any interruption which might withdraw his mind, were it but for a moment, from so ecstatic a subject of contemplation, Durward, retiring to the interior of the castle, hastily assigned his former pretext of a headache for not joining the household of the bishop at the supper-meal, and, lighting his lamp, betook himself to the chamber which had been assigned him, to read, and to read again and again, the precious billet, and to kiss a thousand times the no less precious ring.

But such high-wrought feelings could not remain long in the same ecstatic tone. A thought pressed upon him, though he repelled it as ungrateful—as even blasphemous—that the frankness of the confession implied less delicacy, on the part of her who made it, than was consistent with the high romantic feeling of adoration with which he had hitherto worshipped the Lady Isabelle. No sooner did this ungracious thought intrude itself than he hastened to stifle it, as he would have stifled a hissing and hateful adder, that had intruded itself into his couch. Was it for him—him the favoured—on whose account she had stooped from her sphere, to ascribe blame to her for the very act of condescension, without which he dared not have raised his eyes towards her? Did not her very dignity of birth and of condition, reverse, in her case, the usual rules which impose silence on the lady until her lover shall have first spoken? To these arguments, which he boldly formed into syllogisms, and avowed to himself, his vanity might possibly suggest one which he cared not to embody even mentally with the same frankness—that the merit of the party beloved might perhaps warrant, on the part of the lady, some little departure from common rules; and, after all, as in the case of Malvolio, there was example for it in chronicle. The squire of low degree, of whom he had just been reading, was, like himself, a gentleman void of land and living, and yet the generous Princess of Hungary bestowed on him, without scruple, more substantial marks of her affection, than the billet he had just received:—

“Welcome,” she said, “my swete squyre,
My heartis roote, my soule’s desire;
I will give thee kisses three,
And als five hundrid poundis in fee.”

And again the same faithful history made the King of Hongrie himself avouch,

“I have yknown many a page
Come to be prince by marriage.”

So that, upon the whole, Quentin generously and magnanimously reconciled himself to a line of conduct on the countess’s part, by which he was likely to be so highly benefited.

But this scruple was succeeded by another doubt,

harder of digestion. The traitor Hayraddin had been in the apartments of the ladies, for aught Quentin knew, for the space of four hours, and, considering the hints which he had thrown out, of possessing an influence of the most interesting kind over the fortunes of Quentin Durward, what should assure him that this train was not of his laying? and if so, was it not probable that such a dissembling villain had set it on foot to conceal some new plan of treachery—perhaps to seduce Isabelle out of the protection of the worthy bishop? This was a matter to be closely looked into, for Quentin felt a repugnance to this individual proportioned to the unabashed impudence with which he had avowed his profligacy, and could not bring himself to hope, that anything in which he was concerned could ever come to an honourable or happy conclusion.

These various thoughts rolled over Quentin’s mind like misty clouds, to dash and obscure the fair landscape which his fancy had at first drawn, and his couch was that night a sleepless one. At the hour of prime—ay, and an hour before it, was he in the castle-garden, where no one now opposed either his entrance or his abode, with a feather of the assigned colour, as distinguished as he could by any means discover in such haste. No notice was taken of his appearance for nearly two hours; at length he heard a few notes of the lute, and presently the lattice opened right above the little postern-door at which Marthon had admitted Hayraddin, and Isabelle, in maidenly beauty, appeared at the opening, greeted him half-kindly, half-shyly, coloured extremely at the deep and significant reverence with which he returned her courtesy—shut the casement, and disappeared.

Day-light and champagne could discover no more. The authenticity of the billet was ascertained—it only remained what was to follow; and of this the fair writer had given no hint. But no immediate danger impended—The countess was in a strong castle, under the protection of a prince, at once respectable for his secular, and venerable for his ecclesiastical authority. There was neither immediate room nor occasion for the bold squire interfering in the adventure; and it was sufficient if he kept himself prompt to execute her commands whenever they should be communicated to him. But fate purposed to call him into action sooner than he was aware of.

It was the fourth night after his arrival at Schonwaldt, when Quentin had taken measures for sending back on the morrow to the court of Louis, the remaining groom who had accompanied him on his journey, with letters from himself to his uncle and Lord Crawford, renouncing the service of France, for which the treachery to which he had been exposed by the private instructions of Hayraddin gave him an excuse, both in honour and prudence; and he betook himself to his bed with all the rosy-coloured ideas around him which flutter about the couch of a youth when he loves dearly, and thinks his love is as sincerely repaid.

But Quentin’s dreams, which at first partook of the nature of those happy influences under which he had fallen asleep, began by degrees to assume a more terrific character.

He walked with the Countess Isabelle beside a smooth and inland lake, such as formed the principal characteristic of his native glen; and he spoke to her of his love without any consciousness of the impediments which lay between them. She blushed and smiled when she listened—even as he might have expected from the tenor of the letter, which, sleeping or waking, lay nearest to his heart. But the scene suddenly changed from summer to winter—from calm to tempest; the winds and the waves rose with such a contest of surge and whirlwind, as if the demons of the water and of the air had been contending for their roaring empires in rival strife. The rising waters seemed to cut off their advance and their retreat—the increasing tempest, which dashed them against each other, seemed to render their remaining on the spot impossible; and the tumultuous sensations produced by the apparent danger awoke the dreamer.

He awoke; but although the circumstances of the vision had disappeared, and given place to reality, the noise, which had probably suggested them, still continued to sound in his ears.

Quentin's first impulse was to sit erect in bed, and listen with astonishment to sounds, which, if they had announced a tempest, might have shamed the wildest that ever burst down from the Grampians; and again in a minute he became sensible, that the tumult was not excited by the fury of the elements, but by the wrath of men.

He sprung from bed, and looked from the window of his apartment; but it opened into the garden, and on that side all was quiet, though the opening of the casement made him still more sensible, from the shouts which reached his ears, that the outside of the castle was beleaguered and assaulted, and that by a numerous and determined enemy. Hastily collecting his dress and arms, and putting them on with such celerity as darkness and surprise permitted, his attention was solicited by a knocking at the door of his chamber. As Quentin did not immediately answer, the door, which was but a slight one, was forced open from without, and the intruder, announced by his peculiar dialect to be the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin, entered the apartment. A vial, which he held in his hand, touched by a match, produced a dark flash of ruddy fire, by means of which he kindled a lamp, which he took from his bosom.

"The horoscope of your destinies," he said energetically to Durward, without any farther greeting, "now turns upon the determination of a minute."

"Caitiff!" said Quentin, in reply, "there is treachery around us; and where there is treachery, thou *must* have a share in it."

"You are mad," answered Maugrabin—"I never betrayed any one but to gain by it—and wherefore should I betray you, by whose safety I can take more advantage than by your destruction? Harken for a moment, if it be possible for you, to one note of reason, ere it is sounded into your ear by the death-shout of ruin. The Liegeois are up—William de la Marck with his band leads them—Were there means of resistance, their numbers, and his fury, would overcome them; but there are next to none. If you would save the countess and your own hopes,

follow me, in the name of her who sent you a table diamond, with three leopards engraved on it!"

"Lead the way," said Quentin, hastily—"In that name I dare every danger."

"As I shall manage it," said the Bohemian, "there is no danger, if you can but withhold your hand from strife which does not concern you; for, after all, what is it to you whether the bishop, as they call him, slaughters his flock, or the flock slaughters the shepherd?—Ha! ha! ha! Follow me, but with caution and patience; subdue your own courage, and confide in my prudence—and my debt of thankfulness is paid, and you have a countess for your spouse.—Follow me."

"I follow," said Quentin, drawing his sword; "but the moment in which I detect the least sign of treachery, thy head and body are three yards separate."

Without more conversation, the Bohemian, seeing that Quentin was now fully armed and ready, ran down the stairs before him, and winded hastily through various side-passages, until they gained the little garden. Scarce a light was to be seen on that side, scarce any bustle was to be heard; but no sooner had Quentin entered the open space, than the noise on the opposite side of the castle became ten times more stunningly audible, and he could hear the various war-cries of "Liege! Liege! Sanglier! Sanglier!" shouted by the assailants, while the feebler cry of "Our Lady for the prince bishop!" was raised in a faint and faltering tone, by those who had hastened, though surprised and at disadvantage, to the defence of the walls.

But the interest of the fight, notwithstanding the martial character of Quentin Durward, was indifferent to him in comparison of the fate of Isabelle of Croye, which, he had reason to fear, would be a dreadful one, unless rescued from the power of the dissolute and cruel freebooter, who was now, as it seemed, bursting the gates of the castle. He reconciled himself to the aid of the Bohemian, as men in a desperate illness refuse not the remedy prescribed by quacks and mountebanks, and followed across the garden, with the intention of being guided by him until he should discover symptoms of treachery, and then piercing him through the heart, or striking his head from his body. Hayraddin seemed himself conscious that his safety turned on a feather-weight, for he forbore, from the moment they entered the open air, all his wonted gibes and smirks, and seemed to have made a vow to act at once with modesty, courage, and activity.

At the opposite door, which led to the ladies' apartments, upon a low signal made by Hayraddin, appeared two women, muffled in the black silk veils which were then, as now, worn by the women in the Netherlands. Quentin offered his arm to one of them, who clung to it with trembling eagerness, and indeed hung upon him so much, that had her weight been greater, she must have much impeded their retreat. The Bohemian, who conducted the other female, took the road straight for the postern which opened upon the moat, through the garden wall, close to which the little skiff was drawn up, by means of which Quentin had formerly observed Hayraddin himself retreating from the castle.

As they crossed, the shouts of storm and successful violence seemed to announce that the castle was in the act of being taken; and so dismal was the sound in Quentin's ears, that he could not help swearing aloud, "But that my blood is irretrievably devoted to the fulfilment of my present duty, I would back to the wall, take faithful part with the hospitable bishop, and silence some of those knaves whose throats are full of mutiny and robbery."

The lady, whose arm was still folded in his, pressed it lightly as he spoke, as if to make him understand that there was a nearer claim on his chivalry than the defence of Schonwaldt; while the Bohemian exclaimed, loud enough to be heard, "Now, that I call right christian frenzy, which would turn back to fight, when love and fortune both demand that we should fly.—On, on—with all the haste you can make—Horses wait us in yonder thicket of willows."

"There are but two horses," said Quentin, who saw them in the moon-light.

"All that I could procure without exciting suspicion—and enough besides," replied the Bohemian. "You two must ride for Tongres ere the way becomes unsafe—Marthon will abide with the women of our horde, with whom she is an old acquaintance. Know, she is a daughter of our tribe, and only dwelt among you to serve our purpose as occasion should fall."

"Marthon!" exclaimed the countess, looking at the veiled female, with a shriek of surprise; "is not this my kinswoman?"

"Only Marthon," said Hayraddin—"Excuse me that little piece of deceit. I dared not carry off both the ladies of Croye from the Wild Boar of Ardennes."

"Wretch!" said Quentin, emphatically—"but it is not—shall not be too late—I will back to rescue the Lady Hameline."

"Hameline," whispered the lady, in a disturbed voice, "hangs on thy arm, to thank thee for her rescue."

"Ha! what!—How is this?" said Quentin, extricating himself from her hold, and with less gentleness than he would at any other time have used towards a female of any rank—"Is the Lady Isabelle then left behind?—Farewell—farewell."

As he turned to hasten back to the castle, Hayraddin laid hold of him—"Nay, hear you—hear you—you run upon your death! What the foul fiend did you wear the colours of the old one for?—I will never trust blue and white silk again. But she has almost as large a dower—has jewels and gold—hath pretensions, too, upon the earldom."

While he spoke thus, panting on in broken sentences, the Bohemian struggled to detain Quentin, who at length laid his hand on his dagger, in order to extricate himself.

"Nay, if that be the case," said Hayraddin, unloosing his hold, "go—and the devil, if there be one, go along with you."—And, soon as freed from his hold, the Scot shot back to the castle with the speed of the wind.

Hayraddin then turned round to the Countess Hameline, who had sunk down on the ground between shame, fear, and disappointment.

"Here has been a mistake," he said; "up, lady, and come with me—I will provide you, ere morning comes, a gallanter husband than this smock-faced boy; and if one will not serve, you shall have twenty."

The Lady Hameline was as violent in her passions, as she was vain and weak in her understanding. Like many other persons, she went tolerably well through the ordinary duties of life; but in a crisis like the present, she was entirely incapable of doing aught, save pouring forth unavailing lamentations, and accusing Hayraddin of being a thief, a base slave, an impostor, a murderer.

"Call me Zingaro," returned he, "and you have said all at once."

"Monster! you said the stars had decreed our union, and caused me to write—O wretch that I was!" exclaimed the unhappy lady.

"And so they had decreed your union," said Hayraddin, "had both parties been willing—but think you the blessed constellations can make any one wed against his will?—I was led into error with your accursed christian gallantries, and fopperies of ribbons and favours—and the youth prefers veal to beef, I think—that's all.—Up and follow me; and take notice, I endure neither weeping nor swooning."

"I will not stir a foot," said the countess, obstinately.

"By the bright welkin, but you shall, though!" exclaimed Hayraddin. "I swear to you, by all that ever fools believed in, that you have to do with one, who would care little to strip you naked, bind you to a tree, and leave you to your fortune!"

"Nay," said Marthon, interfering, "by your favour, she shall not be misused. I wear a knife as well as you, and can use it—She is a kind woman, though a fool.—And you, madam, rise up and follow us—Here has been a mistake; but it is something to have saved life and limb. There are many in yonder castle would give all the wealth in the world to stand where we do now."

As Marthon spoke, a clamour, in which the shouts of victory were mingled with screams of terror and despair, was wafted to them from the castle of Schonwaldt.

"Hear that, lady!" said Hayraddin, "and be thankful you are not adding your treble pipe to yonder concert. Believe me, I will care for you honestly, and the stars shall keep their words, and find you a good husband."

Like some wild animal, exhausted and subdued by terror and fatigue, the Countess Hameline yielded herself up to the conduct of her guides, and suffered herself to be passively led whichever way they would. Nay, such was the confusion of her spirits, and the exhaustion of her strength, that the worthy couple, who half bore half led her, carried on their discourse in her presence without her even understanding it.

"I ever thought your plan was folly," said Marthon. "Could you have brought the young people together, indeed, we might have had a hold on their gratitude, and a footing in their castle. But what chance of so handsome a youth wedding this old fool?"

"Rizpah," said Hayraddin, "you have borne the

name of a christian, and dwelt in the tents of those besotted people, till thou hast become a partaker in their follies. How could I dream that he would have made scruples about a few years, youth or age, when the advantages of the match were so evident? And thou knowest, there would have been no moving yonder coy wench to be so frank as this coming countess here, who hangs on our arms as dead a weight as a wool-pack. I loved the lad too, and would have done him a kindness: to wed him to this old woman, was to make his fortune; to unite him to Isabelle, were to have brought on him De la Marck, Burgundy, France, all who claim an interest in disposing of her hand. And this silly woman's wealth being chiefly in gold and jewels, we should have had our share. But the bow-string has burst, and the arrow failed. Away with her—we will bring her to William with the Beard. By the time he has gorged himself with wassail, as is his wont, he will not know an old countess from a young one. Away, Rizpah—bear a gallant heart. The bright Aldeboran still influences the destinies of the children of the Desert.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SACK.

The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,
And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,
In liberty of bloody hand shall range,
With conscience wide as hell.

Henry V.

THE surprised and affrighted garrison of the castle of Schonwaldt had, nevertheless, for some time, made good the defence of the place against the assailants; but the immense crowds which, issuing from the city of Liege, thronged to the assault like bees, distracted their attention and abated their courage.

There was also disaffection, at least, if not treachery, among the defenders; for some called out to surrender, and others, deserting their posts, tried to escape from the castle. Many threw themselves from the walls into the moat, and such as escaped drowning, flung aside their distinguishing badges and saved themselves by mingling among the motley crowd of assailants. Some few, indeed, from attachment to the bishop's person, drew around him, and continued to defend the great keep to which he had fled; and others, doubtful of receiving quarter, or from an impulse of desperate courage, held out other detached bulwarks and towers of the extensive building. But the assailants had got into the possession of the courts and lower parts of the edifice, and were busy pursuing the vanquished and searching for spoil, when one individual, as if he sought for that death from which all others were flying, endeavoured to force his way into the scene of tumult and horror, under apprehensions still more horrible to his imagination than the realities around were to his sight and senses. Whoever had seen Quentin Durward that fatal night, not knowing the meaning of his conduct, had accounted him a raging madman; whoever had appreciated his motives had ranked him nothing beneath a hero of romance.

Approaching Schonwaldt on the same side from which he had left it, the youth met several fugitives making for the wood, who naturally avoided him as an enemy, because he came in an opposite direction from that which they had adopted. When he came nearer, he could hear and partly see men dropping from the garden wall into the castle fosse, and others who seemed precipitated from the battlements by the assailants. His courage was not staggered, even for an instant. There was not time to look for the boat, even had it been practicable to use it; and it was in vain to approach the postern of the garden, which was crowded with fugitives who, ever and anon, as they were thrust through it by the pressure behind, fell into the moat, which they had no means of crossing.

Avoiding that point, Quentin threw himself into the moat, near what was called the little gate of the castle, and where there was a draw-bridge, which was still elevated. He avoided with difficulty the fatal grasp of more than one sinking wretch, and, swimming to the draw-bridge, caught hold of one of the chains which was hanging down, and, by a great exertion of strength and activity, swayed himself out of the water, and attained the platform from which the draw-bridge was suspended. As with hands and knees he struggled to make good his footing, a lanzknecht, with his bloody sword in his hand, made towards him, and raised his weapon for a blow, which must have been fatal.

“How now, fellow?” said Quentin, in a tone of authority—“Is that the way in which you assist a comrade?—Give me your hand.”

The soldier in silence, and not without hesitation, reached him his arm, and helped him upon the platform, when, without allowing him time for reflection, the Scot continued in the same tone of command—“To the western tower, if you would be rich—the priest's treasury is in the western tower.”

The words were echoed on every hand: “To the western tower—the treasure is in the western tower!” And the stragglers who were within hearing of the cry, took, like a herd of raging wolves, the direction opposite to that which Quentin, come life, come death, was determined to pursue.

Bearing himself as if he were one, not of the conquered, but of the victors, he made a way into the garden, and pushed across it, with less interruption than he could have expected; for the cry of “To the western tower!” had carried off one body of the assailants, and another was summoned together, by war-cry and trumpet-sound, to assist in repelling a desperate sally, attempted by the defenders of the keep, who had hoped to cut their way out of the castle, bearing the bishop along with them. Quentin, therefore, crossed the garden with an eager step and throbbing heart, commending himself to those heavenly powers which had protected him through the numberless perils of his life, and bold in his determination to succeed, or leave his life in this desperate undertaking. Ere he reached the garden, three men rushed on him with leveled lances, crying, “Liege, Liege!”

Putting himself in defence, but without striking, he replied, “France, France, friend to Liege!”

“*Vivat France!*” cried the burghers of Liege,

and passed on. The same signal proved a talisman to avert the weapons of four or five of La Marck's followers, whom he found straggling in the garden, and who set upon him, crying, "Sanglier!"

In a word, Quentin began to hope, that his character as an emissary of King Louis, the private instigator of the insurgents of Liege, and the secret supporter of William de la Marck, might possibly bear him through the horrors of the night.

On reaching the turret, he shuddered when he found the little side-door, through which Marthon and the Countess Hameline had shortly before joined him, was now blockaded with more than one dead body.

Two of them he dragged hastily aside, and was stepping over the third body, in order to enter the portal, when the supposed dead man laid hand on his cloak, and entreated him to stay and assist him to rise. Quentin was about to use rougher methods than struggling to rid himself of this untimely obstruction, when the fallen man continued to exclaim, "I am smothered here, in mine own armour!—I am the Syndic Pavillon of Liege! If you are for us, I will enrich you—if you are for the other side, I will protect you; but—but do not leave me to die the death of a smothered pig!"

In the midst of this scene of blood and confusion, the presence of mind of Quentin suggested to him, that this dignitary might have the means of protecting their retreat. He raised him on his feet, and asked him if he was wounded.

"Not wounded—at least I think not"—answered the burgher; "but much out of wind."

"Sit down then on this stone, and recover your breath," said Quentin; "I will return instantly."

"For whom are you?" said the burgher, still detaining him.

"For France—for France," answered Quentin, studying to get away.

"What! my lively young archer?" said the worthy syndic. "Nay, if it has been my fate to find a friend in this fearful night, I will not quit him, I promise you. Go where you will, I follow; and, could I get some of the tight lads of our guildry together, I might be able to help you in turn; but they are all squandered abroad like so many pease.—Oh, it is a fearful night!"

During this time, he was dragging himself on after Quentin, who, aware of the importance of securing the countenance of a person of such influence, slackened his pace to assist him, although cursing in his heart the encumbrance that retarded his progress.

At the top of the stair was an ante-room, with boxes and trunks, which bore marks of having been rifled, as some of the contents lay on the floor. A lamp, dying in the chimney, shed a feeble beam on a dead or senseless man, who lay across the hearth.

Bounding from Pavillon, like a greyhound from his keeper's leash, and with an effort which almost overthrew him, Quentin sprung through a second and a third room, the last of which seemed to be the bed-room of the ladies of Croye. No living mortal was to be seen in either of them. He called upon the Lady Isabelle's name, at first gently, then

more loudly, and then with an accent of despairing emphasis, but no answer was returned. He wrung his hands, tore his hair, and stamped on the earth with desperation. At length, a feeble glimmer of light, which shone through a crevice in the wainscoting of a dark nook in the bed-room, announced some recess or concealment behind the arras. Quentin hastened to examine it. He found there was indeed a concealed door, but it resisted his hurried efforts to open it. Heedless of the personal injury he might sustain, he rushed at the door with his whole force and weight of his body; and such was the impetus of an effort made betwixt hope and despair, that it would have burst much stronger fastenings.

He thus forced his way, almost headlong, into a small oratory, where a female figure, which had been kneeling in agonizing supplication before the holy image, now sunk at length on the floor, under the new terrors implied in this approaching tumult. He hastily raised her from the ground, and, joy of joys! it was she whom he sought to save—the Countess Isabelle. He pressed her to his bosom—he conjured her to awake—entreated her to be of good cheer—for that she was now under the protection of one who had heart and hand enough to defend her against armies.

"Durward," she said, as she at length collected herself, "is it indeed you?—then there is some hope left. I thought all living and mortal friends had left me to my fate—Do not again abandon me."

"Never—never!" said Durward. "Whatever shall happen—whatever danger shall approach, may I forfeit the benefits purchased by yonder blessed sign, if I be not the sharer of your fate until it is again a happy one!"

"Very pathetic and touching, truly," said a rough, broken, asthmatic voice behind—"A love affair, I see; and, from my soul, I pity the tender creature, as if she were my own Trudchen."

"You must do more than pity us," said Quentin, turning towards him; "you must assist in protecting us, Meinheer Pavillon. Be assured this lady was put under my especial charge by your ally the King of France; and, if you aid me not to shelter her from every species of offence and violence, your city will lose the favour of Louis of Valois. Above all, she must be guarded from the hands of William de la Marck."

"That will be difficult," said Pavillon, "for these schelms of lanzknechts are very devils at rummaging out the wenches; but I'll do my best—We will to the other apartment, and there I will consider—It is but a narrow stair, and you can keep the door with a pike, while I look from the window, and get together some of my brisk boys of the curriers' guildry of Liege, that are as true as the knives they wear in their girdles.—But first undo me these clasps—for I have not worn this corslet since the battle of Saint Tron; and I am three stone heavier since that time, if there be truth in Dutch beam and scale."

The undoing of the iron enclosure gave great relief to the honest man, who, in putting it on, had more considered his zeal to the cause of Liege, than his capacity of bearing arms. It afterwards

turned out, that being, as it were, borne forward involuntarily, and hoisted over the walls by his company as they thronged to the assault, the magistrate had been carried here and there, as the tide of attack and defence flowed or ebbcd, without the power, latterly, of even uttering a word; until, as the sea casts a log of drift-wood ashore in the first creek, he had been ultimately thrown down in the entrance to the ladies of Croye's apartments, where the encumbrance of his own armour, with the superincumbent weight of two men slain in the entrance, and who fell above him, might have fixed him down long enough, had he not been relieved by Durward.

The same warmth of temper which rendered Hermann Pavillon a hot-headed and intemperate zealot in politics, had the more desirable consequence of making him, in private, a good-tempered, kind-hearted man, who, if sometimes a little misled by vanity, was always well-meaning and benevolent. He told Quentin to have an especial care of the poor pretty *yung frau*; and, after this unnecessary exhortation, began to halloo from the window, "Liege, Liege, for the gallant skimmers' guild of curriers!"

One or two of his immediate followers collected at the summons, and at the peculiar whistle with which it was accompanied (each of the crafts having such a signal among themselves), and, more joining them, established a guard under the window from which their leader was bawling, and before the postern door.

Matters seemed now settling into some sort of tranquillity. All opposition had ceased, and the leaders of different classes were taking measures to prevent indiscriminate plunder. The great bell was tolled, as summons to a military council, and its iron tongue communicating to Liege the triumphant possession of Schonwaldt by the insurgents, was answered by all the bells in that city; whose distant and clamorous voices seemed to cry, Hail to the victors! It would have been natural, that Meinheer Pavillon should now have sallied from his fastness; but, either in reverent care of those whom he had taken under his protection, or perhaps for the better assurance of his own safety, he contented himself with dispatching messenger on messenger, to command his lieutenant, Peterkin Geislaer, to attend him directly.

Peterkin came at length, to his great relief, as being the person upon whom, on all pressing occasions, whether of war, politics, or commerce, Pavillon was most accustomed to repose confidence. He was a stout, squat figure, with a square face, and broad black eye-brows, that announced him no granter of propositions,—an advice-giving countenance, so to speak. He was endued with a buff jerkin and wore a broad belt and cutlass by his side, and a halbert in his hand.

"Peterkin, my dear lieutenant," said his commander, "this has been a glorious day—night, I should say—I trust thou art pleased for once?"

"I am well enough pleased that you are so," said the doughty lieutenant; "though I should not have thought of your celebrating the victory, if you call it one, up in this garret by yourself, when you are wanted in council."

"But am I wanted there?" said the syndic.

"Ay, marry are you, to stand up for the rights of Liege, that are in more danger than ever," answered the lieutenant.

"Pshaw, Peterkin," answered his principal, "thou art ever such a frampold grumbler!"

"Grumbler! not I," said Peterkin; "what pleases other people, will always please me. Only I wish we have not got King Stork, instead of King Log, like the fabliau that the Clerk of Saint Lambert's used to read us out of Meister's *Æsop's* book."

"I cannot guess your meaning, Peterkin," said the syndic.

"Why then, I tell you, Master Pavillon, that this Boar, or Bear, is like to make his own den of Schonwaldt, and, 'tis probable, to turn out as bad a neighbour as ever was the old bishop, and worse. Here has he taken the whole conquest in his own hand, and is only doubting whether he should be called prince or bishop;—and it is a shame to see how they have mishandled the old man among them."

"I will not permit it, Peterkin," said Pavillon, bustling up; "I disliked the mitre, but not the head that wore it. We are ten to one in the field, Peterkin, and will not permit these courses."

"Ay, ten to one in the field, but only man to man in the castle; besides that Nikkel Blok the butcher, and all the rabble of the suburbs, take part with William de la Marck, partly for *saus* and *braus* (for he has broached all the ale-tubs and wine-casks), and partly for old envy at us, who are the craftsmen, and have privileges."

"Peter," said Pavillon, "we will go presently to the city. I will stay no longer in Schonwaldt."

"But the bridges are up, master," said Geislaer—"the gates locked, and guarded by these lanz-knechts; and, if we were to try to force our way, these fellows, whose every-day business is war, might make wild work of us, that only fight of a holiday."

"But why has he secured the gates?" said the alarmed burgher; "or what business hath he to make honest men prisoners?"

"I cannot tell—not I," said Peter. "Some noise there is about the ladies of Croye, who have escaped during the storm of the castle. That first put the Man with the Beard beside himself with anger, and now he's beside himself with drink also."

The burgomaster cast a disconsolate look towards Quentin, and seemed at a loss what to resolve upon. Durward, who had not lost a word of the conversation, which alarmed him very much, saw nevertheless that their only safety depended on his preserving his own presence of mind, and sustaining the courage of Pavillon. He struck boldly into the conversation, as one who had a right to have a voice in the deliberation.—"I am ashamed," he said, "Meinheer Pavillon, to observe you hesitate what to do on this occasion. Go boldly to William de la Marck, and demand to leave the castle, you, your lieutenant, your squire, and your daughter. He can have no pretence for keeping you prisoner."

"For me and my lieutenant—that is, myself and Peter!—good—but who is my squire?"

"I am, for the present," replied the undaunted Scot.

"You!" said the embarrassed burgess; "but are you not the envoy of King Louis of France?"

"True, but my message is to the magistrates of Liege—and only in Liege will I deliver it.—Were I to acknowledge my quality before William de la Marck, must I not enter into negotiation with him?—ay, and, it is like, be detained by him. You must get me secretly out of the castle in the capacity of your squire."

"Good, my squire;—but you spoke of my daughter—my daughter is, I trust, safe in my house in Liege—where I wish her father was, with all my heart and soul."

"This lady," said Durward, "will call you father while we are in this place."

"And for my whole life afterwards," said the countess, throwing herself at the citizen's feet, and clasping his knees.—"Never shall the day pass in which I will not honour you, love you, and pray for you as a daughter for a father, if you will but aid me in this fearful strait—O be not hard-hearted! think your own daughter may kneel to a stranger, to ask him for life and honour—think of this, and give me the protection you would wish her to receive!"

"In troth," said the good citizen, much moved with her pathetic appeal—"I think, Peter, that this pretty maiden hath a touch of our Trudchen's sweet look,—I thought so from the first; and that this brisk youth here, who is so ready with his advice, is somewhat like Trudchen's bachelor—I wager a groat, Peter, that this is a true-love matter, and it is a sin not to further it."

"It were shame and sin both," said Peter, a good-natured Fleming, notwithstanding his self-conceit; and as he spoke, he wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his jerkin.

"She *shall* be my daughter, then," said Pavillon, "well wrapped up in her black silk veil; and if there are not enough of true-hearted skimmers to protect her, being the daughter of their syndic, it were pity they should ever tug leather more.—But hark ye,—questions must be answered—what should my daughter make here at such an onslaught?"

"What should half the women in Liege make here when they followed us to the castle," said Peter, "excepting because it was just the place in the world that they should *not* have come to?—Your *yung frau* Trudchen has come a little farther than the rest—that is all."

"Admirably spoken," said Quentin; "only be bold, and take this gentleman's good counsel, noble Meinherr Pavillon, and, at no trouble to yourself, you will do the most worthy action since the days of Charlemagne.—Here, sweet lady, wrap yourself close in this veil (for many articles of female apparel lay scattered about the apartment),—be but confident, and a few minutes will place you in freedom and safety.—Noble sir," he added, addressing Pavillon, "set forward."

"Hold—hold—hold a minute," said Pavillon, "my mind misgives me!—This De la Marck is a fury; a perfect boar in his nature as in his name; what if the young lady be one of those of Croye?—and what if he discover her, and be addicted to wrath?"

VOL. III.

"And if I were one of those unfortunate women," said Isabelle, again attempting to throw herself at his feet, "could you for that reject me in this moment of despair? Oh, that I had been indeed your daughter, or the daughter of the poorest burgher!"

"Not so poor—not so poor neither, young lady—we pay as we go," said the citizen.

"Forgive me, noble sir,"—again began the unfortunate maiden.

"Not noble, nor sir neither," said the syndic; "a plain burgher of Liege, that pays bills of exchange in ready guilders.—But that is nothing to the purpose.—Well, say you *be* a countess, I will protect you nevertheless."

"You are bound to protect her, were she a duchess," said Peter, "having once passed your word."

"Right, Peter, very right; it is our old Low Dutch fashion, *ein wort, ein man*; and now let us to this gear.—We must take leave of this William de la Marck; and yet I know not, my mind misgives me when I think of him; and were it a ceremony which could be waived, I have no stomach to go through it."

"Were you not better, since you have a force together, make for the gate and force the guard?" said Quentin.

But with united voice Pavillon and his adviser exclaimed against the propriety of such an attack upon their ally's soldiers, with some hints concerning its rashness, which satisfied Quentin that it was not a risk to be hazarded with such associates. They resolved, therefore, to repair boldly to the great hall of the castle, where, as they understood, the Wild Boar of Ardennes held his feast, and demand free egress for the Syndic of Liege and his company, a request too reasonable, as it seemed, to be denied. Still the good burgomaster groaned when he looked on his companions, and exclaimed to his faithful Peter,—"*See what it is to have too bold and too tender a heart! Alas! Perkin, how much have courage and humanity cost me! and how much may I yet have to pay for my virtues, before Heaven makes us free of this damned Castle of Schonwaldt!*"

As they crossed the courts, still strewed with the dying and dead, Quentin, while he supported Isabelle through the scene of horrors, whispered to her courage and comfort, and reminded her that her safety depended entirely on her firmness and presence of mind.

"Not on mine—not on mine," she said, "but on yours—on yours only.—O, if I but escape this fearful night, never shall I forget him who saved me! One favour more only let me implore at your hand, and I conjure you to grant it, by your mother's fame and your father's honour!"

"What is it you can ask that I could refuse?" said Quentin, in a whisper.

"Plunge your dagger in my heart," said she, "rather than leave me captive in the hands of these monsters."

Quentin's only answer was a pressure of the young countess's hand, which seemed as if, but for terror, it would have returned the caress. And, leaning on her youthful protector, she entered the fearful hall, preceded by Pavillon and his lieutenant,

and followed by a dozen of the *Kurschen-schaft*, or skimmers' trade, who attended, as a guard of honour, on the syndic.

As they approached the hall, the yells of acclamation, and bursts of wild laughter, which proceeded from it, seemed rather to announce the revel of festive demons, rejoicing after some accomplished triumph over the human race, than of mortal beings, who had succeeded in a bold design. An emphatic tone of mind, which despair alone could have inspired, supported the assumed courage of the Countess Isabelle; undaunted spirits, which rose with the extremity, maintained that of Durward; while Pavillon and his lieutenant made a virtue of necessity, and endured like bears bound to a stake, which must necessarily stand the dangers of the course.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REVELERS.

Cade.—Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?

Dick.—Here, sir.

Cade.—They fell before thee like sheep and oxen; and thou behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house.

Henry IV. Part II.

THERE could hardly exist a more strange and horrible change than had taken place in the castle-hall of Schonwaldt since Quentin had partaken of the noon-tide meal there; and it was indeed one which painted, in the extremity of their dreadful features, the miseries of war—more especially when waged by those most relentless of all agents, the mercenary soldiers of a barbarous age—men who, by habit and profession, had become familiarized with all that was cruel and bloody in the profession, while they were devoid alike of patriotism and of the romantic spirit of chivalry,—the peculiar virtues, the former of the bold peasants, who fought in defence of their country, and the latter of the gallant knight-hood of the period, who combated for honour and their ladies' love.

Instead of the orderly, decent, and somewhat formal meal, at which civil and ecclesiastical officers had, a few hours before, sat mingled in the same apartment, where a light jest could only be uttered in a whisper, and where, even amid superfluity of feasting and of wine, there reigned a decorum which almost amounted to hypocrisy, there was now such a scene of wild and roaring debauchery, as Satan himself, had he taken the chair as founder of the feast, could scarcely have improved.

At the head of the table sat, in the bishop's throne and state, which had been hastily brought thither from his great council-chamber, the redoubted Boar of Ardennes himself, well deserving that dreaded name, in which he affected to delight, and which he did as much as he could think of to deserve. His head was unhelmeted, but he wore the rest of his ponderous and bright armour, which indeed he rarely laid aside. Over his shoulders hung a strong surcoat, made of the dressed skin of a huge wild boar, the hoofs being of solid silver, and the tusks of

the same. The skin of the head was so arranged, that, drawn over the casque, when the baron was armed, or over his bare head, in the fashion of a hood, as he often affected when the helmet was laid aside, and as he now wore it, the effect was that of a grinning, ghastly monster; and yet the countenance which it overshadowed scarce required such horrors to improve those which were natural to its ordinary expression.

The upper part of De la Marck's face, as nature had formed it, almost gave the lie to his character; for though his hair, when uncovered, resembled the rude and wild bristles of the hood he had drawn over it, yet an open, high, and manly forehead, broad ruddy cheeks, large, sparkling, light-coloured eyes, and a nose hooked like the beak of the eagle, promised something valiant and generous; yet the effect of these more favourable traits was entirely overpowered by his habits of violence and insolence, which, joined to debauchery and intemperance, had stamped upon his features a character inconsistent with the rough gallantry which they would otherwise have exhibited. The former had, from habitual indulgence, swoln the muscles of the cheeks, and those around the eyes, in particular the latter; evil practices and habits had dimmed the eyes themselves, reddened the part of them that should have been white, and given the whole face a hideous likeness of the monster, which it was the terrible baron's pleasure to resemble. But from an odd sort of contradiction, De la Marck, while he assumed in other respects the appearance of the Wild Boar, and even seemed pleased with the name, yet endeavoured, by the length and growth of his beard, to conceal the circumstance that had originally procured him that denomination. This was an unusual thickness and projection of the mouth and upper jaw, which, with the huge projecting side-teeth, gave that resemblance to the bestial creation, which, joined to the delight that De la Marck had in haunting the forest so called, originally procured for him the name of the Boar of Ardennes. The beard, broad, grisly, and uncombed, neither concealed the natural horrors of the countenance nor dignified its brutal expression.

The soldiers and officers sat around the table, intermixed with the men of Liege, some of them of the very lowest description; among whom Nikkel Blok the butcher, placed near De la Marck himself, was distinguished by his tucked-up sleeves, which displayed arms smeared to the elbows with blood, as was the cleaver which lay on the table before him. The soldiers wore, most of them, their beards long and grisly, in imitation of their leader; had their hair plaited and turned upwards, in the manner that might best improve the natural ferocity of their appearance; and intoxicated, as many of them seemed to be, partly with the sense of triumph, and partly with the long libations of wine which they had been quaffing, presented a spectacle at once hideous and disgusting. The language which they held, and the songs which they sung, without even pretending to pay each other the compliment of listening, were so full of license and blasphemy, that Quentin blessed God that the extremity of the noise prevented them from being intelligible to his companion.

It only remains to say, of the burghers who were associated with William de la Marck's soldiers in this fearful revel, that the wan faces and anxious mien of the greater part, showed that they either disliked their entertainment, or feared their companions; while some of lower education, or a nature more brutal, saw only in the excesses of the soldier a gallant bearing, which they would willingly imitate, and the tone of which they endeavoured to catch as far as was possible, and stimulated themselves to the task, by swallowing immense draughts of wine and *schwarzbier*—indulging a vice which at all times was too common in the Low Countries.

The preparations for the feast had been as disorderly as the quality of the company. The whole of the bishop's plate—nay, even that belonging to the church, for the Boar of Ardennes regarded not the imputation of sacrilege—were mingled with black-jacks, or huge tankards made of leather, and drinking-horns of the most ordinary description.

One circumstance of horror remains to be added and accounted for; and we willingly leave the rest of the scene to the imagination of the reader. Amidst the wild license assumed by the soldiers of De la Marck, one who was excluded from the table (a *lanzknecht*, remarkable for his courage and for his daring behaviour during the storm of the evening), had impudently snatched up a large silver goblet, and carried it off, declaring it should atone for his loss of the share of the feast. The leader laughed till his sides shook at a jest so congenial to the character of the company; but when another, less renowned, it would seem, for audacity in battle, ventured on using the same freedom, De la Marck instantly put a check to a jocular practice, which would soon have cleared his table of all the more valuable decorations—"Ho! by the spirit of the thunder!" he exclaimed, "those who dare not be men when they face the enemy, must not pretend to be thieves among their friends. What! thou frontless dastard thou—thou who didst wait for opened gate and lowered bridge, when Conrade Horst forced his way over moat and wall, must *thou* be malapert?—Knit him up to the stanchions of the hall-window!—He shall beat time with his feet, while we drink a cup to his safe passage to the devil."

The doom was scarce sooner pronounced than accomplished; and in a moment the wretch wrestled out his last agonies, suspended from the iron bars. His body still hung there when Quentin and the others entered the hall, and, intercepting the pale moonbeam, threw on the castle-floor an uncertain shadow, which dubiously, yet fearfully, intimated the nature of the substance that produced it.

When the Syndic Pavillon was announced from mouth to mouth in this tumultuous meeting, he endeavoured to assume, in right of his authority and influence, an air of importance and equality, which a glance at the fearful object at the window, and at the wild scene around him, rendered it very difficult for him to sustain, notwithstanding the exhortations of Peter, who whispered in his ear, with some perturbation, "Up heart, master, or we are but gone men!"

The syndic maintained his dignity, however, as well as he could, in a short address, in which he complimented the company upon the great victory gained by the soldiers of De la Marck and the good citizens of Liege.

"Ay," answered De la Marck, sarcastically, "we have brought down the game at last, quoth my lady's brach to the wolf-hound. But ho! sir burgomaster, you come like Mars, with beauty by your side. Who is this fair one?—Unveil, unveil—no woman calls her beauty her own to-night."

"It is my daughter, noble leader," answered Pavillon; "and I am to pray your forgiveness for her wearing a veil. She has a vow for that effect to the three blessed kings."

"I will absolve her of it presently," said De la Marck; "for here, with one stroke of a cleaver, will I consecrate myself Bishop of Liege; and I trust one living bishop is worth three dead kings."

There was a shuddering among the guests; for the community of Liege, and even some of the rude soldiers, revered the Kings of Cologne, as they were commonly called, though they respected nothing else.

"Nay, I mean no treason against their defunct majesties," said De la Marck; "only bishop I am determined to be. A prince both secular and ecclesiastical, having power to bind and loose, will best suit a band of reprobates such as you, to whom no one else would give absolution.—But come hither, noble burgomaster—sit beside me, when you shall see me make a vacancy for my own preferment.—Bring in our predecessor in the holy seat."

A bustle took place in the hall, while Pavillon, excusing himself from the proffered seat of honour, placed himself near the bottom of the table, his followers keeping close behind him, not unlike a flock of sheep which may be sometimes seen to assemble in the rear of an old bell-wether, who is, from office and authority, judged by them to have rather more courage than themselves. Near the spot sat a very handsome lad, a natural son, as was said, of the ferocious De la Marck, and concerning whom he sometimes showed affection, and even tenderness. The mother of the boy, a beautiful concubine, had perished by a blow dealt her by the ferocious leader in a fit of drunkenness or jealousy; and her fate had caused her tyrant as much remorse as he was capable of feeling. His attachment to the surviving orphan might be partly owing to these circumstances. Quentin, who had learned this point of the leader's character from the old priest, planted himself as close as he could to the youth in question; determined to make, in some way or other, either a hostage or a protector, should other means of safety fail them.

While all stood in a kind of suspense, waiting the event of the orders which the tyrant had issued, one of Pavillon's followers whispered Peter, "Did not our master call that wench his daughter?—Why, it cannot be our Trudchen. This strapping lass is taller by two inches; and there is a black lock of hair peeps forth yonder from under her veil. By Saint Michael of the Market-place, you might as well call a black bullock's hide a white heifer's!"

"Hush! hush!" said Peter, with some presence

of mind—"What if our master hath a mind to steal a piece of doe-venison out of the bishop's park here, without our good dame's knowledge? And is it for thee or me to be a spy on him?"

"That will not I, brother," answered the other, "though I would not have thought of his turning deer-stealer at his years. Sapperment—what a shy fairy it is! See how she crouches down on yonder seat, behind folk's backs, to escape the gaze of the Marckers.—But hold, hold! what are they about to do with the poor old bishop?"

As he spoke, the Bishop of Liege, Louis of Bourbon, was dragged into the hall of his own palace by the brutal soldiery. The disheveled state of his hair, beard, and attire, bore witness to the ill treatment he had already received; and some of his sacerdotal robes, hastily flung over him, appeared to have been put on in scorn and ridicule of his quality and character. By good fortune, as Quentin was compelled to think it, the Countess Isabelle, whose feelings at seeing her protector in such an extremity might have betrayed her own secret and compromised her safety, was so situated as neither to hear nor see what was about to take place; and Durward sedulously interposed his own person before her, so as to keep her from observing alike, and from observation.

The scene which followed was short and fearful. When the unhappy prelate was brought before the footstool of the savage leader, although in former life only remarkable for his easy and good-natured temper, he showed in this extremity a sense of his dignity and noble blood, well becoming the high race from which he was descended. His look was composed and undismayed; his gesture, when the rude hands which dragged him forward were unloosed, was noble, and at the same time resigned, somewhat between the bearing of a feudal noble and of a christian martyr; and so much was even De la Marck himself staggered by the firm demeanour of his prisoner, and recollection of the early benefits he had received from him, that he seemed irresolute, cast down his eyes, and it was not until he had emptied a large goblet of wine, that, resuming his haughty insolence of look and manner, he thus addressed his unfortunate captive:—"Louis of Bourbon," said the truculent soldier, drawing hard his breath, clenching his hands, setting his teeth, and using the other mechanical actions to rouse up and sustain his native ferocity of temper—"I sought your friendship, and you rejected mine. What would you now give that it had been otherwise?—Nikkel, be ready."

The butcher rose, seized his weapon, and stealing round behind De la Marck's chair, stood with it uplifted in his bare and sinewy arms.

"Look at that man, Louis of Bourbon," said De la Marck again—"What terms wilt thou now offer, to escape this dangerous hour?"

The bishop cast a melancholy but unshaken look upon the grisly satellite, who seemed prepared to execute the will of the tyrant, and then he said with firmness, "Hear me, William de la Marck; and good men all, if there be any here who deserve that name, hear the only terms I can offer to this ruffian.—William de la Marck, thou hast stirred up to se-

dition an imperial city—hast assaulted and taken the palace of a prince of the holy German Empire—slain his people—plundered his goods—maltreated his person;—for this thou art liable to the ban of the empire—hast deserved to be declared outlawed and fugitive, landless and rightless. Thou hast done more than all this. More than mere human laws hast thou broken—more than mere human vengeance hast thou deserved. Thou hast broken into the sanctuary of the Lord—laid violent hands upon a father of the church—defiled the house of God with blood and rapine, like a sacrilegious robber"

"Hast thou yet done?" said De la Marck, fiercely interrupting him, and stamping with his foot.

"No," answered the prelate, "for I have not yet told thee the terms which you demanded to hear from me."

"Go on," said De la Marck; "and let the terms please me better than the preface, or woe to thy grey head!" And flinging himself back in his seat, he grinded his teeth, till the foam flew from his lips, as from the tusks of the savage animal whose name and spoils he wore.

"Such are thy crimes," resumed the bishop, with calm determination; "now hear the terms, which, as a merciful prince and a christian prelate, setting aside all personal offence, forgiving each peculiar injury, I condescend to offer. Fling down thy leading-staff—renounce thy command—unbind thy prisoners—restore thy spoil—distribute what else thou hast of goods, to relieve those whom thou hast made orphans and widows—array thyself in sackcloth and ashes—take a palmer's staff in thy hand, and go on pilgrimage to Rome, and we will ourselves be intercessors for thee with the imperial chamber at Ratisbon for thy life, with our holy father the pope for thy miserable soul."

While Louis of Bourbon proposed these terms, in a tone as decided as if he still occupied his episcopal throne, and as if the usurper kneeled a suppliant at his feet, the tyrant slowly raised himself in his chair; the amazement with which he was at first filled giving way gradually to rage, until, as the bishop ceased, he looked to Nikkel Blok, and raised his finger, without speaking a word. The ruffian struck, as if he had been doing his office in the common shambles, and the murdered bishop sunk, without a groan, at the foot of his own episcopal throne. The Liegeois, who were not prepared for so horrible a catastrophe, and had expected to hear the conference end in some terms of accommodation, started up unanimously, with cries of execration, mingled with shouts of vengeance.

But William de la Marck, raising his tremendous voice above the tumult, and shaking his clenched hand and extended arm, shouted aloud, "How now, ye porkers of Liege! ye wallowers in the mud of the Maes!—do ye dare to mate yourselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes?—Up, ye Boar's brood! (an expression by which he himself, and others, often designated his soldiers,) let these Flemish hogs see your tusks!"

Every one of his followers started up at the command, and mingled as they were among their late allies, prepared too for such a surprisal, each had,

in an instant, his next neighbour by the collar, while his right hand brandished a broad dagger, that glimmered against lamp-light and moonshine. Every arm was uplifted, but no one struck; for the victims were too much surprised for resistance, and it was probably the object of De la Marck only to impose terror on his civic confederates.

But the courage of Quentin Durward, prompt and alert in resolution beyond his years, and stimulated at the moment by all that could add energy to his natural shrewdness and resolution, gave a new turn to the scene. Imitating the action of the followers of De la Marck, he sprung on Carl Eberson, the son of their leader, and mastering him with ease, held his dirk at the boy's throat, while he exclaimed, "Is that your game? then here I play my part."

"Hold! hold!" exclaimed De la Marck, "it is a jest—a jest—Think you I would injure my good friends and allies of the city of Liege?—Soldiers, unloose your holds; sit down; take away the carrion (giving the bishop's corpse a thrust with his foot) which hath caused this strife among friends, and let us drown unkindness in a fresh carouse."

All unloosened their holds, and the citizens and soldiers stood gazing on each other, as if they scarce knew whether they were friends or foes. Quentin Durward took advantage of the moment.

"Hear me," he said, "William de la Marck, and you, burghers and citizens of Liege;—and do you, young sir, stand still (for the boy Carl was attempting to escape from his gripe); no harm shall befall you, unless another of these sharp jests shall pass round."

"Who art thou, in the fiend's name," said the astonished De la Marck, "who art come to hold terms and take hostages from us in our own lair—from us, who exact pledge from others, but yield them to no one?"

"I am a servant of King Louis of France," said Quentin, boldly; "an archer of his Scottish Guard, as my language and dress may partly tell you. I am here to behold and to report your proceedings; and I see with wonder, that they are those of heathens, rather than christians—of madmen, rather than men possessed of reason. The hosts of Charles of Burgundy will be instantly in motion against you all; and if you wish assistance from France, you must conduct yourself in a different manner.—For you, men of Liege, I advise your instant return to your own city; and if there is any obstruction offered to your departure, I denounce those by whom it is so offered, foes to my master, his most gracious majesty of France."

"France and Liege! France and Liege!" cried the followers of Pavillon and several other citizens, whose courage began to rise at the bold language held by Quentin.

"France and Liege! and long live the gallant archer! We will live and die with him!"

William de la Marck's eyes sparkled, and he grasped his dagger, as if about to launch it at the heart of the audacious speaker; but glancing his eye around, he read something in the looks of his soldiers which even *he* was obliged to respect. Many of them were Frenchmen, and all of them knew the private support which William had received, both

in men and in money, from that kingdom; nay, some of them were rather startled at the violent and sacrilegious action which had been just committed. The name of Charles of Burgundy, a person likely to resent to the utmost the deeds of that night, and the extreme impolicy of at once quarreling with the Liegeois and provoking the monarch of France, made an appalling impression on their minds, confused as their intellects were. De la Marck, in short, saw he would not be supported, even by his own band, in any farther act of violence; and relaxing the terrors of his brow and eye, declared that "he had not the least design against his good friends of Liege, all of whom were at liberty to depart from Schonwaldt at their pleasure, although he had hoped they would revel one night with him, at least, in honour of their victory." He added, with more calmness than he commonly used, that "he would be ready to enter into negotiation concerning the partition of spoil, and the arrangement of measures for their mutual defence, either the next day or as soon after as they would. Meantime, he trusted that the Scottish gentleman would honour his feast by remaining all night at Schonwaldt."

The young Scot returned his thanks, but said his motions must be determined by those of Pavillon, to whom he was directed particularly to attach himself; but that, unquestionably, he would attend him on his next return to the quarters of the valiant William de la Marck.

"If you depend on my motions," said Pavillon, hastily, "you are likely to quit Schonwaldt without an instant's delay; and if you do not come back to Schonwaldt save in my company, you are not likely to see it again in a hurry."

This last part of the sentence the honest citizen muttered to himself, afraid of the consequences of giving audible vent to feelings which, nevertheless, he was unable altogether to suppress.

"Keep close about me, my brisk Kurschen lads," he said to his body-guard, "and we will get as fast as we can out of this den of thieves."

Most of the better classes of the Liegeois seemed to entertain similar opinions with the syndic, and there was not so much joy amongst them at the obtaining possession of Schonwaldt as now seemed to arise from the prospect of getting safe out of it. They were suffered to leave the castle without opposition of any kind—and glad was Quentin when he turned his back on those formidable walls.

For the first time since they had entered that dreadful hall, Quentin ventured to ask the young countess how she did.

"Well, well," she answered, in feverish haste, "excellently well—do not stop to ask a question; let us not lose an instant in words—Let us fly—let us fly!"

She endeavoured to mend her pace as she spoke; but with so little success, that she must have fallen from exhaustion had not Durward supported her. With the tenderness of a mother, when she conveys her infant out of danger, the young Scot raised his precious charge in his arms; and, while she encircled his neck with one arm, lost to every other thought save the desire of escaping, he would not

have wished one of the risks of the night unencountered, since such had been the conclusion.

The honest burgomaster was, in his turn, supported and dragged forward by his faithful counsellor Peter, and another of his clerks; and thus, in breathless haste, they reached the banks of the river, encountering many strolling bands of citizens, who were eager to know the event of the siege, and the truth of certain rumours already afloat, that the conquerors had quarreled among themselves.

Evading their curiosity as they best could, the exertions of Peter and some of his companions at length procured a boat for the use of the company, and with it an opportunity of enjoying some repose, equally welcome to Isabelle, who continued to lie almost motionless in the arms of her deliverer, and to the worthy burgomaster, who, after delivering a broken string of thanks to Durward, whose mind was at the time too much occupied to answer him, began a long harangue, which he addressed to Peter, upon his own courage and benevolence, and the dangers to which these virtues had exposed him, on this and other occasions.

"Peter, Peter," he said, resuming the complaint of the preceding evening, "if I had not had a bold heart, I would never have stood out against paying the burghers-twentieths, when every other living soul was willing to pay the same.—Ay, and then a less stout heart had not seduced me into the other battle of Saint Tron, where a Hainault man-at-arms thrust me into a muddy ditch with his lance, which neither heart nor hand that I had could help me out of, till the battle was over.—Ay, and then, Peter, my courage seduced me, moreover, into too strait a corslet, which would have been the death of me, but for this gallant young gentleman, whose trade is fighting, whereof I wish him heartily joy. And then for my tenderness of heart, Peter, it has made a poor man of me—that is, it would have made a poor man of me, if I had not been tolerably well to pass in this wicked world;—and Heaven knows what trouble it is like to bring on me yet, with ladies, countesses, and keeping of secrets, which, for aught I know, may cost me half my fortune, and my neck into the bargain!"

Quentin could remain no longer silent, but assured him, that whatever danger or damage he should incur on the part of the young lady now under his protection, should be thankfully acknowledged, and, as far as was possible, repaid.

"I thank you, young Master Squire Archer, I thank you," answered the citizen of Liege; "but who was it told you that I desired any repayment at your hand for doing the duty of an honest man? I only regretted that it might cost me so and so; and I hope I may have leave to say so much to my lieutenant, without either grudging my loss or my peril."

Quentin accordingly concluded that his present friend was one of the numerous class of benefactors to others, who take out their reward in grumbling, without meaning more than, by showing their grievances, to exalt a little the idea of the valuable service by which they have incurred them, and therefore prudently remained silent, and suffered the syndic to maunder on to his lieutenant concerning

the risk and the loss he had encountered by his zeal for the public good, and his disinterested services to individuals, until they reached his own habitation.

The truth was, that the honest citizen felt that he had lost a little consequence, by suffering the young stranger to take the lead at the crisis which had occurred at the castle-hall of Schonwaldt; and, however delighted with the effect of Durward's interference at the moment, it seemed to him, on reflection, that he had sustained a diminution of importance, for which he endeavoured to obtain compensation, by exaggerating the claims which he had upon the gratitude of his country in general, his friends in particular, and more especially still, on the Countess of Croye, and her youthful protector.

But when the boat stopped at the bottom of his garden, and he had got himself assisted on shore by Peter, it seemed as if the touch of his own threshold had at once dissipated those feelings of wounded self-opinion and jealousy, and converted the discontented and obscured demagogue into the honest, kind, hospitable, and friendly host. He called loudly for Trudchen, who presently appeared; for fear and anxiety would permit few within the walls of Liege to sleep during that eventful night. She was charged to pay the utmost attention to the care of the beautiful and half-fainting stranger; and, admiring her personal charms, while she pitied her distress, Gertrude discharged the hospitable duty with the zeal and affection of a sister.

Late as it now was, and fatigued as the syndic appeared, Quentin, on his side, had difficulty to escape a flask of choice and costly wine, as old as the battle of Azincour; and must have submitted to take his share, however unwilling, but for the appearance of the mother of the family, whom Pavillon's loud summons for the keys of the cellar brought forth from her bed-room. She was a jolly little round-about woman, who had been pretty in her time, but whose principal characteristics for several years had been a red and sharp nose, a shrill voice, and a determination that the syndic, in consideration of the authority which he exercised when abroad, should remain under the rule of due discipline at home.

So soon as she understood the nature of the debate between her husband and his guest, she declared roundly, that the former, instead of having occasion for more wine, had got too much already; and, far from using, in furtherance of his request, any of the huge bunch of keys which hung by a silver chain at her waist, she turned her back on him without ceremony, and ushered Quentin to the neat and pleasant apartment in which he was to spend the night, amid such appliances to rest and comfort as probably he had till that moment been entirely a stranger to; so much did the wealthy Flemings excel, not merely the poor and rude Scots, but the French themselves, in all the conveniences of domestic life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FLIGHT.

— Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible;
Yea, get the better of them.

* * * * *

— Set on your foot;
And, with a heart new fired, I follow you,
To do I know not what.

Julius Cæsar.

IN spite of a mixture of joy and fear, doubt, anxiety, and other agitating passions, the exhausting fatigues of the preceding day were powerful enough to throw the young Scot into a deep and profound repose, which lasted until late on the day following; when his worthy host entered the apartment, with looks of care on his brow.

He seated himself by his guest's bed-side, and began a long and complicated discourse upon the domestic duties of a married life, and especially upon the awful power and right supremacy which it became married men to sustain in all differences of opinion with their wives. Quentin listened with some anxiety. He knew that husbands, like other belligerent powers, were sometimes disposed to sing *Te Deum*, rather to conceal a defeat than to celebrate a victory; and he hastened to probe the matter more closely, "by hoping their arrival had been attended with no inconvenience to the good lady of the household."

"Inconvenience!—no," answered the burgomaster—"No woman can be less taken unawares than Mother Mabel—always happy to see her friends—always a clean lodging and a handsome meal ready for them, with God's blessing on bed and board—No woman on earth so hospitable—only 'tis pity her temper is something particular."

"Our residence here is disagreeable to her, in short?" said the Scot, starting out of bed, and beginning to dress himself hastily. "Were I but sure the Lady Isabelle were fit to travel after the horrors of the last night, we would not increase the offence by remaining here an instant longer."

"Nay," said Pavillon, "that is just what the young lady herself said to Mother Mabel; and truly I wish you saw the colour that came to her face as she said it—a milk-maid that has skated five miles to market against the frost-wind, is a lily compared to it—I do not wonder Mother Mabel may be a little jealous, poor dear soul."

"Has the Lady Isabelle then left her apartment?" said the youth, continuing his toilette operations with more dispatch than before.

"Yes," replied Pavillon; "and she expects your approach with much impatience, to determine which way you should go—since you are both determined on going.—But I trust you will tarry breakfast?"

"Why did you not tell me this sooner?" said Durward, impatiently.

"Softly—softly," said the syndic; "I have told it you too soon, I think, if it puts you into such a hasty fluster. Now I have some more matter for

your ear, if I saw you had some patience to listen to me."

"Speak it, worthy sir, as soon and as fast as you can—I listen devoutly."

"Well, then," resumed the burgomaster, "I have but one word to say, and that is, that Trudchen, who is as sorry to part with yonder pretty lady as if she had been some sister of hers, wants you to take some other disguise; for there is word in the town that the ladies of Croye travel the country in pilgrims' dresses, attended by a French lifeguards-man of the Scottish archers; and it is said one of them was brought into Schonwaldt last night by a Bohemian after we had left it; and it was said still farther, that he had assured William de la Marck that you were charged with no message either to him or to the good people of Liege, and that you had stolen away the young countess, and travelled with her as her paramour. And all this news hath come from Schonwaldt this morning; and it has been told to us and the other councillors, who know not well what to advise; for though our own opinion is that William de la Marck has been a thought too rough both with the bishop and with ourselves, yet there is a great belief that he is a good-natured soul at bottom—that is, when he is sober—and that he is the only leader in the world to command us against the Duke of Burgundy;—and, in truth, as matters stand, it is partly my own mind that we must keep fair with him, for we have gone too far to draw back."

"Your daughter advises well," said Quentin Durward, abstaining from reproaches or exhortations, which he saw would be alike unavailing to sway a resolution, which had been adopted by the worthy magistrate in compliance at once with the prejudices of his party and the inclination of his wife—"Your daughter counsels well—We must part in disguise, and that instantly. We may, I trust, rely upon you for the necessary secrecy, and for the means of escape?"

"With all my heart—with all my heart," said the honest citizen, who, not much satisfied with the dignity of his own conduct, was eager to find some mode of atonement. "I cannot but remember that I owed you my life last night, both for unclasping that accursed steel doublet, and helping me through the other scrape, which was worse; for yonder boar and his brood look more like devils than men. So I will be true to you as blade to haft, as our cutlers say, who are the best in the whole world. Nay, now you are ready, come this way—you shall see how far I can trust you."

The syndic led him from the chamber in which he had slept to his own counting-room, in which he transacted his affairs of business; and after bolting the door, and casting a piercing and careful eye around him, he opened a concealed and vaulted closet behind the tapestry, in which stood more than one iron chest. He proceeded to open one which was full of guilders, and placed it at Quentin's discretion, to take whatever sum he might think necessary for his companion's expenses and his own.

As the money with which Quentin was furnished on leaving Plessis was now nearly expended, he hesitated not to accept the sum of two hundred guilders; and by doing so, took a great weight from

the mind of Pavillon, who considered the desperate transaction in which he thus voluntarily became the creditor, as an atonement for the breach of hospitality which various considerations in a great measure compelled him to commit.

Having carefully locked his treasure-chamber, the wealthy Fleming next conveyed his guest to the parlour, where, in full possession of her activity of mind and body, though pale from the scenes of the preceding night, he found the countess attired in the fashion of a Flemish maiden of the middling class. No other was present excepting Trudchen, who was sedulously employed in completing the countess's dress, and instructing her how to bear herself. She extended her hand to him, which when he had reverently kissed, she said to him, "Signior Quentin, we must leave our friends here, unless I would bring on them a part of the misery which has pursued me ever since my father's death. You must change your dress and go with me, unless you also are tired of befriending a being so unfortunate."

"I!—I tired of being your attendant!—To the end of the earth will I guard you! But you—you yourself—are you equal to the task you undertake?—Can you, after the terrors of last night"—

"Do not recall them to my memory," answered the countess; "I remember but the confusion of a horrid dream.—Has the excellent bishop escaped?"

"I trust he is in freedom," said Quentin, making a sign to Pavillon, who seemed about to enter on the dreadful narrative, to be silent.

"Is it possible for us to rejoin him?—Hath he gathered any power?" said the lady.

"His only hopes are in Heaven," said the Scot; "but wherever you wish to go, I stand by your side, a determined guide and guard."

"We will consider," said Isabelle; and after a moment's pause, she added, "A convent would be my choice, but that I fear it would prove a weak defence against those who pursue me."

"Hem! hem!" said the syndic; "I could not well recommend a convent within the district of Liege; because the Boar of Ardenne, though in the main a brave leader, a trusty confederate, and a well-wisher to our city, has, nevertheless, rough humours, and payeth, on the whole, little regard to cloisters, convents, nunneries, and the like. Men say that there are a score of nuns—that is, such as were nuns—who march always with his company."

"Get yourself in readiness hastily, Signior Durward," said Isabelle, interrupting this detail, "since to your faith I must needs commit myself."

No sooner had the syndic and Quentin left the room, than Isabelle began to ask at Gertrude various questions concerning the roads, and so forth, with such clearness of spirit and pertinence, that the latter could not help exclaiming, "Lady, I wonder at you!—I have heard of masculine firmness, but yours appears to me more than belongs to humanity."

"Necessity," answered the countess—"necessity, my friend, is the mother of courage, as of invention. No long time since, I fainted when I saw a drop of blood shed from a trifling cut—I have since seen

life-blood flow around me, I may say, in waves, yet I have retained my senses and my self-possession.—Do not think it was an easy task," she added, laying on Gertrude's arm a trembling hand, although she still spoke with a firm voice; "the little world within me is like a garrison besieged by a thousand foes, whom nothing but the most determined resolution can keep from storming it on every hand, and at every moment. Were my situation one whit less perilous than it is—were I not sensible that my only chance to escape a fate more horrible than death, is to retain my recollection and self-possession—Gertrude, I would at this moment throw myself into your arms, and relieve my bursting bosom by such a transport of tears and sorrow, as never rushed from a breaking heart!"

"Do not do so, lady!" said the sympathizing Fleming; "take courage, tell your beads, throw yourself on the care of Heaven; and surely, if ever Heaven sent a deliverer to one ready to perish, that bold and adventurous young gentleman must be designed for yours. There is one, too," she added, blushing deeply, "in whom I have some interest. Say nothing to my father; but I have ordered my bachelor, Hans Glover, to wait for you at the eastern gate, and never to see my face more, unless he brings word that he has guided you safe from the territory."

To kiss her tenderly was the only way in which the young countess could express her thanks to the frank and kind-hearted city-maiden, who returned the embrace affectionately, and added, with a smile, "Nay, if two maidens and their devoted bachelors cannot succeed in a disguise and an escape, the world is changed from what I am told it wont to be."

A part of this speech again called the colour into the countess's pale cheeks, which was not lessened by Quentin's sudden appearance. He entered completely attired as a Flemish boor of the better class, in the holiday suit of Peter, who expressed his interest in the young Scot by the readiness with which he parted with it for his use; and swore, at the same time, that, were he to be curried and tugged worse than ever was bullock's hide, they should make nothing out of him, to the betraying of the young folks. Two stout horses had been provided by the activity of Mother Mabel, who really desired the countess and her attendant no harm, so that she could make her own house and family clear of the dangers which might attend upon harbouring them. She beheld them mount and go off with great satisfaction, after telling them that they would find their way to the east gate by keeping their eye on Peter, who was to walk in that direction as their guide, but without holding any visible communication with them.

The instant her guests had departed, Mother Mabel took the opportunity to read a long practical lecture to Trudchen upon the folly of reading romances, whereby the flaunting ladies of the court were grown so bold and venturous, that, instead of applying to learn some honest housewifery, they must ride, forsooth, a damsel-errant through the country, with no better attendant than some idle squire, debauched page, or rake-belly archer from foreign parts, to the great danger of their health, the impoverishing of

their substance, and the irreparable prejudice of their reputation.

All this Gertrude heard in silence, and without reply; but, considering her character, it might be doubted whether she derived from it the practical inference which it was her mother's purpose to enforce.

Meantime, the travellers had gained the eastern gate of the city, traversing crowds of people, who were fortunately too much busied in the political events and rumours of the hour, to give any attention to a couple who had so little to render their appearance remarkable. They passed the guards in virtue of a permission obtained for them by Pavillon, but in the name of his colleague Rouslaer, and they took leave of Peter Geislaer with a friendly, though brief exchange, of good wishes on either side. Immediately afterwards, they were joined by a stout young man, riding a good grey horse, who presently made himself known as Hans Glover, the bachelor of Trudchen Pavillon. He was a young fellow with a good Flemish countenance—not, indeed, of the most intellectual cast, but arguing more hilarity and good-humour than wit, and, as the countess could not help thinking, scarce worthy to be bachelor to the generous Trudchen. He seemed, however, fully desirous to second the views which she had formed in their favour; for, saluting them respectfully, he asked of the countess in Flemish, on which road she desired to be conducted?

"Guide me," said she, "towards the nearest town on the frontiers of Brabant."

"You have then settled the end and object of your journey?" said Quentin, approaching his horse to that of Isabelle, and speaking French, which their guide did not understand.

"Surely," replied the young lady; "for, situated as I now am, it must be no small detriment to me if I were to prolong a journey in my present circumstances, even though the termination should be a rigorous prison."

"A prison?" said Quentin.

"Yes, my friend, a prison; but I will take care that you shall not share it."

"Do not talk—do not think of me," said Quentin. "Saw I you but safe, my own concerns are little worth minding."

"Do not speak so loud," said the Lady Isabelle; "you will surprise our guide—you see he has already rode on before us;"—for, in truth, the good-natured Fleming, doing as he desired to be done by, had removed from them the constraint of a third person upon Quentin's first motion towards the lady.—"Yes," she continued, when she noticed they were free from observation, "to you, my friend, my protector—why should I be ashamed to call you what Heaven has made you to me?—to you it is my duty to say, that my resolution is taken to return to my native country, and to throw myself on the mercy of the Duke of Burgundy. It was mistaken, though well-meant advice, which induced me ever to withdraw from his protection, and place myself under that of the crafty and false Louis of France."

"And you resolve to become the bride, then, of the Count of Campo-basso, the unworthy favourite of Charles?"

VOL. III.

Thus spoke Quentin, with a voice in which internal agony struggled with his desire to assume an indifferent tone, like that of the poor condemned criminal, when, affecting a firmness which he is far from feeling, he asks if the death-warrant be arrived.

"No, Durward, no," said the Lady Isabelle, sitting up erect in her saddle, "to that hated condition all Burgundy's power shall not sink a daughter of the house of Croye. Burgundy may seize on my lands and fiefs, he may imprison my person in a convent; but that is the worst I have to expect; and worse than that I will endure ere I give my hand to Campo-basso."

"The worst!" said Quentin; "and what worse can there be than plunder and imprisonment?—Oh, think, while you have God's free air around you, and one by your side who will hazard life to conduct you to England, to Germany, even to Scotland, in all of which you would find generous protectors,—O, while this is the case, do not resolve so rashly to abandon the means of liberty, the best gift that Heaven gives!—O, well sung a poet of my own land—

Ah, Freedom is a noble thing—
Freedom makes man to have liking—
Freedom the zest to pleasure gives—
He lives at ease who freely lives.
Grief, sickness, poortith, want, are all
Summ'd up within the name of thrall."

She listened with a melancholy smile to her guide's tirade in praise of liberty; and then answered, after a moment's pause, "Freedom is for man alone—woman must ever seek a protector, since nature made her incapable to defend herself. And where am I to find one?—In the voluptuary Edward of England—in the inebriated Wenceslaus of Germany—in Scotland?—Ah, Durward, were I your sister, and could you promise me shelter in some of those mountain-glens which you love to describe, where, for charity, or for the few jewels I have preserved, I might lead an unharassed life, and forget the lot I was born to—Could you promise me the protection of some honoured matron of the land—of some baron whose heart was as true as his sword—that were indeed a prospect, for which it were worth the risk of farther censure to wander farther and wider!"

There was a faltering tenderness of voice with which the Countess Isabelle made this admission, that at once filled Quentin with a sensation of joy, and cut him to the very heart. He hesitated a moment ere he made an answer, hastily reviewing in his mind the possibility there might be that he could procure her shelter in Scotland; but the melancholy truth rushed on him, that it would be alike base and cruel to point out to her a course, which he had not the most distant power or means to render safe. "Lady," he said at last, "I should act foully against my honour and oath of chivalry, did I suffer you to ground any plan upon the thoughts that I have the power in Scotland to afford you other protection, than that of the poor arm which is now by your side. I scarce know that my blood flows in the veins of an individual who now

lives in my native land. The knight of Innerquharity stormed our castle at midnight, and cut off all that belonged to my name. Were I again in Scotland, our feudal enemies are numerous and powerful, I single and weak; and even had the king a desire to do me justice, he dared not, for the sake of redressing the wrongs of a poor individual, provoke a chief who rides with five hundred horse."

"Alas!" said the countess, "there is then no corner of the world safe from oppression, since it rages as unrestrained amongst those wild hills which afford so few objects to covet, as in our rich and abundant Lowlands!"

"It is a sad truth, and I dare not deny it," said the Scot, "that, for little more than the pleasure of revenge and the lust of bloodshed, our hostile clans do the work of executioners on each other; and Ogilvies and the like act the same scenes in Scotland, as De la Marck and his robbers do in this country."

"No more of Scotland, then," said Isabelle, with a tone of indifference, either real or affected—"no more of Scotland,—which indeed I mentioned but in jest, to see if you really dared recommend to me, as a place of rest, the most distracted kingdom in Europe. It was but a trial of your sincerity, which I rejoice to see may be relied on, even when your partialities are most strongly excited. So, once more, I will think of no other protection than can be afforded by the first honourable baron holding of Duke Charles, to whom I am determined to render myself."

"And why not rather betake yourself to your own estates, and to your own strong castle, as you designed when at Tours?" said Quentin. "Why not call around you the vassals of your father, and make treaty with Burgundy, rather than surrender yourself to him? Surely there must be many a bold heart that would fight in your cause; and I know at least of one, who would willingly lay down his life to give example."

"Alas!" said the countess, "that scheme, the suggestion of the crafty Louis, and, like all which he ever suggested, designed more for his advantage than for mine, has become impracticable, since it was betrayed to Burgundy by the double traitor Zamet Hayraddin. My kinsman was then imprisoned, and my houses garrisoned. Any attempt of mine would but expose my vassals to the vengeance of Duke Charles; and why should I occasion more bloodshed than has already taken place on so worthless an account? No, I will submit myself to my sovereign as a dutiful vassal, in all which shall leave my personal freedom of choice unfringed; the rather that I trust my kinswoman, the Countess Hameline, who first counseled, and indeed urged my flight, has already taken this wise and honourable step."

"Your kinswoman!" repeated Quentin, awakened to recollections to which the young Countess was a stranger, and which the rapid succession of perilous and stirring events had, as matters of nearer concern, in fact banished from his memory.

"Ay—my cousin—the Countess Hameline of Croye—know you aught of her?" said the Countess Isabelle; "I trust she is now under the protection

of the Burgundian banner. You are silent. Know you aught of her?"

The last question, urged in a tone of the most anxious inquiry, obliged Quentin to give some account of what he knew of the countess's fate. He mentioned, that he had been summoned to attend her in a flight from Liege, which he had no doubt the Lady Isabelle would be partaker in—he mentioned the discovery that had been made after they had gained the forest—and finally, he told his own return to the castle, and the circumstances in which he found it. But he said nothing of the views with which it was plain the Lady Hameline had left the Castle of Schonwaldt, and as little about the floating report of her having fallen into the hands of William de la Marck. Delicacy prevented his even hinting at the one, and regard for the feelings of his companion, at a moment when strength and exertion were most demanded of her, prevented him from alluding to the latter, which had, besides, only reached him as a mere rumour.

This tale, though abridged of those important particulars, made a strong impression on the Countess Isabelle, who, after riding some time in silence, said at last, with a tone of cold displeasure, "And so you abandoned my unfortunate relative in a wild forest, at the mercy of a vile Bohemian and a traitorous waiting-woman?—Poor kinswoman, thou wert wont to praise this youth's good faith!"

"Had I not done so, madam," said Quentin, not unreasonably offended at the turn thus given to his gallantry, "what had been the fate of one to whose service I was far more devotedly bound? Had I not left the Countess Hameline of Croye to the charge of those whom she had herself selected as counsellors and advisers, the Countess Isabelle had been ere now the bride of William de la Marck, the Wild Boar of Ardennes."

"You are right," said the Countess Isabelle, in her usual manner; "and I, who have the advantage of your unhesitating devotion, have done you foul and ungrateful wrong. But oh, my unhappy kinswoman! and the wretch Marthon, who enjoyed so much of her confidence, and deserved it so little—it was she that introduced to my kinswoman the wretched Zamet and Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, by their pretended knowledge in soothsaying and astrology, obtained a great ascendancy over her mind; it was she who, strengthening their predictions, encouraged her in—I know not what to call them—delusions concerning matches and lovers, which my cousin's age rendered ungraceful and improbable. I doubt not that, from the beginning, we had been surrounded by these snares by Louis of France, in order to determine us to take refuge at his court, or rather to put ourselves into his power; after which rash act on our part, how unkingly, unknighly, ignobly, ungentlemanly-like, he hath conducted himself towards us, you, Quentin Durward, can bear witness. But, alas! my kinswoman—what think you will be her fate?"

Endeavouring to inspire hopes which he scarce felt, Durward answered, that the avarice of these people was stronger than any other passion; that Marthon, even when he left them, seemed to act rather as the Lady Hameline's protectress; and, in

fine, that it was difficult to conceive any object these wretches could accomplish by the ill usage or murder of the countess, whereas they might be gainers by treating her well, and putting her to ransom.

To lead the Countess Isabelle's thoughts from this melancholy subject, Quentin frankly told her the treachery of the Maugrabin, which he had discovered in the night-quarter near Namur, and which appeared the result of an agreement betwixt the King and William de la Marek. Isabelle shuddered with horror, and then recovering herself, said, "I am ashamed, and I have sinned in permitting myself so far to doubt of the saints' protection, as for an instant to have deemed possible the accomplishment of a scheme so utterly cruel, base, and dishonourable, while there are pitying eyes in Heaven to look down on human miseries. It is not a thing to be thought of with fear or abhorrence, but to be rejected as such a piece of incredible treachery and villany, as it were atheism to believe could ever be successful. But I now see plainly why that hypocritical Marthon often seemed to foster every seed of petty jealousy or discontent betwixt my poor kinswoman and myself, whilst she always mixed with flattery, addressed to the individual who was present, whatever could prejudice her against her absent cousin. Yet never did I dream she could have proceeded so far as to have caused my once affectionate kinswoman to have left me behind in the perils of Schonwaldt, while she made her own escape."

"Did the Lady Hameline not mention to you, then," said Quentin, "her intended flight?"

"No," replied the countess, "but she alluded to some communication which Marthon was to make to me. To say truth, my poor kinswoman's head was so turned by the mysterious jargon of the miserable Hayraddin, whom that day she had admitted to a long and secret conference, and she threw out so many strange hints, that—that—in short, I cared not to press on her, when in that humour, for any explanation. Yet it was cruel to leave me behind her."

"I will excuse the Lady Hameline from such unkindness," said Quentin; "for such was the agitation of the moment, and the darkness of the hour, that I believe the Lady Hameline as certainly conceived herself accompanied by her niece, as I at the same time, deceived by Marthon's dress and demeanour, supposed I was in the company of both the ladies of Croye:—and of *her* especially," he added, with a low but determined voice, "without whom the wealth of worlds would not have tempted me to leave Schonwaldt."

Isabelle stooped her head forward, and seemed scarce to hear the emphasis with which Quentin had spoken. But she turned her face to him again when he began to speak of the policy of Louis; and it was not difficult for them, by mutual communication, to ascertain that the Bohemian brothers, with their accomplice Marthon, had been the agents of that crafty monarch, although Zamet, the elder of them, with a perfidy peculiar to his race, had attempted to play a double game, and had been punished accordingly. In the same humour of mu-

tual confidence, and forgetting the singularity of their own situation, as well as the perils of the road, the travelers pursued their journey for several hours, only stopping to refresh their horses at a retired dorf, or hamlet, to which they were conducted by Hans Glover, who, in all other respects, as well as in leaving them much to their own freedom in conversation, conducted himself like a person of reflection and discretion.

Meantime, the artificial distinction which divided the two lovers (for such we may now term them), seemed dissolved, or removed, by the circumstances in which they were placed; for if the countess boasted the higher rank, and was by birth entitled to a fortune incalculably larger than that of the youth, whose revenue lay in his sword, it was to be considered that, for the present, she was as poor as he, and for her safety, honour, and life, exclusively indebted to his presence of mind, valour, and devotion. They *spoke* not indeed of love, for though the young lady, her heart full of gratitude and confidence, might have pardoned such a declaration, yet Quentin, on whose tongue there was laid a check, both by natural timidity and by the sentiments of chivalry, would have held it an unworthy abuse of her situation had he said anything which could have the appearance of taking undue advantage of the opportunities which it afforded them. They *spoke* not then of love, but the thoughts of it were on both sides unavoidable; and thus they were placed in that relation to each other, in which sentiments of mutual regard are rather understood than announced, and which, with the freedoms which it permits, and the uncertainties that attend it, often forms the most delightful hours of human existence, and as frequently leads to those which are darkened by disappointment, fickleness, and all the pains of blighted hope and unrequited attachment.

It was two hours after noon, when the travelers were alarmed by the report of the guide, who, with paleness and horror in his countenance, said that they were pursued by a party of De la Marck's *Schwarz-reiters*. These soldiers, or rather banditti, were bands levied in the lower circles of Germany, and resembled the lanzknechts in every particular, except that the former acted as light cavalry. To maintain the name of Black Troopers, and to strike additional terror into their enemies, they usually rode on black chargers, and smeared with black ointment their arms and accoutrements, in which operation their hands and faces often had their share. In morals and in ferocity these Schwarz-reiters emulated their pedestrian brethren the lanzknechts.

On looking back, and discovering along the long level road which they had traversed a cloud of dust advancing, with one or two of the headmost troopers riding furiously in front of it, Quentin addressed his companion—"Dearest Isabelle, I have no weapon left save my sword; but since I cannot fight for you, I will fly with you. Could we gain yonder wood that is before us ere they come up, we may easily find means to escape."

"So be it, my only friend," said Isabelle, pressing her horse to the gallop; "and thou, good fellow," she added, addressing Hans Glover, "get thee off

to another road, and do not stay to partake our misfortune and danger."

The honest Fleming shook his head, and answered her generous exhortation, with *Nein, nein! das geht nichts*, and continued to attend them, all three riding towards the shelter of the wood as fast as their jaded horses could go, pursued, at the same time, by the Schwarz-reiters, who increased their pace when they saw them fly. But notwithstanding the fatigue of the horses, still the fugitives, being unarmed, and riding lighter in consequence, had considerably the advantage of the pursuers, and were within about a quarter of a mile of the wood, when a body of men-at-arms, under a knight's pennon, was discovered advancing from the cover, so as to intercept their flight.

"They have bright armour," said Isabelle; "they must be Burgundians. Be they who they will, we must yield to them, rather than to the lawless miscreants who pursue us."

A moment after, she exclaimed, looking on the pennon, "I know the cloven heart which it displays! It is the banner of the Count of Crevecœur, a noble Burgundian—to him I will surrender myself."

Quentin Durward sighed; but what other alternative remained? and how happy would he have been but an instant before, to have been certain of the escape of Isabelle, even under worse terms! They soon joined the band of Crevecœur, and the countess demanded to speak to the leader, who had halted his party till he should reconnoitre the Black Troopers; and as he gazed on her with doubt and uncertainty, she said, "Noble Count,—Isabelle of Croye, the daughter of your old companion in arms, Count Reinold of Croye, renders herself, and asks protection from your valour for her and hers."

"Thou shalt have it, fair kinswoman, were it against a host—always excepting my liege Lord of Burgundy. But there is little time to talk of it. These filthy-looking fiends have made a halt, as if they intended to dispute the matter.—By Saint George of Burgundy, they have the insolence to advance against the banner of Crevecœur!—What! will not the knaves be ruled?—Damian, my lance—Advance banner—Lay your spears in the rest—Crevecœur to the rescue!"

Crying his war-cry, and followed by his men-at-arms, he galloped rapidly forward to charge the Schwarz-reiters.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SURRENDER.

Rescue or none, Sir Knight, I am your captive;
Deal with me what your nobleness suggests—
Thinking the chance of war may one day place you
Where I must now be reckon'd—i' the roll
Of melancholy prisoners.

Anonymous.

THE skirmish betwixt the Schwarz-reiters and the Burgundian men-at-arms lasted scarcely five minutes, so soon were the former put to the route by the superiority of the latter, in armour, weight of horse, and military spirit. In less than the space we

have mentioned, the Count of Crevecœur, wiping his bloody sword upon his horse's mane ere he sheathed it, came back to the verge of the forest, where Isabelle had remained a spectator of the combat. One part of his people followed him, while the other continued to pursue the flying enemy for a little space along the causeway.

"It is shame," said the count, "that the weapons of knights and gentlemen should be soiled by the blood of those brutal swine."

So saying, he returned his weapon to the sheath, and added, "This is a rough welcome to your home, my pretty cousin, but wandering princesses must expect such adventures. And well I came up in time, for, let me assure you, the Black Troopers respect a countess's coronet as little as a country-wench's coif, and I think your retinue is not qualified for much resistance."

"My lord count," said the Lady Isabelle, "without farther preface, let me know if I am a prisoner, and where you are to conduct me."

"You know, you silly child," answered the count, "how I would answer that question, did it rest on me. But you, and your foolish match-making, marriage-hunting aunt, have made such wild use of your wings of late, that I fear you must be contented to fold them up in a cage for a little while. For my part, my duty, and it is a sad one, will be ended when I have conducted you to the court of the duke, at Peronne; for which purpose, I hold it necessary to deliver the command of this reconnoitring party to my nephew, Count Stephen, while I return with you thither, as I think you may need an intercessor—And I hope the young giddy-pate will discharge his duty wisely."

"So please you, fair uncle," said Count Stephen, "If you doubt my capacity to conduct the men-at-arms, even remain with them yourself, and I will be the servant and guard of the Countess Isabelle of Croye."

"No doubt, fair nephew," answered his uncle, "this were a goodly improvement on my scheme; but methinks I like it as well in the way I planned it. Please you, therefore, to take notice, that your business here is not to hunt after and stick these black hogs, for which you seemed but now to have felt an especial vocation, but to bring me true tidings what is going forward in the country of Liege, concerning which we hear such wild rumours. Let some half a score of lances follow me, and the rest remain with my banner, under your guidance."

"Yet one moment, Cousin of Crevecœur," said the Countess Isabelle, "and let me, in yielding myself prisoner, stipulate at least for the safety of those who have befriended me in my misfortunes. Permit this good fellow, my trusty guide, to go back unharmed to his native town of Liege."

"My nephew," said Crevecœur, after looking sharply at Glover's honest breadth of countenance, "shall guard this good fellow, who seems, indeed, to have little harm in him, as far into the territory as he himself advances, and then leave him at liberty."

"Fail not to remember me to the kind Gertrude," said the countess to her guide, and added, taking a string of pearls from under her veil, "Pray her to

wear this in remembrance of her unhappy friend."

Honest Glover took the string of pearls, and kissed, with clownish gesture, but with sincere kindness, the fair hand which had found such a delicate mode of remunerating his own labours and peril.

"Umph! signs and tokens," said the count; "any farther bequests to make, my fair cousin?—It is time we were on the way."

"Only," said the countess, making an effort to speak, "that you will be pleased to be favourable to this—this young gentleman."

"Umph!" said Crevecœur, casting the same penetrating glance on Quentin which he had bestowed on Glover, but apparently with a much less satisfactory result, and mimicking, though not offensively, the embarrassment of the countess.—"Umph!—Ay,—this is a blade of another temper.—And pray, my cousin, what has this—this *very* young gentleman done, to deserve such intercession at your hands?"

"He has saved my life and honour," said the countess, reddening with shame and resentment.

Quentin also blushed with indignation, but wisely concluded, that to give vent to it might only make matters worse.

"Life and honour?—Umph!"—said again the Count Crevecœur; "methinks it would have been as well, my cousin, if you had not put yourself in the way of lying under such obligations to this very young gentleman.—But let it pass. The young gentleman may wait on us, if his quality permit, and I will see he has no injury—only, I will myself take the office of protecting your life and honour, and may perhaps find for him some fitter duty than that of being a squire of the body to damosels errant."

"My lord count," said Durward, unable to keep silence any longer, "lest you should talk of a stranger in slighter terms than you might afterwards think becoming, I take leave to tell you, that I am Quentin Durward, an archer of the Scottish body-guard, in which, as you well know, none but gentlemen and men of honour are enrolled."

"I thank you for your information, and I kiss your hands, signior archer," said Crevecœur, in the same tone of raillery. "Have the goodness to ride with me to the front of the party."

As Quentin moved onward at the command of the count, who had now the power, if not the right, to dictate his motions, he observed that the Lady Isabelle followed his motions with a look of anxious and timid interest, which amounted almost to tenderness, and the sight of which brought water into his own eyes. But he remembered that he had a man's part to sustain before Crevecœur, who, perhaps of all the chivalry in France or Burgundy, was least like to be moved to anything but laughter by a tale of true-love sorrow. He determined, therefore, not to wait his addressing him, but to open the conversation in a tone which should assert his claim to fair treatment, and to more respect than the count, offended perhaps at finding a person of such inferior note placed so near the confidence of his high-born and wealthy cousin, seemed disposed to entertain for him.

"My Lord Count of Crevecœur," he said, in a temperate but firm tone of voice, "may I request

of you, before our interview goes farther, to tell me if I am at liberty, or am to account myself your prisoner?"

"A shrewd question," replied the count, "which, at present, I can only answer by another—Are France and Burgundy, think you, at peace or war with each other?"

"That," replied the Scot, "you, my lord, should certainly know better than I. I have been absent from the court of France, and have heard no news for some time."

"Look you there," said the count; "you see how easy it is to ask questions, but how difficult to answer them. Why, I myself, who have been at Peronne with the duke for this week and better, cannot resolve this riddle any more than you; and yet, sir squire, upon solution of that question depends the said point, whether you are prisoner or free man; and, for the present, I must hold you as the former—Only, if you have really and honestly been of service to my kinswoman, and if you are candid in your answers to the questions I shall ask, affairs shall stand the better with you."

"The Countess of Croye," said Quentin, "is best judge if I have rendered any service, and to her I refer you on that matter. My answers you will yourself judge of when you ask me your questions."

"Umph!—haughty enough," muttered the Count of Crevecœur, "and very like one that wears a lady's favour in his hat, and thinks he must carry things with a high tone, to honour the precious remnant of silk and tinsel.—Well, sir, I trust it will be no abatement of your dignity, if you answer me, how long you have been about the person of the Lady Isabelle of Croye?"

"Count of Crevecœur," said Quentin Durward, "if I answer questions which are asked in a tone approaching towards insult, it is only lest injurious inferences should be drawn from my silence respecting one to whom we are both obliged to render justice. I have acted as escort to the Lady Isabelle since she left France to retire into Flanders."

"Ho! ho!" said the count; "and that is to say, since she fled from Plessis-les-Tours?—You, an archer of the Scottish Guard, accompanied her, of course, by the express orders of King Louis?"

However little Quentin thought himself indebted to the King of France, who, in contriving the surprisal of the Countess Isabelle by William de la Marck, had probably calculated on the young Scotchman being slain in her defence, he did not yet conceive himself at liberty to betray any trust which Louis had reposed, or had seemed to repose in him, and therefore replied to Count Crevecœur's inference, "that it was sufficient for him to have the authority of his superior officer for what he had done, and he inquired no further."

"It is quite sufficient," said the count. "We know the king does not permit his officers to send the archers of his guard to prance like paladins by the bridle-rein of wandering ladies, without he hath some politic purpose to serve. It will be difficult for King Louis to continue to aver so boldly, that he knew not of the ladies of Croye's having escaped from France, since they were escorted by one of his

own life-guard.—And whither, Sir Archer, was your retreat directed?"

"To Liege, my lord," answered the Scot; "where the ladies desired to be placed under the protection of the late bishop."

"The *late* bishop!" exclaimed the Count of Crevecœur; "is Louis of Bourbon dead?—Not a word of his illness had reached the duke—Of what did he die?"

"He sleeps in a bloody grave, my lord—that is, if his murderers have conferred one on his remains."

"Murdered!" exclaimed Crevecœur again—"Holy Mother of Heaven!—young man, it is impossible."

"I saw the deed done with mine own eyes, and many an act of horror besides."

"Saw it! and made not in to help the good prelate!" exclaimed the count; "or to raise the castle against his murderers?—Know'st thou not, that even to look on such a deed, without resisting it, is profane sacrilege?"

"To be brief, my lord," said Durward, "ere this act was done, the castle was stormed by the blood-thirsty William de la Marck, with help of the insurgent Liegeois."

"I am struck with thunder," said Crevecœur. "Liege in insurrection!—Schonwaldt taken!—the bishop murdered!—Messenger of sorrow, never did one man unfold such a packet of woes!—Speak—knew you of this assault—of this insurrection—of this murder?—Speak—thou art one of Louis's trusted archers, and it is he that has aimed this painful arrow.—Speak, or I will have thee torn with wild horses!"

"And if I *am* so torn, my lord, there can be nothing rent out of me, that may not become a true Scottish gentleman. I know no more of these villainies than you,—was so far from being partaker in them, that I would have withstood them to the uttermost, had my means, in a twentieth degree, equaled my inclination. But what could I do?—they were hundreds, and I but one. My only care was to rescue the Countess Isabelle, and in that I was happily successful. Yet, had I been near enough when the ruffian deed was so cruelly done on the old man, I had saved his grey hairs, or I had avenged them; and as it was, my abhorrence was spoken loud enough to prevent other horrors."

"I believe thee, youth," said the count; "thou art neither of an age nor nature to be trusted with such bloody work, however well fitted to be the squire of dames. But alas! for the kind and generous prelate, to be murdered on the hearth where he so often entertained the stranger with christian charity and princely bounty—and that by a wretch! a monster! a portentous growth of blood and cruelty!—bred up in the very hall where he has imbrued his hands in his benefactor's blood! But I know not Charles of Burgundy—nay, I should doubt of the justice of Heaven, if vengeance be not as sharp, and sudden, and severe, as this villany has been unexampled in atrocity. And, if no other were to pursue the murderer."—Here he paused, grasped his sword, then quitting his bridle, struck both gauntleted hands upon his breast, until his corslet

clattered, and finally held them up to Heaven, as he solemnly continued—"I—I, Philip Crevecœur of Cordès, make a vow to God, Saint Lambert, and the Three Kings of Cologne, that small shall be my thought of other earthly concerns, till I take full revenge on the murderers of the good Louis of Bourbon, whether I find them in forest or field, in city or in country, in hill or plain, in king's court or in God's church! and thereto I pledge lands and living, friends and followers, life and honour. So help me God and Saint Lambert of Liege, and the Three Kings of Cologne!"

When the Count of Crevecœur had made his vow, his mind seemed in some sort relieved from the overwhelming grief and astonishment with which he had heard the fatal tragedy that had been acted at Schonwaldt, and he proceeded to question Durward more minutely concerning the particulars of that disastrous affair, which the Scot, noways desirous to abate the spirit of revenge which the count entertained against William de la Marck, gave him at full length.

"But those blind, unsteady, faithless, fickle beasts, the Liegeois," said the count, "that they should have combined themselves with this inexorable robber and murderer, to put to death their lawful prince!"

Durward here informed the enraged Burgundian that the Liegeois, or at least the better class of them, however rashly they had run into the rebellion against their bishop, had no design, so far as appeared to him, to aid in the execrable deed of De la Marck; but, on the contrary, would have prevented it if they had had the means, and were struck with horror when they beheld it."

"Speak not of the faithless, inconstant, plebeian rabble!" said Crevecœur. "When they took arms against a prince, who had no fault, save that he was too kind and too good a master for such a set of ungrateful slaves—when they armed against him, and broke into his peaceful house, what was there in their intention but murder?—when they banded themselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes, the greatest homicide in the marches of Flanders, what else could there be in his purpose *but* murder, which is the very trade he lives by? And again, was it not one of their own vile rabble who did the very deed, by thine own account?—I hope to see their canals running blood by the light of their burning houses. Oh, the kind, noble, generous lord, whom they have murdered!—Other vassals have rebelled under the pressure of imposts and penury; but the men of Liege, in the fulness of insolence and plenty."—He again abandoned the reins of his war-horse, and wrung bitterly the hands, which his mail-gloves rendered untractable. Quentin easily saw that the grief which he manifested was augmented by the bitter recollection of past intercourse and friendship with the sufferer, and was silent accordingly; respecting feelings which he was unwilling to aggravate, and at the same time felt it impossible to soothe.

But the Count of Crevecœur returned again and again to the subject—questioned him on every particular of the surprise of Schonwaldt, and the death of the bishop; and then suddenly, as if he had

recollected something which had escaped his memory, demanded what had become of the Lady Hameline, and why she was not with her kinswoman? "Not," he added, contemptuously, "that I consider her absence as at all a loss to the Countess Isabelle; for, although she was her kinswoman, and upon the whole well-meaning, yet the court of Cognac never produced such a fantastic fool; and I hold it for certain, that her niece, whom I have always observed to be a modest and orderly young woman, was led into the absurd frolic of flying from Burgundy to France, by that blundering, romantic, old, match-making and match-seeking idiot!"

What a speech for a romantic lover to hear! and to hear, too, when it would have been ridiculous in him to attempt what it was impossible for him to achieve,—namely, to convince the count, by force of arms, that he did foul wrong to the countess—the peerless in sense as in beauty—in terming her a modest and orderly young woman; qualities which might have been predicated with propriety of the daughter of a sun-burnt peasant, who lived by goading the oxen, while her father held the plough. And then, to suppose her under the domination and supreme guidance of a silly and romantic aunt!—the slander should have been repelled down the slanderer's throat. But the open, though severe, physiognomy of the Count of Crevecœur, the total contempt which he seemed to entertain for those feelings which were uppermost in Quentin's bosom, overawed him; not for fear of the count's fame in arms—that was a risk which would have increased his desire of making out a challenge—but in dread of ridicule, the weapon of all others most feared by enthusiasts of every description, and which, from its predominance over such minds, often checks what is absurd, and often smothers that which is noble.

Under the influence of this fear, of becoming an object of scorn rather than resentment, Durward, though with some pain, confined his reply to a confused account of the Lady Hameline having made her escape from Schonwaldt before the attack took place. He could not, indeed, have made his story very distinct, without throwing ridicule on the near relation of Isabelle, and perhaps incurring some himself, as having been the object of her preposterous expectations. He added to his embarrassed detail, that he had heard a report, though a vague one, of the Lady Hameline having again fallen into the hands of William de la Marck.

"I trust in Saint Lambert that he will marry her," said Crevecœur; "as, indeed, he is like enough to do, for the sake of her money-bags; and equally like to knock her upon the head, so soon as these are either secured in his own grasp, or, at farthest, emptied."

The count then proceeded to ask so many questions concerning the mode in which both ladies had conducted themselves on the journey, the degree of intimacy to which they admitted Quentin himself, and other trying particulars, that, vexed and ashamed and angry, the youth was scarce able to conceal his embarrassment from the keen-sighted soldier and courtier, who seemed suddenly disposed to take leave of him, saying, at the same time, "Umph—I

see it is as I conjectured, on one side at least; I trust the other party has kept her senses better.—Come, sir squire, spur on, and keep the van, while I fall back to discourse with the Lady Isabelle. I think I have learned now so much from you, that I can talk to her of these sad passages without hurting her nicety, though I have fretted yours a little.—Yet stay, young gallant—one word ere you go. You have had, I imagine, a happy journey through fairy-land—all full of heroic adventure, and high hope and wild minstrel-like delusion, like the gardens of Morgaine la Fay. Forget it all, young soldier," he added, touching him on the shoulder; "remember yonder lady only as the honoured Countess of Croye—forget her as a wandering and adventurous damsel: And her friends—one of them I can answer for—will remember, on their part, only the services you have done her, and forget the unreasonable reward which you have had the boldness to propose to yourself."

Enraged that he had been unable to conceal from the sharp-sighted Crevecœur feelings which the count seemed to consider as the object of ridicule, Quentin replied indignantly, "My lord count, when I require advice of you, I will ask it; when I demand assistance of you, it will be time enough to refuse it; when I set peculiar value on your opinion of me, it will not be too late to express it."

"Heyday!" said the count; "I have come between Amadis and Oriana, and must expect a challenge to the lists!"

"You speak as if that were an impossibility," said Quentin—"When I broke a lance with the Duke of Orleans, it was against a breast in which flowed better blood than that of Crevecœur—When I measured swords with Dunois, I engaged a better warrior."

"Now Heaven nourish thy judgment, gentle youth," said Crevecœur. "If thou speak'st truth, thou hast had singular luck in this world; and truly, if it be the pleasure of Providence exposes thee to such trials, without a beard on thy lip, thou wilt be mad with vanity ere thou writest thyself man. Thou canst not move me to anger, though thou mayst to mirth. Believe me, though thou mayst have fought with princes, and played the champion for countesses, by some of those freaks which fortune will sometimes exhibit, thou art by no means the equal of those of whom thou hast been either the casual opponent, or more casual companion. I can allow thee, like a youth who hath listened to romances till he fancied himself a paladin, to form pretty dreams for some time; but thou must not be angry at a well-meaning friend, though he shake thee something roughly by the shoulders to awake thee."

"My lord count," said Quentin, "my family"—

"Nay, it was not utterly of family that I spoke," said the count; "but of rank, fortune, high station, and so forth, which place a distance between various degrees and classes of persons. As for birth, all men are descended from Adam and Eve."

"My lord count," repeated Quentin, "my ancestors, the Durwards of Glen-houlakin"—

"Nay," said the count, "if you claim a farther descent for them than from Adam, I have done!—Good even to you."

He reined back his horse, and paused to join the countess, to whom, if possible, his insinuations and advices, however well meant, were still more disagreeable than to Quentin, who, as he rode on, muttered to himself, "cold-blooded, insolent, overweening coxcomb! Would that the next Scottish archer, who has his arquebuss pointed at thee, may not let thee off so easily as I did!"

In the evening they reached the town of Charleroi, on the Sambre, where the Count of Crevecœur had determined to leave the Countess Isabelle, whom the terror and fatigue of yesterday, joined to a flight of fifty miles since morning, and the various distressing sensations by which it was accompanied, had made incapable of traveling farther with safety to her health. The count consigned her, in a state of great exhaustion, to the care of the abbess of the Cistercian convent in Charleroi, a noble lady, to whom both the families of Crevecœur and Croye were related, and in whose prudence and kindness he could repose confidence.

Crevecœur himself only stopped to recommend the utmost caution to the governor of a small Burgundian garrison who occupied the place, and required him also to mount a guard of honour upon the convent during the residence of the Countess Isabelle of Croye—ostensibly to secure her safety, but perhaps secretly to prevent her attempting to escape. The count only assigned as a cause for the garrison being vigilant, some vague rumours which he had heard of disturbances in the bishopric of Liege. But he was determined himself to be the first who should carry the formidable news of the insurrection and the murder of the bishop, in all their horrible reality, to Duke Charles; and for that purpose, having procured fresh horses for himself and suite, he mounted with the resolution of continuing his journey to Peronne without stopping for repose; and informing Quentin Durward that he must attend him, he made, at the same time, a mock apology for parting fair company, but hoped, that to so devoted a squire of dames a night's journey by moonshine would be more agreeable than supinely to yield himself to slumber like an ordinary mortal.

Quentin, already sufficiently afflicted by finding that he was to be parted from Isabelle, longed to answer this taunt with an indignant defiance; but aware that the count would only laugh at his anger and despise his challenge, he resolved to wait some future time, when he might have an opportunity of obtaining some amends from this proud lord, who, though for very different reasons, had become nearly as odious to him as the Wild Boar of Ardennes himself. He therefore assented to Crevecœur's proposal, as to what he had no choice of declining, and they pursued in company and with all the dispatch they could exert the road between Charleroi and Peronne.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.

No human quality is so well wove
In warp and woof, but there 's some flaw in it;
I've known a brave man fly a shepherd's cur,
A wise man so demean him, driveling idiocy
Had well nigh been ashamed on 't. For your crafty,
Your worldly-wise man, he, above the rest,
Weaves his own snares so fine, he 's often caught in them
Old Play.

QUENTIN, during the earlier part of the night-journey, had to combat with that bitter heart-ache, which is felt when youth parts, and probably for ever, with her he loves. As, pressed by the urgency of the moment, and the impatience of Crevecœur, they hasted on through the rich lowlands of Hainault, under the benign guidance of a rich and lustrous harvest-moon, she shed her yellow influence over rich and deep pastures, woodland, and corn-fields, from which the husbandmen were using her light to withdraw the grain, such was the industry of the Flemings, even at that period; she shone on broad, level, and fructifying rivers, where glided the white sail in the service of commerce, uninterrupted by rock or torrent, beside lively quiet villages, whose external decency and cleanliness expressed the ease and comfort of the inhabitants;—she gleamed upon the feudal castle of many a gallant baron and knight, with its deep moat, battlemented court, and high belfry; for the chivalry of Hainault was renowned among the nobles of Europe; and her light displayed at a distance, in its broad beam, the gigantic towers of more than one lofty minster.

Yet all this fair variety, however differing from the waste and wilderness of his own land, interrupted not the course of Quentin's regrets and sorrows. He had left his heart behind him when he departed from Charleroi; and the only reflection which the farther journey inspired was, that every step was carrying him farther from Isabelle. His imagination was taxed to recal every word she had spoken, every look she had directed towards him; and, as happens frequently in such cases, the impression made upon his imagination by the recollection of these particulars, was even stronger than the realities themselves had excited.

At length, after the cold hour of midnight was past, in spite alike of love and of sorrow, the extreme fatigue which Quentin had undergone the two preceding days began to have an effect on him, which his habits of exercise of every kind, and his singular alertness and activity of character, as well as the painful nature of the reflections which occupied his thoughts, had hitherto prevented his experiencing. The ideas of his mind began to be so little corrected by the exertions of his senses, worn out and deadened as the latter now were by extremity of fatigue, that the visions which the former drew superseded or perverted the information conveyed by the blunted organs of seeing and hearing; and Durward was only sensible that he was awake, by the exertions which, sensible of the peril of his situation, he occasionally made, to resist falling into

a deep and dead sleep. Every now and then, a strong consciousness of the risk of falling from or with his horse roused him to exertion and animation; but ere long his eyes again were dimmed by confused shades of all sorts of mingled colours, the moon-light landscape swam before them, and he was so much overcome with fatigue, that the Count of Crevecoeur, observing his condition, was at length compelled to order two of his attendants, one to each rein of Durward's bridle, in order to prevent the risk of his falling from his horse.

When, at length, they reached the town of Landrecy, the count, in compassion to the youth, who had now been in a great measure without sleep for three nights, allowed himself and his retinue a halt of four hours, for rest and refreshment.

Deep and sound were Quentin's slumbers, until they were broken by the sound of the count's trumpet, and the cry of his fourriers and harbingers, "*Debout! debout!—Ha! Messires, en route, en route!*"—Yet, unwelcomely early as the tones came, they awaked him a different being in strength and spirits from what he had fallen asleep. Confidence in himself and his fortunes returned with his reviving spirits, and with the rising sun. He thought of his love no longer as a desperate and fantastic dream, but as a high and invigorating principle, to be cherished in his bosom, although he might never propose to himself, under all the difficulties by which he was beset, to bring it to any prosperous issue.—"The pilot," he reflected, "steers his bark by the polar star, although he never expects to become possessor of it; and the thoughts of Isabelle of Croye shall make me a worthy man-at-arms, though I may never see her more. When she hears that a Scottish soldier, named Quentin Durward, distinguished himself in a well-fought field, or left his body on the breach of a disputed fortress, she will remember the companion of her journey, as one who did all in his power to avert the snares and misfortunes which beset it, and perhaps will honour his memory with a tear, his coffin with a garland."

In this manly mood of bearing his misfortune, Quentin felt himself more able to receive and reply to the jests of the Count of Crevecoeur, who passed several on his alleged effeminacy and incapacity of undergoing fatigue. The young Scot accommodated himself so good-humouredly to the count's raillery, and replied at once so happily and so respectfully, that the change of his tone and manner made obviously a more favourable impression on the count than he had entertained from his prisoner's conduct during the preceding evening, when, rendered irritable by the feelings of his situation, he was alternately moodily silent or fiercely argumentative.

The veteran soldier began at length to take notice of him, as a pretty fellow, of whom something might be made; and more than hinted to him, that, would he but resign his situation in the archer-guard of France, he would undertake to have him enrolled in the household of the Duke of Burgundy in an honourable condition, and would himself take care of his advancement. And although Quentin, with suitable expressions of gratitude, declined this favour at present, until he should find out how far he had

to complain of his original patron, King Louis, he nevertheless continued to be on good terms with the Count of Crevecoeur; and, while his enthusiastic mode of thinking, and his foreign and idiomatical manner of expressing himself, often excited a smile on the grave cheek of the count; that smile had lost all that it had of sarcastic and bitter, and did not exceed the limits of good humour and good manners.

Thus traveling on with much more harmony than on the preceding day, the little party came at last within two miles of the famous and strong town of Peronne, near which the Duke of Burgundy's army lay encamped, ready, as was supposed, to invade France; and, in opposition to which, Louis XI. had himself assembled a strong force near Saint Maxence, for the purpose of bringing to reason his over-powerful vassal.

Peronne, situated upon a deep river, in a flat country, and surrounded by strong bulwarks and profound moats, was accounted in ancient, as in modern times, one of the strongest fortresses in France.* The Count of Crevecoeur, his retinue, and his prisoner, were approaching the fortress about the third hour after noon; when, riding through the pleasant glades of a large forest, which then covered the approach to the town on the east side, they were met by two men of rank, as appeared from the number of their attendants, dressed in the habits worn in time of peace; and who, to judge from the falcons which they carried on their wrists, and the number of spaniels and greyhounds led by their followers, were engaged in the amusement of hawking. But on perceiving Crevecoeur, with whose appearance and liveries they were sufficiently intimate, they quitted the search which they were making for a heron along the banks of a long artificial canal, and came galloping towards him.

"News, news, Count of Crevecoeur!" they cried both together;—"will you give news, or take news? or will you barter fairly?"

"I would barter fairly, messires," said Crevecoeur, after saluting them courteously, "did I conceive you had any news of importance sufficient to make an equivalent for mine."

The two sportsmen smiled on each other; and the taller of the two, a fine baronial figure, with a dark countenance, marked with that sort of sadness which some physiognomists ascribe to a melancholy temperament, and some, as the Italian statuary augured of the visage of Charles I., consider as predicting an unhappy death, turning to his companion, said, "Crevecoeur has been in Brabant, the country of commerce, and he has learned all its artifices—he will be too hard for us if we drive a bargain."

"Messires," said Crevecoeur, "the duke ought in justice to have the first of my wares, as the seigneur takes his toll before open market begins. But tell me, are your news of a sad or a pleasant complexion?"

The person whom he particularly addressed was

* Indeed, though lying on an exposed and warlike frontier, it was never taken by an enemy, but preserved the proud name of Peronne la Pucelle, until the Duke of Wellington, a great destroyer of that sort of reputation, took the place in the memorable advance upon Paris in 1815.

a little lively-looking man, with an eye of great vivacity, which was corrected by an expression of reflection and gravity about the mouth and upper lip—the whole physiognomy marking a man rather of counsel than of action, who saw and judged rapidly, but was sage and slow in forming resolutions or in expressing opinions. This was the famous *Sieur d'Argenton*, better known in history, and amongst historians, by the venerable name of *Philip des Comines*, at this time close to the person of *Duke Charles the Bold*, and one of his most esteemed counsellors. He answered *Crevecœur's* question concerning the complexion of the news of which he and his companion, the *Baron d'Hymbercourt*, were the depositaries.—“They were,” he said, “like the colours of the rainbow, various in hue, as they might be received from different points, and placed betwixt the black cloud and the fair sky—Such a rainbow was never seen in France or Flanders since that of *Noah's ark*.”

“My tidings,” replied *Crevecœur*, “are altogether like the comet; gloomy, wild, and terrible in themselves, yet to be accounted the forerunners of still greater and more terrible evils which are to ensue.”

“We must open our bales,” said *d'Argenton* to his companion, “or our market will be forestalled by some new-comers, for ours are public news.—In one word, *Crevecœur*—listen, and wonder—*King Louis* is at *Peronne*!”

“What!” said the count, in astonishment; “has the duke retreated without a battle? and do you remain here in your dress of peace, after the town is besieged by the French?—for I cannot suppose it taken.”

“No, surely,” said *d'Hymbercourt*, “the banners of Burgundy have not gone back a foot; and still *King Louis* is here.”

“Then *Edward of England* must have come over the seas with his bowmen,” said *Crevecœur*, “and, like his ancestors, gained a second field of *Poitiers*.”

“Not so,” said *d'Argenton*—“Not a French banner has been borne down, not a sail spread from England—where *Edward* is too much amused among the wives of the citizens of London, to think of playing the *Black Prince*. Hear the extraordinary truth. You know, when you left us, that the conference between the commissioners on the parts of France and Burgundy was broken up, without apparent chance of reconciliation.”

“True; and we dreamt of nothing but war.”

“What has followed has been indeed so like a dream,” said *d'Argenton*, “that I almost expect to awake, and find it so. Only one day since, the duke had in council protested so furiously against farther delay, that it was resolved to send a defiance to the king, and march forward instantly into France. *Toison d'Or*, commissioned for the purpose, had put on his official dress, and had his foot in the stirrup to mount his horse, when, lo! the French herald *Montjoie* rode into our camp. We thought of nothing else than that *Louis* had been beforehand with our defiance; and began to consider how much the duke would resent their advice, which had prevented him from being the first to declare war. But a council being speedily assembled, what was our

wonder when the herald informed us, that *Louis*, King of France, was scarce an hour's riding behind, intending to visit *Charles*, Duke of Burgundy, with a small retinue, in order that their differences might be settled at a personal interview!”

“You surprise me, messires,” said *Crevecœur*; “and yet you surprise me less than you might have expected; for, when I was last at *Plessis-les-Tours*, the all-trusted cardinal, *Balue*, offended with his master, and Burgundian at heart, did hint to me, that he could so work upon *Louis's* peculiar foibles, as to lead him to bring himself into such a position with regard to Burgundy, that the duke might have the terms of peace of his own making. But I never suspected that so old a fox as *Louis* could have been induced to come into the trap of his own accord. What said the council?”

“As you may guess,” answered *d'Hymbercourt*; “talked much of faith to be observed, and little of advantage to be obtained, by such a visit; while it was manifest they thought almost entirely of the last, and were only anxious to find some way to reconcile it with the necessary preservation of appearances.”

“And what said the duke?” continued the Count of *Crevecœur*.

“Spoke brief and bold, as usual,” replied *d'Argenton*.—“Which of you was it,” he asked, “who witnessed the meeting of my cousin *Louis* and me after the battle of *Montlhery*, when I was so thoughtless as to accompany him back within the entrenchments of Paris with half a score of attendants, and so put my person at the king's mercy?” I replied, that most of us had been present; and none could ever forget the alarm which it had been his pleasure to give us. “Well,” said the duke, “you blamed me for my folly, and I confessed to you that I had acted like a giddy-pated boy; and I am aware, too, that my father of happy memory being then alive, my kinsman, *Louis*, would have had less advantage by seizing on my person than I might now have by securing his. But, nevertheless, if my royal kinsman comes hither on the present occasion, in the same singleness of heart under which I then acted, he shall be royally welcome—If it is meant by this appearance of confidence, to circumvent and to blind me, till he execute some of his politic schemes, by *Saint George of Burgundy*, let him look to it!” And so, having turned up his moustaches, and stamped on the ground, he ordered us all to get on our horses, and receive so extraordinary a guest.”

“And you met the king accordingly?” replied the Count of *Crevecœur*—“Miracles have not ceased!—How was he accompanied?”

“As slightly as might be,” answered *Hymbercourt*; “only a score or two of the Scottish Guard, and a few knights and gentlemen of his household—among whom his astrologer, *Galeotti*, made the gayest figure.”

“That fellow,” said *Crevecœur*, “holds some dependence on the Cardinal *Balue*—I should not be surprised that he has had his share in determining the king to this step of doubtful policy. Any nobility of higher rank?”

“There are *Monsieur of Orleans* and *Dunois*,” replied *d'Argenton*.

"I will have a rouse with Dunois," said Creve-cœur, "wag the world as it will. But we heard they were in prison."

"They were both under arrest in the Castle of Loches, that delightful place of retirement for the French nobility," said Hymbercourt; "but Louis has released them, in order to bring them with him—perhaps because he cared not to leave Orleans behind. For his other attendants, faith, I think his gossip, the hangman marshal, with two or three of his retinue, and Oliver, his barber, may be the most considerable—and the whole so poorly arrayed, that, by my honour, the king resembles most an old usurer going to collect desperate debts, attended by a body of catchpolls."

"And where is he lodged?" said Creve-cœur.

"Nay, that," replied d'Argenton, "is the most marvelous of all. Our duke offered to let the king's archer-guard have a gate of the town, and a bridge of boats over the Somme, and to have assigned to Louis himself the adjoining house, belonging to a wealthy burgess, Giles Orthen; but, in going thither, the king espied the banners of De Lau and Pencil de Rivière, whom he had banished from France; and scared, as it would seem, with the thought of being so near refugees and malcontents of his own making, he craved to be lodged in the Castle of Peronne, and there he hath his abode accordingly."

"Why, God ha' mercy!" exclaimed Creve-cœur, "this is not only being content with venturing into the lion's den, but thrusting his head into his very jaws—Nothing less than the very bottom of the rat-trap would serve the crafty old politician!"

"Nay," said d'Argenton, "Hymbercourt hath not told you the speech of Le Glorieux—which, in my mind, was the shrewdest opinion that was given."

"And what said *his* most illustrious wisdom?" asked the count.

"As the duke," replied d'Argenton, "was hastily ordering some vessels and ornaments of plate, and the like, to be prepared as presents for the king and his retinue, by way of welcome on his arrival, 'Trouble not thy small brain about it, my friend Charles,' said Le Glorieux, 'I will give thy cousin Louis a nobler and fitter gift than thou canst; and that is my cap and bells, and my bauble to boot; for, by the mass, he is a greater fool than I am, for putting himself in thy power.' 'But if I give him no reason to repent it, sirrah, how then?' said the duke. 'Then, truly, Charles, thou shalt have cap and bauble thyself, as the greatest fool of the three of us.' I promise you this knavish quip touched the duke closely—I saw him change colour and bite his lip.—And now, our news are told, noble Creve-cœur, and what think you they resemble?"

"A mine full-charged with gunpowder," answered Creve-cœur, "to which, I fear, it is my fate to bring the linstock. Your news and mine are like flax and fire, or like certain chemical substances which cannot be mingled without an explosion. Friends,—gentlemen,—ride close by my rein; and when I tell you what has chanced in the bishopric of Liege, I think you will be of opinion, that King Louis might as safely have undertaken a pilgrimage to the infernal regions, as this ill-timed visit to Peronne."

The two nobles drew up close on either hand of the count, and listened, with half-suppressed exclamations, and gestures of the deepest wonder and interest, to his account of the transactions at Liege and Schonwaldt. Quentin was then called forward, and examined and re-examined on the particulars of the bishop's death, until at length he refused to answer any further interrogatories, not knowing wherefore they were asked, or what use might be made of his replies.

They now reached the rich and level banks of the Somme, and the ancient walls of the little town of Peronne la Pucelle, and the deep green meadows adjoining, now whitened with the numerous tents of the Duke of Burgundy's army, amounting to about fifteen thousand men.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE INTERVIEW.

When princes meet, astrologers may mark it
An ominous conjunction, full of boding,
Like that of Mars with Saturn.

Old Play.

ONE hardly knows whether to term it a privilege or a penalty annexed to the quality of princes, that, in their intercourse with each other, they are required, by the respect which is due to their own rank and dignity, to regulate their feelings and expressions by a severe etiquette, which precludes all violent and avowed display of passion, and which, but that the whole world are aware that this assumed complaisance is a matter of ceremony, might justly pass for profound dissimulation. It is no less certain, however, that the overstepping of these bounds of ceremonial, for the purpose of giving more direct vent to their angry passions, has the effect of compromising their dignity with the world in general; as was particularly noted when those distinguished rivals, Francis the First, and the Emperor Charles, gave each other the lie direct, and were desirous of deciding their differences hand to hand, in single combat.

Charles of Burgundy, the most hasty and impatient, nay, the most imprudent prince of his time, found himself, nevertheless, fettered within the magic circle which prescribed the most profound deference to Louis, as his suzerain and liege lord, who had deigned to confer upon him, a vassal of the crown, the distinguished honour of a personal visit. Dressed in his ducal mantle, and attended by his great officers, and principal knights and nobles, he went in gallant cavalcade to receive Louis XI. His retinue absolutely blazed with gold and silver; for the wealth of the court of England being exhausted by the wars of York and Lancaster, and the expenditure of France limited by the economy of the sovereign, that of Burgundy was for the time the most magnificent in Europe. The cortège of Louis, on the contrary, was few in number, and comparatively mean in appearance, and the exterior of the king himself, in a thread-bare cloak, with his wonted old high-crowned hat stuck full of images, rendered the contrast still more striking; and while the duke,

richly attired with coronet and mantle of state, threw himself from his noble charger, and, kneeling on one knee, offered to hold the stirrup while Louis dismounted from his little ambling palfrey, the effect was almost grotesque.

The greeting between the two potentates was, of course, as full of affected kindness and compliment, as it was totally devoid of sincerity. But the temper of the duke rendered it much more difficult for him to preserve the necessary appearances, in voice, speech, and demeanour; while in the king, every species of simulation and dissimulation, seemed so much a part of his nature, that those best acquainted with him could not have distinguished what was feigned from what was real.

Perhaps the most accurate illustration, were it not unworthy two such high potentates, would be, to suppose the king in the situation of a stranger, perfectly acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the canine race, who, for some purpose of his own, is desirous to make friends with a large and surly mastiff who holds him in suspicion, and is disposed to fly upon him on the first symptoms either of diffidence or of umbrage. The mastiff growls internally, erects his bristles, shows his teeth, yet takes shame to fly upon the intruder, who seems at the same time so kind, and so confiding, and therefore the animal endures advances which are far from pacifying him, watching at the same time the slightest opportunity which may justify him in his own eyes for seizing his friend by the throat.

The king was no doubt sensible, from the altered voice, constrained manner, and abrupt gestures of the duke, that the game he had to play was delicate, and perhaps he more than once repented having ever taken it in hand. But repentance was too late, and all that remained for him was that inimitable dexterity of management, which the king understood equally at least to any man that ever lived.

The demeanour which Louis used towards the duke, was such as to resemble the kind overflowing of the heart in a moment of sincere reconciliation with an honoured and tried friend, from whom he had been estranged by temporary circumstances now passed away, and forgotten as soon as removed. The king blamed himself for not having sooner taken the decisive step, of convincing his kind and good kinsman by such a mark of confidence as he was now bestowing, that the angry passages which had occurred betwixt them were nothing in his remembrance, when weighed against the kindness which received him when an exile from France, and under the displeasure of the king his father. He spoke of the good Duke of Burgundy, as Philip the father of Duke Charles was currently called, and remembered a thousand instances of his paternal kindness.

"I think, cousin," he said, "your father made little difference in his affection, betwixt you and me; for I remember, when by an accident I had bewildered myself in a hunting-party, I found the good duke upbraiding you with leaving me in the forest, as if you had been careless of the safety of an elder brother."

The Duke of Burgundy's features were naturally harsh and severe; and when he attempted to smile, in polite acquiescence to the truth of what the king

told him, the grimace which he made was truly diabolical.

Prince of dissemblers, he said, in his secret soul, would that it stood with my honour to remind you *how* you have requited all the benefits of our house!

"And then," continued the king, "if the ties of consanguinity and gratitude are not sufficient to bind us together, my fair cousin, we have those of spiritual relationship; for, I am godfather to your fair daughter Mary, who is as dear to me as one of my own maidens; and when the saints (their holy name be blessed!) sent me a little blossom which withered in the course of three months, it was your princely father who held it at the font, and celebrated the ceremony of baptism, with richer and prouder magnificence than Paris itself could have afforded. Never shall I forget the deep, the indelible impression which the generosity of Duke Philip, and yours, my dearest cousin, made upon the half-broken heart of the poor exile!"

"Your majesty," said the duke, compelling himself to make some reply, "acknowledged that slight obligation in terms which overpaid all the display which Burgundy could make, to show due sense of the honour you had done its sovereign."

"I remember the words you mean, fair cousin," said the king, smiling; "I think they were, that in guerdon of the benefit of that day, I, poor wanderer, had nothing to offer, save the persons of myself, of my wife, and of my child.—Well, and I think I have indifferently well redeemed my pledge."

"I mean not to dispute what your majesty is pleased to aver," said the duke; "but"—

"But you ask," said the king, interrupting him, "how my actions have accorded with my words—Marry thus: the body of my infant child Joachim rests in Burgundian earth—my own person I have this morning placed unreservedly in your power—and, for that of my wife,—truly, cousin, I think, considering the period of time which has passed, you will scarce insist on my keeping my word in that particular. She was born on the day of the Blessed Annunciation (he crossed himself, and muttered an *Ora pro nobis*), some fifty years since; but she is no farther distant than Rheims, and if you insist on my promise being fulfilled to the letter, she shall presently wait your pleasure."

Angry as the Duke of Burgundy was at the barefaced attempt of the king to assume towards him a tone of friendship and intimacy, he could not help laughing at the whimsical reply of that singular monarch, and his laugh was as discordant as the abrupt tones of passion in which he often spoke. Having laughed longer and louder than was then, or would now be, thought fitting the time and occasion, he answered in the same tone, bluntly declining the honour of the queen's company, but stating his willingness to accept that of the king's eldest daughter, whose beauty was celebrated.

"I am happy, fair cousin," said the king, with one of those dubious smiles of which he frequently made use, "that your gracious pleasure has not fixed on my younger daughter Joan. I should otherwise have had spear-breaking between you and my cousin of Orleans; and, had harm come of it, I must on

either side have lost a kind friend and affectionate cousin."

"Nay, nay, my royal sovereign," said Duke Charles, "the Duke of Orleans shall have no interruption from me in the path which he has chosen *par amours*. The cause in which I couch my lance against Orleans must be fair and straight."

Louis was far from taking amiss this brutal allusion to the personal deformity of the Princess Joan. On the contrary, he was rather pleased to find that the duke was content to be amused with broad jests, in which he was himself a proficient, and which—according to the modern phrase—spared much sentimental hypocrisy. Accordingly, he speedily placed their intercourse on such a footing, that Charles, though he felt it impossible to play the part of an affectionate and reconciled friend to a monarch whose ill offices he had so often encountered, and whose sincerity, on the present occasion, he so strongly doubted, yet had no difficulty in acting the hearty landlord towards a facetious guest; and so the want of reciprocity in kinder feelings between them was supplied by the tone of good fellowship which exists between two boon companions—a tone natural to the duke from the frankness—and it might be added, the grossness—of his character; and to Louis, because, though capable of assuming any mood of social intercourse, that which really suited him best was mingled with grossness of ideas, and of caustic humour in expression.

Both princes were happily able to preserve, during the period of a banquet at the town-house of Peronne, the same kind of conversation, on which they had met as on a neutral ground, and which, as Louis easily perceived, was more available than any other to keep the Duke of Burgundy in that state of composure which seemed necessary to his own safety.

Yet he was alarmed to observe that the duke had around him several of those French nobles, and those of the highest rank and in situations of great trust and power, whom his own severity or injustice had driven into exile; and it was to secure himself from the possible effects of their resentment and revenge that—as already mentioned—he requested to be lodged in the castle or citadel of Peronne, rather than in the town itself. This was readily granted by Duke Charles, with one of those grim smiles of which it was impossible to say whether it meant good or harm to the party whom it concerned.

But when the king, expressing himself with as much delicacy as he could, and in a manner he thought best qualified to lull suspicion asleep, asked whether the Scottish archers of his guard might not maintain the custody of the castle of Peronne during his residence there, in lieu of the gate of the town, which the duke had offered to their care, Charles replied, with his wonted sternness of voice and abruptness of manner, rendered more alarming by his habit, when he spoke, of either turning up his moustaches or handling his sword or dagger, the last of which he used frequently to draw a little way and then return to the sheath—"Saint Martin! no, my liege. You are in your vassal's camp and city—so men call me in respect to your majesty—my castle and town are yours, and my men are yours;

so it is indifferent whether they or the Scottish archers guard either the outer gate or defences of the castle.—No, by Saint George! Peronne is a virgin fortress—she shall not lose her reputation by any neglect of mine. Maidens must be carefully watched, my royal cousin, if we would have them continue to live in good fame."

"Surely, fair cousin, and I altogether agree with you," said the king, "being, in fact, more interested in the reputation of the good little town than you are—Peronne being, as you know, fair cousin, one of those upon the same river Somme, which, pledged to your father of happy memory for redemption of money, are liable to be redeemed upon repayment. And, to speak truth, coming, like an honest debtor, disposed to clear off my obligations of every kind, I have brought here a few sumpter-mules loaded with silver for the redemption—enough to maintain even your princely and royal establishment, fair cousin, for the space of three years."

"I will not receive a penny of it," said the Duke, twirling his moustaches; "the day of redemption is past, my royal cousin; nor was there ever serious purpose that the right should be exercised, the cession of these towns being the sole recompense my father ever received from France, when, in a happy hour for your family, he consented to forget the murder of my grandfather, and to exchange the alliance of England for that of your father. Saint George! if he had not so acted, your royal self, far from having towns on the Somme, could scarce have kept those beyond the Loire. No—I will not render a stone of them, were I to receive for every stone so rendered its weight in gold. I thank God, and the wisdom and valour of my ancestors, that the revenues of Burgundy, though it be but a duchy, will maintain my state, even when a king is my guest, without obliging me to barter my heritage."

"Well, fair cousin," answered the king, with the same mild and placid manner as before, and unperturbed by the muttering and violent gestures of the duke, "I see that you are so good a friend to France, that you are unwilling to part with aught that belongs to her. But we shall need some moderator in these affairs when we come to treat of them in council—What say you to Saint Paul?"

"Neither Saint Paul, nor Saint Peter, nor e'er a saint in the calendar," said the Duke of Burgundy, "shall preach me out of possession of Peronne."

"Nay, but you mistake me," said King Louis, smiling; "I mean Louis de Luxembourg, our trusty constable, the Count of Saint Paul.—Ah! Saint Mary of Embrun! we lack but his head at our conference! the best head in France, and the most useful to the restoration of perfect harmony betwixt us."

"By Saint George of Burgundy!" said the duke, "I marvel to hear your majesty talk thus of a man, false and perjured, both to France and Burgundy—one who hath ever endeavoured to fan into a flame our frequent differences, and that with the purpose of giving himself the airs of a mediator. I swear by the order I wear, that his marshes shall not be long a resource for him!"

"Be not so warm, cousin," said the king, smiling, and speaking under his breath; "when I wished for the constable's *head*, as a means of ending the set-

tlement of our trifling differences, I had no desire for his *body*, which might remain at Saint Quentin's with much convenience."

"Ho! ho! I take your meaning, my royal cousin," said Charles, with the same dissonant laugh which some of the king's coarse pleasantries had extorted, and added, stamping with his heel on the ground, "I allow, in that sense, the head of the constable *might* be useful at Peronne."

These, and other discourses, by which the king mixed hints at serious affairs amid matters of mirth and amusement, did not follow each other consecutively; but were adroitly introduced during the time of the banquet at the Hôtel de Ville, during a subsequent interview in the duke's own apartments, and, in short, as occasion seemed to render the introduction of such delicate subjects easy and natural.

Indeed, however rashly Louis had placed himself in a risk, which the duke's fiery temper, and the mutual subjects of exasperated enmity which subsisted betwixt them, rendered of doubtful and perilous issue, never pilot on an unknown coast conducted himself with more firmness and prudence. He seemed to sound with the utmost address and precision, the depths and shallows of his rival's mind and temper, and manifested neither doubt nor fear, when the result of his experiments discovered much more of sunken rocks, and of dangerous shoals, than of safe anchorage.

At length a day closed, which must have been a wearisome one to Louis, from the constant exertion, vigilance, precaution, and attention, which his situation required, as it was a day of constraint to the duke, from the necessity of suppressing the violent feelings to which he was in the general habit of giving uncontrolled vent.

No sooner was the latter retired into his own apartment, after he had taken a formal leave of the king for the night, than he gave way to the explosion of passion which he had so long suppressed; and many an oath and abusive epithet, as his jester, Le Glorieux, said, "fell that night upon heads which they were never coined for"—his domestics reaping the benefit of that hoard of injurious language, which he could not in decency bestow on his royal guest, even in his absence, and which was yet become too great to be altogether suppressed. The jests of the clown had some effect in tranquillizing the duke's angry mood;—he laughed loudly, threw the jester a piece of gold, caused himself to be disrobed in tranquillity, swallowed a deep cup of wine and spices, went to bed, and slept soundly.

The couchee of King Louis is more worthy of notice than that of Charles; for the violent expression of exasperated and headlong passion, as indeed it belongs more to the brutal than the intelligent part of our nature, has little to interest us, in comparison to the deep workings of a vigorous and powerful mind.

Louis was escorted to the lodgings he had chosen in the castle, or citadel of Peronne, by the chamberlains and harbingers of the Duke of Burgundy, and received at the entrance by a strong guard of archers and men-at-arms.

As he descended from his horse to cross the draw-bridge, over a moat of unusual width and depth, he looked on the sentinels, and observed to d'Argen-

ton, who accompanied him, with other Burgundian nobles, "They wear Saint Andrew's crosses—but not those of my Scottish archers."

"You will find them as ready to die in your defence, sire," said d'Argenton, whose sagacious ear had detected in the king's tone of speech a feeling, which doubtless Louis would have concealed if he could. "They wear the Saint Andrew's cross as the appendage of the collar of the Golden Fleece, my master the Duke of Burgundy's order."

"Do I not know it?" said Louis, showing the collar which he himself wore in compliment to his host; "It is one of the dear bonds of fraternity which exist between my kind brother and myself. We are brothers in chivalry, as in spiritual relationship; cousins by birth, and friends by every tie of kind feeling and good neighbourhood.—No farther than the base-court, my noble lords and gentlemen! I can permit your attendance no farther—you have done me enough of grace."

"We were charged by the duke," said Hymbercourt, "to bring your majesty to your lodging.—We trust your majesty will permit us to obey our master's command."

"In this small matter," said the king, "I trust you will allow my command to outweigh his, even with you his liege subjects.—I am something indisposed, my lords—something fatigued. Great pleasure hath its toils as well as pain.—I trust to enjoy your society better to-morrow.—And yours too, Signior Philip of Argenton—I am told you are the annalist of the time—we that desire to have a name in history, must speak you fair, for men say your pen hath a sharp point, when you will.—Good night, my lords and gentles, to all and each of you."

The lords of Burgundy retired, much pleased with the grace of Louis's manner, and the artful distribution of his attentions; and the king was left with only one or two of his own personal followers, under the archway of the base-court of the Castle of Peronne, looking on the huge tower which occupied one of the angles, being in fact the donjon, or principal keep, of the place. This tall, dark, massive building, was seen clearly by the same moon which was lighting Quentin Durward betwixt Charleroi and Peronne, which, as the reader is aware, shone with peculiar lustre. The great keep was in form nearly resembling the White Tower in the citadel of London, but still more ancient in its architecture, deriving its date, as was affirmed, from the days of Charlemagne. The walls were of a tremendous thickness, the windows very small, and grated with bars of iron, and the huge clumsy bulk of the building cast a dark and portentous shadow over the whole of the court-yard.

"I am not to be lodged there?" the king said, with a shudder, that had something in it ominous.

"No," replied the grey-headed seneschal, who attended upon him unbonneted—"God forbid!—Your majesty's apartments are prepared in these lower buildings which are hard by, and in which king John slept two nights before the battle of Poitiers."

"Hum—that is no lucky omen neither"—muttered the king; "but what of the tower, my old friend? and why should you desire of Heaven that I may not be there lodged?"

"Nay, my gracious liege," said the seneschal, "I know no evil of the tower at all—only that the sentinels say lights are seen, and strange noises heard in it, at night; and there are reasons why that may be the case, for anciently it was used as a state prison, and there are many tales of deeds which have been done in it."

Louis asked no farther questions; for no man was more bound than he to respect the secrets of a prison-house. At the door of the apartments destined for his use, which, though of later date than the tower, were still both ancient and gloomy, stood a small party of his own guard, with their faithful old commander at their head.

"Crawford—my honest and faithful Crawford," said the king, "where hast thou been to-day?—Are the lords of Burgundy so inhospitable as to neglect one of the bravest and most noble gentlemen that ever trod a court?—I saw you not at the banquet."

"I declined it, my liege," said Crawford—"times are changed with me. The day has been that I could have ventured a carouse with the best man in Burgundy, and that in the juice of his own grape; but a matter of four pints now flusters me, and I think it concerns your majesty's service to set in this an example to my callants."

"Thou art ever prudent," said the king; "but surely your toil is the less when you have so few men to command?—and a time of festivity requires not so severe self-denial on your part as a time of danger."

"If I have few men to command," said Crawford, "I have the more need to keep the knaves in fitting condition; and whether this be like to end in feasting or fighting, God and your majesty know better than old John of Crawford."

"You surely do not apprehend any danger?" said the king hastily, yet in a whisper.

"Not I," answered Crawford; "I wish I did; for, as old Earl Tineman used to say, apprehended dangers may be always defended dangers.—The word for the night, if your majesty pleases?"

"Let it be Burgundy, in honour of our host and of a liquor that you love, Crawford."

"I will quarrel with neither duke nor drink, so called," said Crawford, "providing always that both be sound. A good night to your majesty."

"A good night, my trusty Scot," said the king, and passed on to his apartments.

At the door of his bed-room Le Balafré was placed sentinel. "Follow me hither," said the king, as he passed him; and the archer accordingly, like a piece of machinery put into motion by an artist, strode after him into the apartment, and remained there fixed, silent, and motionless attending the royal command.

"Have you heard from that wandering paladin, your nephew?" said the king; "for he hath been lost to us, since, like a young knight who had set out upon his first adventures, he sent us home two prisoners, as the first fruits of his chivalry."

"My lord, I heard something of that," said Balafré; "and I hope your majesty will believe, that if he hath acted wrongfully, it was in no shape by my precept or example, since I never was so bold an ass as to unhorse any of your majesty's most

illustrious house, better knowing my own condition, and"—

"Be silent on that point," said the king; "your nephew did his duty in the matter."

"There indeed," continued Balafré, "he had the cue from me.—'Quentin,' said I to him, 'whatever comes of it, remember you belong to the Scottish archer-guard, and do your duty, whatever comes on't.'"

"I guess he had some such exquisite instructor," said Louis; "but it concerns me that you answer my question—Have you heard of your nephew of late?—Stand aback, my masters," he added, addressing the gentlemen of his chamber, "for this concerneth no ears but mine."

"Surely, please your majesty," said Balafré, "I have seen this very evening the groom Charlot, whom my kinsman dispatched from Liege, or some castle of the bishop's which is near it, and where he hath lodged the ladies of Croye in safety."

"Now our Lady of Heaven be praised for it!" said the king. "Art thou sure of it?—sure of the good news?"

"As sure as I can be of aught," said Le Balafré; "the fellow, I think, hath letters for your majesty from the ladies of Croye."

"Haste to get them," said the king—"Give thy harquebuss to one of these knaves—to Oliver—to any one.—Now our Lady of Embrun be praised! and silver shall be the screen that surrounds her high altar!"

Louis, in this fit of gratitude and devotion, doffed, as usual, his hat, selected from the figures with which it was garnished that which represented his favourite image of the Virgin, placed it on a table, and kneeling down, repeated reverently the vow he had made.

The groom, being the first messenger whom Durward had dispatched from Schonwaldt, was now introduced with his letters. They were addressed to the king by the ladies of Croye, and barely thanked him in very cold terms for his courtesy while at his court, and, something more warmly, for having permitted them to retire, and sent them in safety from his dominions; expressions at which Louis laughed very heartily, instead of resenting them. He then demanded of Charlot, with obvious interest, whether they had not sustained some alarm or attack upon the road? Charlot, a stupid fellow, and selected for that quality, gave a very confused account of the affray in which his companion, the Gascon, had been killed, but knew of no other. Again Louis demanded of him, minutely and particularly, the route which the party had taken to Liege; and seemed much interested when he was informed, in reply, that they had, upon approaching Namur, kept the more direct road to Liege, upon the right bank of the Maes, instead of the left bank, as recommended in their route. The king then ordered the man a small present, and dismissed him, disguising the anxiety he had expressed, as if it had only concerned the safety of the ladies of Croye.

Yet the news, though they implied the failure of one of his own favourite plans, seemed to afford more internal satisfaction on the king's part than he would have probably indicated in a case of brilliant

success. He sighed like one whose breast has been relieved from a heavy burthen, muttered his devotional acknowledgments with an air of deep sanctity, raised up his eyes, and hastened to adjust newer and surer schemes of ambition.

With such purpose, Louis ordered the attendance of his astrologer, Martius Galeotti, who appeared with his usual air of assumed dignity, yet not without an uncertainty on his brow, as if he had doubted the king's kind reception. It was, however, favourable, even beyond the warmest which he had ever met with at any former interview. Louis termed him his friend, his father in the sciences—the glass by which a king should look into distant futurity—and concluded by thrusting on his finger a ring of very considerable value. Galeotti, not aware of the circumstances which had thus suddenly raised his character in the estimation of Louis, yet understood his own profession too well to let that ignorance be seen. He received with grave modesty the praises of Louis, which he contended were only due to the nobleness of the science which he practised, a science the rather the more deserving of admiration on account of its working miracles through means of so feeble an agent as himself; and he and the king took leave, for once much satisfied with each other.

On the astrologer's departure, Louis threw himself into a chair, and appearing much exhausted, dismissed the rest of his attendants, excepting Oliver alone, who, creeping around with gentle assiduity and noiseless step, assisted him in the task of preparing for repose.

During the time while he received this assistance, the king, unusual to his wont, was so silent and pensive, that his attendant was struck by the unusual change in his deportment. The worst minds have often something of good principle in them—banditti show fidelity to their captain, and sometimes a protected and promoted favourite has felt a gleam of sincere interest in the monarch to whom he owed his greatness. Oliver Diable (or by whatever other name he was called expressive of his evil propensities) was, nevertheless, scarce so completely identified with Satan as not to feel some touch of gratitude for his master in this singular condition, when, as it seemed, his fate was deeply interested, and his strength seemed to be exhausted. After for a short time rendering to the king in silence the usual services paid by a servant to his master at the toilette, the attendant was at length tempted to say, with the freedom which his Sovereign's indulgence had permitted him in such circumstances, "*Tête-Dieu*, sire, you seem as if you had lost a battle; and yet I, who was near your majesty during this whole day, never knew you fight a field so gallantly."

"A field!" said King Louis, looking up, and assuming his wonted causticity of tone and manner; "*Pasques-Dieu*, my friend Oliver, say I have kept the arena in a bull-fight; for a blinder, and more stubborn, untameable, uncontrollable brute, than our cousin of Burgundy, never existed, save in the shape of a Murcian bull, trained for the bull-feasts.—Well, let it pass—I dodged him bravely. But, Oliver, rejoice with me that my plans in Flanders have not taken effect, whether as concerning these

two rambling Princesses of Croye, or in Liege—you understand me?"

"In faith, I do not, sire," replied Oliver; "it is impossible for me to congratulate your majesty on the failure of your favourite schemes, unless you tell me some reason for the change in your own wishes and views."

"Nay," answered the king, "there is no change in either, in a general view. But, *Pasques-Dieu*, my friend, I have this day learned more of Duke Charles than I before knew. When he was Count de Charolais, in the time of the old Duke Philip and the banished Dauphin of France, we drank, and hunted, and rambled together—and many a wild adventure we have had. And in those days I had a decided advantage over him—like that which a strong spirit naturally assumes over a weak one. But he has since changed—has become a dogged, daring, assuming, disputatious dogmatist, who nourishes an obvious wish to drive matters to extremities, while he thinks he has the game in his own hands. I was compelled to glide as gently away from each offensive topic, as if I touched red-hot iron. I did but hint at the possibility of these erratic Countesses of Croye, ere they attained Liege (for thither I frankly confessed that, to the best of my belief, they were gone), falling into the hands of some wild snapper upon the frontiers, and, *Pasques-Dieu!* you would have thought I had spoken of sacrilege. It is needless to tell you what he said, and quite enough to say, that I would have held my head's safety very insecure, if, in that moment, accounts had been brought of the success of thy friend, William with the Beard, in his and thy honest scheme of bettering himself by marriage."

"No friend of *mine*, if it please your majesty," said Oliver—"neither friend nor plan of mine."

"True, Oliver," answered the king; "thy plan had been to shave such a bridegroom. Well, thou didst wish her as bad a one, when thou didst modestly hint at thyself. However, Oliver, lucky who hath her not; for hang, draw, and quarter, were the most gentle words which my gentle cousin spoke of him who should wed the young countess, his vassal, without his most ducal permission."

"And he is, doubtless, as jealous of any disturbances in the good town of Liege?" asked the favourite.

"As much, or much more so," replied the king, "as your understanding may easily anticipate; but, ever since I resolved on coming hither, my messengers have been in Liege, to repress, for the present, every movement to insurrection; and my very busy and bustling friends, Rouslaer and Pavillon, have orders to be quiet as a mouse until this happy meeting between my cousin and me is over."

"Judging, then, from your majesty's account," said Oliver, drily, "the utmost to be hoped from this meeting is, that it should not make your condition worse?—Surely this is like the crane that thrust her head into the fox's mouth, and was glad to thank her good fortune that it was not bitten off. Yet your majesty seemed deeply obliged even now to the sage philosopher who encouraged you to play so hopeful a game."

"No game," said the king, sharply, "is to be de-

spaired of until it is lost, and that I have no reason to expect it will be in my own case. On the contrary, if nothing occurs to stir the rage of this vindictive madman, I am sure of victory; and, surely, I am not a little obliged to the skill which selected for my agent, as the conductor of the ladies of Croye, a youth whose horoscope so far corresponded with mine, that he hath saved me from danger, even by the disobedience of my own commands, and taking the route which avoided De la Marck's ambuscade."

"Your majesty," said Oliver, "may find many agents who will serve you on these terms."

"Nay, nay, Oliver," said Louis, impatiently, "the heathen poet speaks of *Vota diis exaudita malignis*,—wishes, that is, which the saints grant to us in their wrath; and such, in the circumstances would have been the success of William de la Marck's exploit, had it taken place about this time, and while I am in the power of this Duke of Burgundy.—And this my own art foresaw—fortified by that of Galeotti;—that is, I foresaw not the miscarriage of De la Marck's undertaking, but I foresaw that the expedition of yonder Scottish archer should end happily for me—and such has been the issue, though in a manner different from what I expected; for the stars, though they foretel general results, are yet silent on the means by which such are accomplished, being often the very reverse of what we expect, or even desire.—But why talk I of these mysteries to thee, Oliver, who art in so far worse than the very devil, who is thy namesake, since he believes and trembles; whereas thou art an infidel both to religion and to science, and wilt remain so till thine own destiny is accomplished, which, as thy horoscope and physiognomy alike assure me, will be by the intervention of the gallows!"

"And if it indeed shall be so," said Oliver, in a resigned tone of voice, "it will be so ordered, because I was too grateful a servant not to execute the commands of my royal master."

Louis burst into his usual sardonic laugh.—"Thou hast broke thy lance on me fairly, Oliver; and, by Our Lady, thou art right, for I defied thee to it. But, prithee, tell me in sadness, dost thou discover anything in these men's measures towards us, which may argue any suspicion of ill-usage?"

"My liege," replied Oliver, "your majesty, and yonder learned philosopher, look for augury to the stars and heavenly host—I am an earthly reptile, and consider but the things connected with my vocation. But, methinks, there is a lack of that earnest and precise attention on your majesty, which men show to a welcome guest of a degree so far above them. The duke, to-night, pleaded weariness, and saw your majesty not farther than to the street, leaving to the officers of his household the task of conveying you to your lodgings. The rooms here are hastily and carelessly fitted up—the tapestry is hung up awry—and, in one of the pieces, as you may observe, the figures are reversed, and stand on their heads, while the trees grow with their roots uppermost."

"Pshaw! accident, and the effect of hurry," said the king. "When did you ever know me concerned about such trifles as these?"

VOL. III.

"Not on their own account are they worth notice," said Oliver; "but as intimating the degree of esteem in which the officers of the duke's household observe your grace to be held by him. Believe me, that, had his desire seemed sincere that your reception should be in all points perfunctorily discharged, the zeal of his people would have made minutes do the work of days—And when," he added, pointing to the basin and ewer, "was the furniture of your majesty's toilette of other substance than silver?"

"Nay," said the king, with a constrained smile, "that last remark, Oliver, is too much in the style of thine own peculiar occupation to be combated by any one.—True it is, that when I was only a refugee, and an exile, I was served upon gold-plate by order of the same Charles, who accounted silver too mean for the dauphin, though he seems to hold that metal too rich for the King of France. Well, Oliver, we will to bed. Our resolution has been made and executed; there is nothing to be done but to play manfully the game on which we have entered. I know that my cousin of Burgundy, like other wild bulls, shuts his eyes when he begins his career. I have but to watch that moment, like one of the *tauridors* whom we saw at Burgos, and his impetuosity places him at my mercy."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EXPLOSION.

'T is listening fear, and dumb amazement all,
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud.

THOMSON'S *Summer*.

THE preceding chapter, agreeable to its title, was designed as a retrospect which might enable the reader fully to understand the terms upon which the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy stood together, when the former, moved, partly perhaps by his belief in astrology, which was represented as favourable to the issue of such a measure, and in a great degree doubtless by the conscious superiority of his own powers of mind over those of Charles, had adopted the extraordinary, and upon any other ground altogether inexplicable, resolution of committing his person to the faith of a fierce and exasperated enemy—a resolution also the more rash and unaccountable, as there were various examples in that stormy time to show, that safe-conducts, however solemnly plighted, had proved no assurance for those in whose favour they were conceived; and indeed the murder of the duke's grandfather, at the Bridge of Montereau, in presence of the father of Louis, and at an interview solemnly agreed upon for the establishment of peace and amnesty, was a horrible precedent, should the duke be disposed to resort to it.

But the temper of Charles, though rough, fierce, headlong, and unyielding, was not, unless in the full tide of passion, faithless or ungenerous, faults which usually belong to colder dispositions. He was at no pains to show the king more courtesy than the laws of hospitality positively demanded; but, on the other

hand, he evinced no purpose of overleaping their sacred barriers.

Upon the next morning after the king's arrival, there was a general muster of the troops of the Duke of Burgundy, which were so numerous and so excellently appointed, that, perhaps, he was not sorry to have an opportunity of displaying them before his great rival. Indeed, while he paid the necessary compliment of a vassal to his suzerain, in declaring that these troops were the king's, and not his own, the curl of his upper lip, and the proud glance of his eye, intimated his consciousness, that the words he used were but empty compliment, and that his fine army, at his own unlimited disposal, was as ready to march against Paris as in any other direction. It must have added to Louis's mortification, that he recognized, as forming part of this host, many banners of French nobility, not only of Normandy and Bretagne, but of provinces more immediately subjected to his own authority, who, from various causes of discontent, had joined and made common cause with the Duke of Burgundy.

True to his character, however, Louis seemed to take little notice of these malcontents, while, in fact, he was revolving in his mind the various means by which it might be possible to detach them from the banners of Burgundy and bring them back to his own, and resolved for that purpose, that he would cause the principals among them to be secretly sounded by Oliver and other agents.

He himself laboured diligently, but at the same time cautiously, to make interest with the duke's chief officers and advisers, employing for that purpose the usual means of familiar and frequent notice, adroit flattery, and liberal presents; not, as he represented, to alienate their faithful services from their noble master, but that they might lend their aid in preserving peace betwixt France and Burgundy,—an end so excellent in itself, and so obviously tending to the welfare of both countries, and of the reigning princes of either.

The notice of so great and so wise a king was in itself a mighty bribe; promises did much, and direct gifts, which the customs of the time permitted the Burgundian courtiers to accept without scruple, did still more. During a boar hunt in the forest, while the duke, eager always upon the immediate object, whether business or pleasure, gave himself entirely up to the ardour of the chase, Louis, unrestrained by his presence, sought and found the means of speaking secretly and separately to many of those who were reported to have most interest with Charles, among whom Hymbercourt and d'Argenton were not forgotten; nor did he fail to mix up the advances which he made towards those two distinguished persons with praises of the valour and military skill of the former, and of the profound sagacity and literary talents of the future historian of the period.

Such an opportunity of personally conciliating, or, if the reader pleases, corrupting, the ministers of Charles, was perhaps what the king had proposed to himself as a principal object of his visit, even if his art should fail to cajole the duke himself. The connexion betwixt France and Burgundy was so close, that most of the nobles belonging to the latter country had hopes or actual interests connected with

the former, which the favour of Louis could advance, or his personal displeasure destroy. Formed for this and every other species of intrigue, liberal to profusion when it was necessary to advance his plans, and skilful in putting the most plausible colour upon his proposals and presents, the king contrived to reconcile the spirit of the proud to their profit, and to hold out to the real or pretended patriot the good of both France and Burgundy, as the ostensible motive; whilst the party's own private interest, like the concealed wheel of some machine, worked not the less powerfully that its operations were kept out of sight. For each man he had a suitable bait, and a proper mode of presenting it; he poured the guerdon into the sleeve of those who were too high to extend their hand, and trusted that his bounty, though it descended like the dew without noise and imperceptibly, would not fail to produce, in due season, a plentiful crop of good will at least, perhaps of good offices, to the donor. In fine, although he had been long paving the way by his ministers for an establishment of such an interest in the court of Burgundy, as should be advantageous to the interests of France, Louis's own personal exertions, directed doubtless by the information of which he was previously possessed, did more to accomplish that object in a few hours, than his agents had effected in years of negotiation.

One man alone the king missed, whom he had been particularly desirous of conciliating, and that was the Count de Crevecoeur, whose firmness, during his conduct as envoy at Plessis, far from exciting Louis's resentment, had been viewed as a reason for making him his own if possible. He was not particularly gratified when he learnt that the count, at the head of an hundred lances, was gone towards the frontiers of Brabant, to assist the bishop, in case of necessity, against William de la Marck and his discontented subjects; but he consoled himself, that the appearance of this force, joined with the directions which he had sent by faithful messengers, would serve to prevent any premature disturbances in that country, the breaking out of which might, he foresaw, render his present situation very precarious.

The court upon this occasion dined in the forest when the hour of noon arrived, as was common in these great hunting-parties; an arrangement at this time particularly agreeable to the duke, desirous as he was to abridge that ceremonious and deferential solemnity with which he was otherwise under the necessity of receiving King Louis. In fact, the king's knowledge of human nature had in one particular misled him on this remarkable occasion. He thought that the duke would have been inexpressibly flattered to have received such a mark of condescension and confidence from his liege lord; but he forgot that the dependence of this dukedom upon the crown of France was privately the subject of galling mortification to a prince so powerful, so wealthy, and so proud as Charles, whose aim it certainly was to establish an independent kingdom. The presence of the king at his own court imposed on him the necessity of exhibiting himself in the subordinate character of a vassal, and of discharging many rites of feudal observance and deference,

which, to one of his haughty disposition, resembled derogation from the character of a sovereign prince, which on all occasions he affected as far as possible to sustain.

But although it was possible to put over the dinner upon the green turf, with sound of bugles, broaching of barrels, and all the freedom of a sylvan meal, it was necessary that the evening repast should, even for that very reason, be held with higher than usual solemnity.

Previous orders for this purpose had been given, and, upon returning to Peronne, King Louis found a banquet prepared with such a profusion of splendour and magnificence, as became the wealth of his formidable vassal, possessed as he was of almost all the Low Countries, then the richest portion of Europe. At the head of the long board, which groaned under plate of gold and silver, filled to profusion with the most exquisite dainties, sat the duke, and on his right hand, upon a seat more elevated than his own, was placed his royal guest. Behind him stood on one side the son of the Duke of Gueldres, who officiated as his grand carver—on the other, Le Glorieux, his jester, without whom he seldom stirred; for, like most men of his hasty and coarse character, Charles carried to extremity the general taste of that age for court-fools and jesters—finding that pleasure in their display of eccentricity and mental infirmity, which his more acute, but not more benevolent rival, loved better to extract from marking the imperfections of humanity in its nobler specimens, and finding subject for mirth in the “fears of the brave, and follies of the wise.” And indeed, if the anecdote related by Brantome be true, that a court-fool, having overheard Louis, in one of his agonies of repentant devotion, confess his accession to the poisoning of his brother, Henry, Count of Guyenne, divulged it next day at dinner before the assembled court, that monarch might be supposed rather more than satisfied with the pleasantries of professed jesters for the rest of his life.

But, on the present occasion, Louis neglected not to take notice of the favourite jester of the duke, and to applaud his repartees; which he did the rather, that he thought he saw that the folly of Le Glorieux, however grossly it was sometimes displayed, covered more than the usual quantity of shrewd and caustic observation proper to his class.

In fact, Tiel Wetzweiler, called Le Glorieux, was by no means a jester of the common stamp. He was a tall, fine-looking man, excellent at many exercises, which seemed scarce reconcilable with mental imbecility, because it must have required patience and attention to acquire them. He usually followed the duke to the chase and to the fight; and at Montlhery, when he was in considerable personal danger, wounded in the throat, and likely to be made prisoner by a French knight, who had hold of his horse's rein, Tiel Wetzweiler charged the assailant so forcibly, as to overthrow him and disengage his master. Perhaps he was afraid of this being thought too serious a service for a person of his condition, and that it might excite him enemies among those knights and nobles who had left the care of their master's person to the court-fool. At any rate, he chose rather to be laughed at than

praised for his achievement, and made such gasconading boasts of his exploits in the battle, that most men thought the rescue of Charles was as ideal as the rest of his tale; and it was on this occasion he acquired the title of Le Glorieux, by which he was ever afterwards distinguished.

Le Glorieux was dressed very richly, but with little of the usual distinction of his profession; and that little rather of a symbolical than a very literal character. His head was not shorn; on the contrary, he wore a long profusion of curled hair, which descended from under his cap, and, joining with a well-arranged, and handsomely trimmed beard, set off features, which, but for a wild lightness of eye, might have been termed handsome. A ridge of scarlet velvet carried across the top of his cap, indicated, rather than positively represented, the professional cock's-comb, which distinguished the head-gear of a fool in right of office. His bauble, made of ebony, was crested, as usual, with a fool's head, with ass's ears formed of silver; but so small, and so minutely carved, that, till very closely examined, it might have passed for an official baton of a more solemn character. These were the only badges of his office which his dress exhibited. In other respects, it was such as to match with that of the most courtly nobles. His bonnet displayed a medal of gold; he wore a chain of the same metal around his neck; and the fashion of his rich garments was not much more fantastic than those of young gallants who have their clothes made in the extremity of the existing fashion.

To this personage Charles, and Louis, in imitation of his host, often addressed themselves during the entertainment; and both seemed to manifest, by hearty laughter, their amusement at the answers of Le Glorieux.

“Whose seats be those that are vacant?” said Charles to the jester.

“One of those at least should be mine by right of succession, Charles,” replied the jester.

“Why so, knave?” said Charles.

“Because they belong to the Sieur d'Hymbercourt and d'Argenton, who are gone so far to fly their falcons, that they have forgot their supper. They, who would rather look at a kite on the wing than a pheasant on the board, are of kin to the fool, and he should succeed to the stools, as a part of their movable estate.”

“That is but a stale jest, my friend Tiel,” said the duke; “but, fools or wise men, here come the defaulters.”

As he spoke, d'Argenton and d'Hymbercourt entered the room, and, after having made their reverence to the two princes, assumed in silence the seats which were left vacant for them.

“What ho! sirs,” exclaimed the duke, addressing them, “your sport has been either very good or very bad, to lead you so far and so late. Sir Philip de Comines, you are dejected—hath d'Hymbercourt won so heavy a wager on you?—You are a philosopher, and should not grieve at bad fortune.—By Saint George! d'Hymbercourt looks as sad as thou doest.—How now, sirs? Have you found no game? or have you lost your falcons? or has a witch crossed your way? or has the Wild Huntsman met

you in the forest? By my honour, you seem as if you were come to a funeral, not a festival."

While the duke spoke, the eyes of the company were all directed towards d'Hymbercourt and d'Argenton; and the embarrassment and dejection of their countenances, neither being of that class of persons to whom such expression of anxious melancholy was natural, became so remarkable, that the mirth and the laughter of the company, which the rapid circulation of goblets of excellent wine had raised to a considerable height, was gradually hushed; and, without being able to assign any reason for such a change in their spirits, men spoke in whispers to each other, as on the eve of expecting some strange and important tidings.

"What means this silence, messires?" said the duke, elevating his voice, which was naturally harsh. "If you bring these strange looks, and this stranger silence, into festivity, we shall wish you had abode in the marshes seeking for herons, or rather for woodcocks and owlets."

"My gracious lord," said d'Argenton, "as we were about to return hither from the forest, we met the Count of Crevecœur."

"How!" said the duke; "already returned from Brabant?—but he found all well there, doubtless?"

"The count himself will presently give your grace an account of his news," said d'Hymbercourt, "which we have heard but imperfectly."

"Body of me! where is the count?" said the duke.

"He changes his dress, to wait upon your highness?" answered d'Hymbercourt.

"His dress? *Saint-bleu*!" exclaimed the impatient prince, "what care I for his dress! I think you have conspired with him to drive me mad."

"Or rather, to be plain," said d'Argenton, "he wishes to communicate these news at a private audience."

"*Teste-Dieu*! my lord king," said Charles, "this is ever the way our counsellors serve us—If they have got hold of aught which they consider as important for our ear, they look as grave upon the matter, and are as proud of their burthen as an ass of a new pack-saddle.—Some one bid Crevecœur come to us directly!—He comes from the frontiers of Liege, and *we*, at least (he laid some emphasis on the pronoun), have no secrets in that quarter which we would shun to have proclaimed before the assembled world."

All perceived that the duke had drunk so much wine as to increase the native obstinacy of his disposition; and though many would willingly have suggested that the present was neither a time for hearing news, nor for taking counsel, yet all knew the impetuosity of his temper too well to venture on farther interference, and sat in anxious expectation of the tidings which the count might have to communicate.

A brief interval intervened, during which the duke remained looking eagerly to the door, as if in a transport of impatience, while the guests sat with their eyes bent on the table, as if to conceal their curiosity and anxiety. Louis alone maintaining perfect composure, continued his conversation alternately with the grand carver and with the jester.

At length Crevecœur entered, and was presently saluted by the hurried question of his master, "What news from Liege and Brabant, Sir Count?—The report of your arrival has chased mirth from our table—we hope your actual presence will bring it back to us."

"My liege and master," answered the count, in a firm, but melancholy tone, "the news which I bring you are fitter for the council-board than the feasting-table."

"Out with them, man, if they were tidings from antichrist," said the duke; "but I can guess them—the Liegeois are again in mutiny."

"They are, my lord," said Crevecœur, very gravely.

"Look there, man," said the duke, "I have hit at once on what you have been so much afraid to mention to me—the hair-brained burghers are again in arms. It could not be in better time, for we may at present have the advice of our own suzerain," bowing to King Louis, with eyes which spoke the most bitter, though suppressed resentment, "to teach us how such mutineers should be dealt with.—Hast thou more news in thy packet? Out with them, and then answer for yourself why you went not forward to assist the bishop."

"My lord, the farther tidings are heavy for me to tell, and will be afflicting to you to hear.—No aid of mine, or of living chivalry, could have availed the excellent prelate. William de la Marck, united with the insurgent Liegeois, has taken his Castle of Schonwaldt, and murdered him in his own hall."

"*Murdered him!*" repeated the duke, in a deep and low tone, but which nevertheless was heard from the one end of the hall in which they were assembled to the other; "thou hast been imposed upon, Crevecœur, by some wild report—it is impossible."

"Alas! my lord!" said the count, "I have it from an eye-witness, an archer of the King of France's Scottish Guard, who was in the hall when the murder was committed by William de la Marck's order."

"And who was doubtless aiding and abetting in the horrible sacrilege," said the duke, starting up and stamping with his foot with such fury, that he dashed in pieces the footstool which was placed before him. "Bar the doors of this hall, gentlemen—secure the windows—let no stranger stir from his seat, upon pain of instant death!—Gentlemen of my chamber, draw your swords." And turning upon Louis, he advanced his own hand slowly and deliberately to the hilt of his weapon, while the king, without either showing fear or assuming a defensive posture, only said,

"These news, fair cousin, have staggered your reason."

"No!" replied the duke, in a terrible tone, "but they have awakened a just resentment, which I have too long suffered to be stifled by trivial considerations of circumstance and place. Murderer of thy brother!—rebel against thy parent!—tyrant over thy subjects!—treacherous ally!—perjured king!—dishonoured gentleman!—thou art in my power, and I thank God for it!"

"Rather thank my folly," said the king; "for when we met on equal terms at Montlhery, methinks you wished yourself farther from me than we are now."

The duke still held his hand on the hilt of his sword, but refrained to draw his weapon, or to strike a foe, who offered no sort of resistance which could in anywise provoke violence.

Meanwhile, wild and general confusion spread itself through the hall. The doors were now fastened and guarded at the order of the duke; but several of the French nobles, few as they were in number, started from their seats, and prepared for the defence of their sovereign. Louis had spoken not a word either to Orleans or Dunois since they were liberated from restraint at the Castle of Loches, if it could be termed liberation, to be dragged in King Louis's train, objects of suspicion evidently, rather than of respect and regard; but, nevertheless, the voice of Dunois was first heard above the tumult addressing himself to the Duke of Burgundy.—"Sir duke, you have forgotten that you are a vassal of France, and that we, your guests, are Frenchmen. If you lift a hand against our monarch, prepare to sustain the utmost effects of our despair; for, credit me, we shall feast as high with the blood of Burgundy as we have done with its wine.—Courage, my Lord of Orleans—and you, gentlemen of France, form yourselves round Dunois, and do as he does!"

It was in that moment when a king might see upon what tempers he could certainly rely. The few independent nobles and knights who attended Louis, most of whom had only received from him frowns or discountenance, unappalled by the display of infinitely superior force, and the certainty of destruction, hastened to array themselves around Dunois, and, led by him, to press towards the head of the table where the contending princes were seated.

On the contrary, the tools and agents whom Louis had dragged forward out of their fitting places, into importance which was not due to them, showed cowardice and cold heart, and, remaining still in their seats, seemed resolved not to provoke their fate by intermeddling, whatever might become of their benefactor.

The first of the more generous party was the venerable Lord Crawford, who, with an agility which no one would have expected at his years, forced his way through all opposition (which was the less violent, as many of the Burgundians, either from a point of honour, or a secret inclination to prevent Louis's impending fate, gave way to him), and threw himself boldly between the king and the duke. He then placed his bonnet, from which his white hair escaped in disheveled tresses, upon one side of his head—his pale cheek and withered brow coloured, and his aged eye lightened with all the fire of a gallant who is about to dare some desperate action. His cloak was flung over one shoulder, and his action intimated his readiness to wrap it about his left arm, while he unsheathed his sword with his right.

"I have fought for his father and his grandsire," that was all he said, "and, by Saint Andrew, end the matter as it will, I will not fail him at this pinch."

What has taken some time to narrate, happened, in fact, with the speed of light; for so soon as the duke assumed his threatening posture, Crawford had thrown himself betwixt him and the object of his vengeance; and the French gentlemen, drawing together as fast as they could, were crowding to the same point.

The Duke of Burgundy still remained with his hand on his sword, and seemed in the act of giving the signal for a general onset, which must necessarily have ended in the massacre of the weaker party, when Crevecœur rushed forward, and exclaimed, in a voice like a trumpet,—“My liege Lord of Burgundy, beware what you do! This is *your* hall—you are the king's vassal—do not spill the blood of your guest on your hearth, the blood of your sovereign on the throne you have erected for him, and to which he came under your safeguard. For the sake of your house's honour, do not attempt to revenge one horrid murder by another yet worse!”

“Out of my road, Crevecœur,” answered the duke, “and let my vengeance pass!—Out of my path!—The wrath of kings is to be dreaded like that of Heaven.”

“Only when, like that of Heaven, it is *just*,” answered Crevecœur, firmly—“Let me pray of you, my lord, to rein the violence of your temper, however justly offended.—And for you, my lords of France, where resistance is unavailing, let me recommend you to forbear whatever may lead towards bloodshed.”

“He is right,” said Louis, whose coolness forsook him not in that dreadful moment, and who easily foresaw, that if a brawl should commence, more violence would be dared and done in the heat of blood, than was like to be attempted if peace were preserved.—“My cousin Orleans—kind Dunois—and you, my trusty Crawford—bring not on ruin and bloodshed by taking offence too hastily. Our cousin the duke is chafed at tidings of the death of a near and loving friend, the venerable Bishop of Liege, whose slaughter we lament as he does. Ancient, and, unhappily, recent subjects of jealousy, lead him to suspect us of having abetted a crime which our bosom abhors. Should our host murder us on the spot—us, his king and his kinsman, under a false impression of our being accessory to this unhappy accident, our fate will be little lightened, but, on the contrary, greatly aggravated, by your stirring.—Therefore, stand back, Crawford—Were it my last word, I speak as a king to his officer, and demand obedience—Stand back, and, if it is required, yield up your sword. I command you to do so, and your oath obliges you to obey.”

“True, true, my lord,” said Crawford, stepping back, and returning to the sheath the blade he had half drawn—“It may be all very true; but, by my honour, if I were at the head of threescore and ten of my brave fellows, instead of being loaded with more than the like number of years, I would try whether I would have some reason out of these fine gallants, with their golden chains and looped-up bonnets, with braw-warld dyes and devices on them.”

The duke stood with his eyes fixed on the ground for a considerable space, and then said, with bitter irony, “Crevecœur, you say well; and it concerns

our honour, that our obligations to this great king, our honoured and loving guest, be not so hastily adjusted, as in our hasty anger we had at first proposed. We will so act, that all Europe shall acknowledge the justice of our proceedings.—Gentlemen of France, you must render up your arms to my officers! Your master has broken the truce, and has no title to take farther benefit of it. In compassion, however, to your sentiments of honour, and in respect to the rank which he hath disgraced, and the race from which he hath degenerated, we ask not our cousin Louis's sword."

"Not one of us," said Dunois, "will resign our weapon, or quit this hall, unless we are assured of at least our king's safety, in life and limb."

"Nor will a man of the Scottish Guard," exclaimed Crawford, "lay down his arms, save at the command of the King of France, or his high constable."

"Brave Dunois," said Louis, "and you, my trusty Crawford, your zeal will do me injury instead of benefit.—I trust," he added with dignity, "in my rightful cause, more than in a vain resistance, which would but cost the lives of my best and bravest.—Give up your swords—the noble Burgundians, who accept such honourable pledges, will be more able than you are to protect both you and me.—Give up your swords—It is I who command you."

It was thus that, in this dreadful emergency, Louis showed the promptitude of decision, and clearness of judgment, which alone could have saved his life. He was aware, that until actual blows were exchanged, he would have the assistance of most of the nobles present to moderate the fury of their prince; but that were a *mêlée* once commenced, he himself and his few adherents must be instantly murdered. At the same time, his worst enemies confessed, that his demeanour had in it nothing either of meanness, or cowardice. He shunned to aggravate into frenzy the wrath of the duke; but he neither deprecated nor seemed to fear it, and continued to look on him with the calm and fixed attention with which a brave man eyes the menacing gestures of a lunatic, whilst conscious that his own steadiness and composure operate as an insensible and powerful check on the rage even of insanity.

Crawford, at the king's command, threw his sword to Crevecœur, saying, "Take it! and the devil give you joy of it.—It is no dishonour to the rightful owner who yields it, for we have had no fair play."

"Hold, gentlemen," said the duke, in a broken voice, as one whom passion had almost deprived of utterance, "retain your swords; it is sufficient you promise not to use them.—And you, Louis of Valois, must regard yourself as my prisoner, until you are cleared of having abetted sacrilege and murder. Have him to the castle—Have him to Earl Herbert's Tower. Let him have six gentlemen of his train to attend him, such as he shall chuse.—My Lord of Crawford, your guard must leave the castle, and shall be honourably quartered elsewhere.—Up with every draw-bridge, and down with every portcullis—Let the gates of the town be trebly guarded—Draw to the right hand side of the river the floating-bridge—Bring round the castle my band of Black Walloons, and treble the sentinels on every post!—You, Hymbercourt, look that patrols of horse

and foot make round of the town every half-hour during the night, and every hour during the next day,—if indeed such ward shall be necessary after day-break, for it is like we may be sudden in this matter.—Look to the person of Louis, as you love your life!"

He started from the table in fierce and moody haste, darted a glance of mortal enmity at the king, and rushed out of the apartment.

"Sirs," said the king, looking with dignity around him, "grief for the death of his ally hath made your prince frantic. I trust you know better your duty, as knights and noblemen, than to abet him in his treasonable violence against the person of his liege lord."

At this moment was heard in the streets the sound of drums beating, and horns blowing, to call out the soldiery in every direction.

"We are," said Crevecœur, who acted as the marshal of the duke's household, "subjects of Burgundy, and must do our duty as such. Our hopes and prayers, and our efforts, will not be wanting to bring about peace and union between your majesty and our liege lord. Meantime, we must obey his commands. These other lords and knights will be proud to contribute to the convenience of the illustrious Duke of Orleans, of the brave Dunois, and the stout Lord Crawford. I myself must be your majesty's chamberlain, and bring you to your apartments in other guise than would be my desire, remembering the hospitality of Plessis. You have only to chuse your attendants, whom the duke's commands limit to six."

"Then," said the king, looking around him, and thinking for a moment,—“I desire the attendance of Oliver le Dain, of a private of my lifeguard, called Balafre, who may be unarmed if you will—of Tristan l'Hermite, with two of his people—and my right loyal and trusty philosopher, Martius Galeotti."

"Your majesty's will shall be complied with in all points," said the Count de Crevecœur. "Galeotti," he added, after a moment's inquiry, "is, I understand, at present supping in some buxom company, but he shall instantly be sent for; the others will obey your majesty's command upon the instant."

"Forward, then, to the new abode, which the hospitality of our cousin provides for us," said the king. "We know it is strong, and have only to hope it may be in a corresponding degree safe."

"Heard you the choice which King Louis has made of his attendants?" said Le Glorieux to Count Crevecœur apart, as they followed Louis from the hall.

"Surely, my merry gossip," replied the count; "what hast thou to object to them?"

"Nothing, nothing—only they are a rare election!—A panderly barber—a Scotch hired cut-throat—a chief hangman and his two assistants, and a thieving charlatan. I will along with you, Crevecœur, and take a lesson in the degrees of roguery, from observing your skill in marshaling them. The devil himself could scarce have summoned such a synod, or have been a better president amongst them."

Accordingly, the all-licensed jester, seizing the

count's arm familiarly, began to march along with him, while, under a strong guard, yet forgetting no semblance of respect, he conducted the king towards his new apartment.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

UNCERTAINTY.

— Then happy low, lie down ;
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Henry IV. Part II.

FORTY men-at-arms, carrying alternately naked swords and blazing torches, served as the escort, or rather the guard, of King Louis, from the town-hall of Peronne to the castle ; and as he entered within its darksome and gloomy strength, it seemed as if a voice screamed in his ear that warning which the Florentine has inscribed over the portal of the infernal regions—"Leave all hope behind."

At that moment, perhaps, some feeling of remorse might have crossed the king's mind, had he thought on the hundreds, nay thousands, whom, without cause, or on light suspicion, he had committed to the abysses of his dungeons, deprived of all hope of liberty, and loathing even the life to which they clung by animal instinct.

The broad glare of the torches outfacing the pale moon, which was more obscured on this than on the former night, and the red smoky light which they dispersed around the ancient buildings, gave a darker shade to that huge donjon called the Earl Herbert's Tower. It was the same that Louis had viewed with misgiving presentiment on the preceding evening, and of which he was now doomed to become an inhabitant, under the terror of what violence soever the wrathful temper of his overgrown vassal might tempt him to exercise in those secret recesses of despotism.

To aggravate the king's painful feelings, he saw, as he crossed the court-yard, one or two bodies, over each of which had been hastily flung a military cloak. He was not long of discerning that they were corpses of slain archers of the Scottish Guard, who having disputed, as the Count Crevecœur informed him, the command given them to quit the post near the king's apartments, a brawl had ensued between them and the Duke's Walloon bodyguards, and before it could be composed by the officers on either side, several lives had been lost.

"My trusty Scots !" said the king, as he looked upon this melancholy spectacle ; "had they brought only man to man, all Flanders—and Burgundy to boot—had not furnished champions to mate you."

"Ay, an it please your majesty," said Balafré, who attended close behind the king, "Maistery mows the meadow—few men can fight more than two at once.—I myself never care to meet three, unless it be in the way of special duty, when one must not stand to count heads."

"Art thou there, old acquaintance?" said the king, looking behind him ; "then I have one true subject with me yet."

"And a faithful minister, whether in your coun-

cils, or in his offices about your royal person," whispered Oliver le Dain.

"We are all faithful," said Tristan l'Hermite, gruffly ; "for should they put to death your majesty, there is not one of us whom they would suffer to survive you, even if we would."

"Now, that is what I call good corporal bail for fidelity," said Le Glorieux, who, as already mentioned, with the restlessness proper to an infirm brain, had thrust himself into their company.

Meanwhile, the seneschal, hastily summoned, was turning with laborious effort the ponderous key which opened the reluctant gate of the huge Gothic keep, and was at last fain to call on the assistance of one of Crevecœur's attendants. When they had succeeded, six men entered with torches, and showed the way through a narrow and winding passage, commanded at different points by shot-holes from vaults and casements constructed behind, and in the thickness of the massive walls. At the end of this passage, arose a stair of corresponding rudeness, consisting of huge blocks of stone, roughly dressed with the hammer, and of unequal height. Having mounted this ascent, a strong iron-clenched door admitted them to what had been the great hall of the donjon, lighted but very faintly even during the day-time (for the apertures, diminished in appearance by the excessive thickness of the walls, resembled slits rather than windows), and now, but for the blaze of the torches, almost perfectly dark. Two or three bats, and other birds of evil presage, roused by the unusual glare, flew against the lights, and threatened to extinguish them ; while the seneschal formally apologized to the king, that the state-hall had not been put in order, such was the hurry of the notice sent to him ; and adding, that, in truth, the apartment had not been in use for twenty years, and rarely before that time, so far as ever he had heard, since the time of King Charles the Simple.

"King Charles the Simple !" echoed Louis ; "I know the history of the tower now.—He was here murdered by his treacherous vassal, Herbert, Earl of Vermandois—So say our annals. I knew there was something concerning the Castle of Peronne which dwelt on my mind, though I could not recall the circumstance—Here, then, my predecessor was slain !"

"Not here, not exactly here, and please your majesty," said the old seneschal, stepping with the eager haste of a cicerone, who shows the curiosities of such a place—"Not here, but in the side-chamber a little onward, which opens from your majesty's bed-chamber."

He hastily opened a wicket at the upper end of the hall, which led into a bed-chamber, small, as is usual in these old buildings ; but, even for that reason, rather more comfortable than the waste hall through which they had passed. Some hasty preparations had been here made for the king's accommodation. Arras had been tacked up, a fire lighted in the rusty grate, which had been long unused, and a pallet laid down for those gentlemen who were to pass the night in his chamber, as was then usual.

"We will get beds in the hall for the rest of your attendants," said the garrulous old man ; "but we

have had such brief notice, if it please your majesty—And if it please your majesty to look upon this little wicket behind the arras, it opens into the little old cabinet in the thickness of the wall where Charles was slain; and there is a secret passage from below, which admitted the men who were to deal with him. And your majesty, whose eye-sight I hope is better than mine, may see the blood still on the oak-floor, though the thing was done five hundred years ago.”

While he thus spoke, he kept fumbling to open the postern of which he spoke, until the king said, “Forbear, old man—forbear but a little while, when thou mayest have a newer tale to tell, and fresher blood to show.—My lord of Crevecœur, what say you?”

“I can but answer, sire, that these two interior apartments are as much at your majesty’s disposal as those in your own Castle at Plessis, and that Crevecœur, a name never blackened by treachery or assassination, has the guard of the exterior defences of it.”

“But the private passage into that closet, of which the old man speaks?” This King Louis said in a low and anxious tone, holding Crevecœur’s arm fast with one hand, and pointing to the wicket-door with the other.

“It is but some dream of Mornay’s,” said Crevecœur, “or some old and absurd tradition of the place;—but we will examine.”

He was about to open the closet door, when Louis answered, “No, Crevecœur, no—Your honour is sufficient warrant.—But what will your duke do with me, Crevecœur? He cannot hope to keep me long a prisoner; and—in short, give me your opinion, Crevecœur.”

“My lord and sire,” said the count, “how the Duke of Burgundy must resent this horrible cruelty on the person of his near relative and ally, is for your majesty to judge; and what right he may have to consider it as instigated by your majesty’s emissaries, you only can know. But my master is noble in his dispositions, and made incapable, even by the very strength of his passions, of any underhand practices. Whatever he does, will be done in the face of day, and of the two nations. And I can but add, that it will be the wish of every counsellor around him—excepting perhaps one—that he should behave in this matter with mildness and generosity, as well as justice.”

“Ah! Crevecœur,” said Louis, taking his hand as if affected by some painful recollections, “how happy is the prince who has counsellors near him, who can guard him against the effects of his own angry passions! Their names will be read in golden letters, when the history of his reign is perused.—Noble Crevecœur, had it been my lot to have such as thou art about *my* person!”

“It had in that case been your majesty’s study to have got rid of them as fast as you could,” said Le Glorieux.

“Aha! Sir Wisdom, art thou there?” said Louis, turning round, and instantly changing the pathetic tone in which he had addressed Crevecœur, and adopting with facility one which had a turn of gaiety in it—“Hast thou followed us hither?”

“Ay, sir,” answered Le Glorieux, “Wisdom

must follow in motley, where Folly leads the way in purple.”

“How shall I construe that, Sir Solomon?” answered Louis—“Wouldst thou change conditions with me?”

“Not I, by my halidome,” quoth Le Glorieux, “if you would give me fifty crowns to boot.”

“Why, wherefore so?—Methinks I could be well enough contented, as princes go, to have thee for my king.”

“Ay, sire,” replied Le Glorieux; “but the question is, whether, judging of your majesty’s wit from its having lodged you here, I should not have cause to be ashamed of having so dull a fool.”

“Peace, sirrah!” said the Count of Crevecœur; “your tongue runs too fast.”

“Let it take its course,” said the king; “I know of no such fair subject of raillery, as the follies of those who should know better.—Here, my sagacious friend, take this purse of gold, and with it the advice, never to be so great a fool as to deem yourself wiser than other people. Prithee, do me so much favour, as to inquire after my astrologer, Martius Galeotti, and send him hither to me presently.”

“I will, without fail, my liege,” answered the jester; “and I wot well I shall find him at Jan Doppletbur’s; for philosophers, as well as fools, know where the best wine is sold.”

“Let me pray for free entrance for this learned person through your guards, Signior de Crevecœur,” said Louis.

“For his entrance, unquestionably,” answered the count; “but it grieves me to add, that my instructions do not authorize me to permit any one to quit your majesty’s apartments.—I wish your majesty a good night,” he subjoined, “and will presently make such arrangements in the outer hall, as may put the gentlemen who are to inhabit it, more at their ease.”

“Give yourself no trouble for them, Sir Count,” replied the king; “they are men accustomed to set hardships at defiance; and, to speak truth, excepting that I wish to see Galeotti, I would desire as little further communication from without this night as may be consistent with your instructions.”

“These are, to leave your majesty,” replied Crevecœur, “undisputed possession of your own apartments. Such are my master’s orders.”

“Your master, Count Crevecœur,” answered Louis, “whom I may also term mine, is a right gracious master.—My dominions,” he added, “are somewhat shrunk in compass, now that they have dwindled to an old hall and a bed-chamber; but they are still wide enough for all the subjects which I can at present boast of.”

The Count of Crevecœur took his leave; and shortly after, they could hear the noise of the sentinels moving to their posts, accompanied with the word of command from the officers, and the hasty tread of the guards who were relieved. At length all became still, and the only sound which filled the air, was the sluggish murmur of the river Somme, as it glided, deep and muddy, under the walls of the castle.

“Go into the hall, my mates,” said Louis to his train; “but do not lie down to sleep. Hold your-

selves in readiness, for there is still something to be done to-night, and that of moment."

Oliver and Tristan retired to the hall accordingly, in which Le Balafre and the provost-marshal's two officers had remained, when the others entered the bed-chamber. They found that those without had thrown fagots enough upon the fire, to serve the purpose of light and heat at the same time, and, wrapping themselves in their cloaks, had sat down on the floor, in postures which variously expressed the discomposure and dejection of their minds. Oliver and Tristan saw nothing better to be done, than to follow their example; and, never very good friends in the days of their court-prosperity, they were both equally reluctant to repose confidence in each other upon this strange and sudden reverse of fortune. So that the whole party sat in silent dejection.

Meanwhile, their master underwent, in the retirement of his secret chamber, agonies which might have atoned for some of those which had been imposed by his command. He paced the room with short and unequal steps, often stood still and clasped his hands together, and gave loose, in short, to agitation, which, in public, he had found himself able to suppress so successfully. At length, pausing, and wringing his hands, he planted himself opposite to the wicket-door, which had been pointed out by old Mornay as leading to the scene of the murder of one of his predecessors, and gradually gave voice to his feelings in a broken soliloquy.

"Charles the Simple—Charles the Simple!—what will posterity call the Eleventh Louis, whose blood will probably soon refresh the stains of thine? Louis the Fool—Louis the Driveler—Louis the Infatuated—are all terms too slight to mark the extremity of my idiocy! To think these hot-headed Liegeois, to whom rebellion is as natural as their food, would remain quiet—to dream that the Wild Beast of Ardennes would, for a moment, be interrupted in his career of force and blood-thirsty brutality—to suppose that I could use reason and arguments to any good purpose with Charles of Burgundy, until I had tried the force of such exhortations with success upon a wild bull—Fool, and double idiot that I was! But the villain Martius shall not escape—He has been at the bottom of this—he and the vile priest, the detestable Balue. If I ever get out of this danger, I will tear from his head the cardinal's cap, though I pull the scalp along with it. But the other traitor is in my hands—I am yet king enough—have yet an empire roomy enough—for the punishment of the quack-salving, word-mongering, star-gazing, lie-coining impostor, who has at once made a prisoner and a dupe of me!—The conjunction of the constellations—ay, the conjunction—He must talk nonsense which would scarce gull a thrice-sodden sheep's-head, and I must be idiot enough to think I understood him! But we will see presently what the conjunction hath really boded. But first let me to my devotions."

Above the little door, in memory perhaps of the deed which had been done within, was a rude niche, containing a crucifix cut in stone. Upon this emblem the king fixed his eyes, as if about to kneel, but stopped short, as if he applied to the blessed image

VOL. III.

the principles of worldly policy, and deemed it rash to approach its presence without having secured the private intercession of some supposed favourite. He therefore turned from the crucifix as unworthy to look upon it, and selecting from the images with which, as often mentioned, his hat was completely garnished, a representation of the Lady of Clery, knelt down before it, and made the following extraordinary prayer; in which, it is to be observed, the grossness of his superstition induced him, in some degree, to consider the Virgin of Clery as a different person from the Madonna of Embrun, a favourite idol, to whom he often paid his vows.

"Sweet Lady of Clery," he exclaimed, clasping his hands and beating his breast while he spoke—"blessed Mother of Mercy! thou who art omnipotent with omnipotence, have compassion with me a sinner! It is true, that I have something neglected thee for thy blessed sister of Embrun; but I am a king, my power is great, my wealth boundless; and, were it otherwise, I would double the *gabelle* on my subjects, rather than not pay my debts to you both. Undo these iron doors—fill up these tremendous moats—lead me, as a mother leads a child, out of this present and pressing danger! If I have given thy sister the command of my guards, thou shalt have the broad and rich province of Champagne; and its vineyards shall pour their abundance into thy convent. I had promised the province to my brother Charles; but he, thou knowest, is dead—poisoned by that wicked Abbé of Angely, whom, if I live, I will punish!—I promised this once before, but this time I will keep my word.—If I had any knowledge of the crime, believe, dearest patroness, it was because I knew no better method of quieting the discontents of my kingdom. O, do not reckon that old debt to my account to-day; but be, as thou hast ever been, kind, benignant, and easy to be entreated! Sweetest lady, work with thy child, that he will pardon all past sins, and one—one little deed which I must do this night—nay, it is no *sin*, dearest Lady of Clery—no sin, but an act of justice privately administered; for the villain is the greatest impostor that ever poured falsehood into a prince's ear, and leans besides to the filthy heresy of the Greeks. He is not worth thy protection; leave him to my care; and hold it as good service, as the man is a necromancer and wizard, that is not worth thy thought and care—a dog, the extinction of whose life ought to be of as little consequence in thine eyes, as the treading out a spark that drops from a lamp, or springs from a fire. Think not of this little matter, gentlest, kindest lady, but only think how thou canst best aid me in my troubles! and I here bind my royal signet to thy effigy, in token that I will keep word concerning the county of Champagne, and that this will be the last time I will trouble thee in affairs of blood, knowing thou art so kind, so gentle, and so tender-hearted."

After this extraordinary contract with the object of his adoration, Louis recited, apparently with deep devotion, the seven penitential psalms in Latin, and several aves, and prayers especially belonging to the service of the Virgin. He then arose, satisfied that he had secured the intercession of the saint to whom he had prayed, the rather, as he craftily reflected,

101

that most of the sins for which he had requested her mediation on former occasions had been of a different character, and that, therefore, the Lady of Clery was less likely to consider him as a hardened and habitual shedder of blood, than the other saints whom he had more frequently made confidants of his crimes in that respect.*

When he had thus cleared his conscience, or rather whited it over like a sepulchre, the king thrust his head out at the door of the hall, and summoned Le Balafre into his apartment. "My good soldier," he said, "thou hast served me long, and hast had little promotion. We are here in a case where I may either live or die; but I would not willingly die an ungrateful man, or leave, so far as the saints may place it in my power, either a friend or an enemy unrecompensed. Now, I have a friend to be rewarded, that is thyself—an enemy to be punished according to his deserts, and that is the base, treacherous villain, Martius Galeotti, who, by his impostures and specious falsehoods, has trained me hither into the power of my mortal enemy, with as firm a purpose of my destruction, as ever butcher had of slaying the beast which he drove to the shambles."

"I will challenge him on that quarrel," said Le Balafre. "I doubt not but the Duke of Burgundy is so much a friend to men of the sword, that he will allow us a fair field within some reasonable space; and if your majesty live so long, and enjoy so much freedom, you shall behold me do battle in your right, and take as proper a vengeance on this philosopher as your heart could desire."

"I commend your bravery and your devotion to my service," said the king. "But this treacherous villain is a stout man-at-arms, and I would not willingly risk thy life, my brave soldier."

"I were no brave soldier, if it please your majesty," said Balafre, "if I dared not face a better man than he. A fine thing it would be for me, who can neither read nor write, to be afraid of a fat lurdane, who has done little else all his life!"

"Nevertheless," said the king, "it is not our pleasure so to put thee in venture, Balafre. This traitor comes hither, summoned by our command. We would have thee, so soon as thou canst find occasion, close up with him, and smite him under the fifth rib—Doest thou understand me?"

"Truly I do," answered Le Balafre; "but, if it please your majesty, this is a matter entirely out of my course of practice. I could not kill you a dog, unless it were in hot assault or pursuit, or defiance given, or such like."

"Why, sure, *thou* dost not pretend to tenderness of heart?" said the king; "thou who hast been first in storm and siege, and most eager, as men tell me, on the pleasures and advantages which are gained on such occasions by the rough heart and the bloody hand?"

* While I perused the corresponding passages in the old manuscript chronicle, I could not help feeling astonished that an intellect such as that of Louis XI. certainly was, could so delude itself by a sort of superstition, of which one would think the stupidest savages incapable; but the terms of the king's prayer, on a similar occasion, as preserved by Brantome, are of a tenor fully as extraordinary.

"My lord," answered Le Balafre, "I have neither feared nor spared your enemies, sword in hand. And an assault is a desperate matter, under risks which raise a man's blood so, that, by Saint Andrew, it will not settle for an hour or two,—which I call a fair license for plundering after a storm. And God pity us poor soldiers, who are first driven mad with danger, and then madder with victory. I have heard of a legion consisting entirely of saints; and methinks it would take them all to pray and intercede for the rest of the army, and for all who wear plumes and corslets, buff-coats and broad-swords. But what your majesty purposes is out of my course of practice, though I will never deny that it has been wide enough. As for the astrologer, if he be a traitor, let him e'en die a traitor's death—I will neither meddle nor make with it. Your majesty has your provost, and two of his marshal's-men without, who are more fit for dealing with him than a *Scottish* gentleman of my family and standing in the service."

"You say well," said the king; "but, at least, it belongs to thy duty to prevent interruption, and to guard the execution of my most just sentence."

"I will do so against all Peronne," said Le Balafre. "Your majesty need not doubt my fealty in that which I can reconcile to my conscience, which, for mine own convenience and the service of your royal majesty, I can vouch to be a pretty large one—at least, I know I have done some deeds for your majesty, which I would rather have eaten a handful of my own dagger than I would have done for any else."

"Let that rest," said the king; "and hear you—when Galeotti is admitted, and the door shut on him, do you stand to your weapon, and guard the entrance on the inside of the apartment. Let no one intrude—that is all I require of you. Go hence, and send the provost-marshal to me."

Balafre left the apartment accordingly, and in a minute afterwards Tristan l'Hermite entered from the hall.

"Welcome, gossip," said the king; "what thinkest thou of our situation?"

"As of men sentenced to death," said the provost-marshal, "unless there come a reprieve from the duke."

"Reprieved or not, he that decoyed us into this snare shall go our fourrier to the next world, to take up lodgings for us," said the king, with a grisly and ferocious smile. "Tristan, thou hast done many an act of brave justice—*finis*—I should have said *funis coronat opus*—thou must stand by me to the end."

"I will, my liege," said Tristan; "I am but a plain fellow, but I am grateful. I will do my duty within these walls, or elsewhere; and while I live, your majesty's breath shall pour as potential a note of condemnation, and your sentence be as literally executed, as when you sat on your own throne. They may deal with me the next hour for it if they will—I care not."

"It is even what I expected of thee, my loving gossip," said Louis; "but hast thou good assistance?—the traitor is strong and able-bodied, and will doubtless be clamorous for aid. The Scot will do nought but keep the door; and well that he can be brought to that by flattery and humouring. Then

Oliver is good for nothing but lying, flattering, and suggesting dangerous counsels; and, *Ventre Saint-Dieu!* I think is more like one day to deserve the halter himself, than to use it to another. Have you men, think you, and means, to make sharp and sure work?"

"I have Trois-Éschelles and Petit-André with me," said he—"men so expert in their office, that out of three men, they would hang up one ere his two companions were aware. And we have all resolved to live or die with your majesty, knowing we shall have as short breath to draw, were you gone, as ever fell to the lot of any of our patients.—But what is to be our present subject, an it please your majesty? I love to be sure of my man; for, as your majesty is pleased sometimes to remind me, I have now and then mistaken the criminal, and strung up in his place an honest labourer, who had given your majesty no offence."

"Most true," said the other. "Know then, Tristan, that the condemned person is Martius Galeotti.—You start, but it is even as I say. The villain hath trained us all hither by false and treacherous representations, that he might put us into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy without defence."

"But not without vengeance!" said Tristan; "were it the last act of my life, I would sting him home like an expiring wasp, should I be crushed to pieces on the next instant!"

"I know thy trusty spirit," said the king, "and the pleasure which, like other good men, thou dost find in the discharge of thy duty, since virtue, as the schoolmen say, is its own reward. But away, and prepare the priests, for the victim approaches."

"Would you have it done in your own presence, my gracious liege?" said Tristan.

Louis declined this offer; but charged the provost-marshal to have everything ready for the punctual execution of his commands the moment the astrologer left his apartment; "for," said the king, "I will see the villain once more, just to observe how he bears himself towards the master whom he has led into the toils. I shall love to see the sense of approaching death strike the colour from that ruddy cheek, and dim that eye which laughed as it lied—O, that there were but another with him, whose counsels aided his prognostications! But if I survive this—look to your scarlet, my lord cardinal! for Rome shall scarce protect you—be it spoken under favour of Saint Peter and the blessed Lady of Clery, who is all over mercy.—Why do you tarry? Go get your grooms ready. I expect the villain instantly. I pray to Heaven he take not fear and come not!—that were indeed a baulk. Begone, Tristan—thou wert not wont to be so slow when business was to be done."

"On the contrary, an it like your majesty, you were ever wont to say that I was too fast, and mistook your purpose, and did the job on the wrong subject. Now, please your majesty to give me a sign, just when you part with Galeotti for the night, whether the business goes on or no. I have known your majesty once or twice change your mind, and blame me for over-dispatch."

"Thou suspicious creature," answered King Louis, "I tell thee I will *not* change my mind;—

but, to silence thy remonstrances, observe, if I say to the knave at parting, 'There is a Heaven above us!' then let the business go on; but if I say, 'Go in peace,' you will understand that my purpose is altered."

"My head is somewhat of the dullest out of my own department," said Tristan l'Hermite. "Stay, let me rehearse—If you bid him depart in peace, I am to have him dealt upon?"

"No, no—idiot, no," said the king; "in that case, you let him pass free. But if I say, '*There is a Heaven above us*;' up with him a yard or two nearer the planets he is so conversant with."

"I wish we may have the means here," said the provost.

"Then *up* with him or *down* with him, it matters not which," answered the king, grimly smiling.

"And the body," said the provost, "how shall we dispose of it?"

"Let me see an instant," said the king—"the windows of the hall are too narrow; but that projecting oriel is wide enough. We will over with him into the Somme, and put a paper on his breast, with the legend, 'Let the justice of the king pass toll-free.' The duke's officers may seize it for duties if they dare."

The provost-marshal left the apartment of Louis, and summoned his two assistants to council in an embrasure in the great hall, where Trois-Éschelles stuck a torch against the wall to give them light. They discoursed in whispers, little noticed by Oliver le Dain, who seemed sunk in dejection, and Le Balafre, who was fast asleep.

"Comrades," said the provost to his executioners, "perhaps you have thought that our vocation was over, or that, at least, we were more likely to be the subjects of the duty of others, than to have any more to discharge on our own parts. But courage, my mates! our gracious master has reserved for us one noble cast of our office, and it must be gallantly executed, as by men who would live in history."

"Ay, I guess how it will be," said Trois-Éschelles; "our patron is like the old Kaisers of Rome, who, when things came to an extremity, or, as we would say, to the ladder-foot with them, were wont to select from their own ministers of justice some experienced person, who might spare their sacred persons from the awkward attempts of a novice or blunderer in our mystery. It was a pretty custom for Ethnics; but, as a good catholic, I should make scruple at laying hands on the most christian king."

"Nay, but, brother, you are ever too scrupulous," said Petit-André. "If he issues word and warrant for his own execution, I see not how we can in duty dispute it. He that dwells at Rome must obey the pope—the marshal's-men must do their master's bidding, and he the king's."

"Hush, you knaves!" said the provost-marshal, "there is here no purpose concerning the king's person, but only that of the Greek heretic pagan and Mahomedan wisard, Martius Galeotti."

"Galeotti!" answered Petit-André; "that comes quite natural. I never knew one of these legerdemain fellows, who pass their life, as one may say, in dancing upon a tight rope, but what they came at length to caper at the end of one—*tchick*."

"My only concern is," said Trois-Éschelles, looking upwards, "that the poor creature must die without confession."

"Tush! tush!" said the provost-marshal, in reply, "he is a rank heretic and necromancer—a whole college of priests could not absolve him from the doom he has deserved. Besides, if he hath a fancy that way, thou hast a gift, Trois-Éschelles, to serve him for ghostly father thyself. But, what is more material, I fear you must use your poniards, my mates; for you have not here the fitting conveniences for the exercise of your profession."

"Now, our Lady of the isle of Paris forbid," said Trois-Éschelles, "that the king's command should find me destitute of my tools! I always wear around my body Saint Francis's cord, doubled four times, with a handsome loop at the further end of it; for I am of the company of Saint Francis, and may wear his cowl when I am in *extremis*—I thank God and the good fathers of Saumur."

"And for me," said Petit-André, "I have always in my budget a handy block and sheaf, or a pulley, as they call it, with a strong screw for securing it where I list, in case we should travel where trees are scarce, or high-branched from the ground. I have found it a great convenience."

"That will suit us well," said the provost-marshal; "you have but to screw your pulley into yonder beam above the door, and pass the rope over it. I will keep the fellow in some conversation near the spot until you adjust the noose under his chin, and then"—

"And then we run up the rope," said Petit-André, "and, *tchick*, our astrologer is so far in heaven, that he hath not a foot on earth."

"But these gentlemen," said Trois-Éschelles, looking towards the chimney, "do not these help, and so take a handsell of our vocation?"

"Hem! no," answered the provost; "the barber only contrives mischief, which he leaves other men to execute; and for the Scot, he keeps the door when the deed is a-doing, which he hath not spirit or quickness sufficient to partake in more actively—every one to his trade."

With infinite dexterity, and even a sort of delight which sweetened the sense of their own precarious situation, the worthy executioners of the provost's mandates adapted their rope and pulley for putting in force the sentence which had been uttered against Galeotti by the captive monarch—seeming to rejoice that that last action was to be one so consistent with their past life. Tristan l'Hermite sat eyeing their proceedings with a species of satisfaction; while Oliver paid no attention to them whatever; and Ludovic Lesly, if, awaked by the bustle, he looked upon them at all, considered them as engaged in matters entirely unconnected with his own duty, and for which he was not to be regarded as responsible in one way or other.

CHAPTER XXIX.

RECRIMINATION.

Thy time is not yet out—the devil thou servest
Has not as yet deserted thee. He aids
The friends who drudge for him, as the blind man
Was aided by the guide, who lent his shoulder
O'er rough and smooth, until he reach'd the brink
Of the fell precipice—then hurl'd him downward.

Old Play.

WHEN obeying the command, or rather the request, of Louis,—for he was in circumstances in which, though a monarch, he could only *request* Le Glorieux to go in search of Martius Galeotti,—the jester had no trouble in executing his commission, betaking himself at once to the best tavern in Peronne, of which he himself was rather more than an occasional frequenter, being a great admirer of that species of liquor which reduced all other men's brains to a level with his own.

He found, or rather observed, the astrologer in the corner of the public drinking-room—a stove, as it is called in German and Flemish—sitting in close colloquy with a female in a singular, and something like a Moorish or Asiatic garb, who, as Le Glorieux approached Martius, rose as in the act to depart.

"These," said the stranger, "are news upon which you may with absolute certainty rely;" and with that disappeared among the crowd of guests who sat grouped at different tables in the apartment.

"Cousin philosopher," said the jester, presenting himself, "Heaven no sooner relieves one sentinel than it sends another to supply the place. One fool being gone, here I come another, to guide you to the apartments of Louis of France."

"And art thou the messenger?" said Martius, gazing on him with prompt apprehension, and discovering at once the jester's quality, though less intimated, as we have before noticed, than was usual, by his external appearance.

"Ay, sir, and like your learning," answered Le Glorieux; "when Power sends Folly to entreat the approach of Wisdom, 'tis a sure sign what foot the patient halts upon."

"How if I refuse to come, when summoned at so late an hour by such a messenger?" said Galeotti.

"In that case, we will consult your ease, and carry you," said Le Glorieux. "Here are half a score of stout Burgundian yeomen at the door, with whom He of Crevecoeur has furnished me to that effect. For know, that my friend Charles of Burgundy and I have not taken away our kinsman Louis's crown, which he was ass enough to put into our power, but have only filed and clipt it a little; and, though reduced to the size of a spangle, it is still pure gold. In plain terms, he is still paramount over his own people, yourself included, and most christian king of the old dining-hall in the Castle of Peronne, to which you, as his liege subject, are presently obliged to repair."

"I attend you, sir," said Martius Galeotti, and accompanied Le Glorieux accordingly—seeing, perhaps, that no evasion was possible.

"Ay, sir," said the fool, as they went towards the

castle, "you do well—for we treat our kinsman as men use an old famished lion in his cage, and thrust him now and then a calf to mumble with his old jaws."

"Do you mean," said Martius, "that the king intends me bodily injury?"

"Nay, that you can guess better than I," said the jester; "for, though the night be cloudy, I warrant you can see the stars through the mist. I know nothing of the matter, not I—only my mother always told me to go warily near an old rat in a trap, for he was never so much disposed to bite."

The astrologer asked no more questions, and Le Glorieux, according to the custom of those of his class, continued to run on in a wild and disordered strain of sarcasm and folly mixed together, until he delivered the philosopher to the guard at the castle-gate of Peronne, where he was passed from warder to warder, and at length admitted within Herbert's Tower.

The hints of the jester had not been lost on Martius Galeotti, and he saw something which seemed to confirm them in the look and manner of Tristan, whose mode of addressing him, as he marshaled him to the king's bed-chamber, was lowering, sullen, and ominous. A close observer of what passed on earth, as well as among the heavenly bodies—the pulley and the rope also caught the astrologer's eye; and as the latter was in a state of vibration, he concluded that some one who had been busy adjusting it had been interrupted in the work by his sudden arrival. All this he saw, and summoned together his subtlety to evade the impending danger, resolved, should he find that impossible, to defend himself to the last against whosoever should assail him.

Thus resolved, and with a step and look corresponding to the determination he had taken, Martius presented himself before Louis, alike unabashed at the miscarriage of his predictions, and undismayed at the monarch's anger and its probable consequences.

"Every good planet be gracious to your majesty!" said Galeotti, with an inclination almost oriental in manner—"every evil constellation withhold their influences from my royal master!"

"Methinks," replied the king, "that when you look around this apartment, when you think where it is situated and how guarded, your wisdom might consider that my propitious stars had proved faithless, and that each evil conjunction had already done its worst. Art thou not ashamed, Martius Galeotti, to see me here, and a prisoner, when you recollect by what assurances I was lured hither?"

"And art *thou* not ashamed, my royal sire," replied the philosopher, "thou, whose step in science was so forward, thy apprehensions so quick, thy perseverance so unceasing—art *thou* not ashamed to turn from the first frown of fortune, like a craven from the first clash of arms? Didst thou propose to become participant of those mysteries which raise men above the passions, the mischances, the pains, the sorrows of life—a state only to be attained by rivaling the firmness of the ancient stoic, and dost thou shrink from the first pressure of adversity, and forfeit the glorious prize for which thou didst

start as a competitor, frightened out of the course, like a scared racer, by shadowy and unreal evils?"

"Shadowy and unreal! frontless as thou art!" exclaimed the king, "is this dungeon unreal?—the weapons of the guards of my detested enemy Burgundy, which you may hear clash at the gate, are those shadows?—What, traitor, *are* real evils, if imprisonment, dethronement, and danger of life, are not so?"

"Ignorance—ignorance, my brother, and prejudice," answered the sage, with great firmness, "are the only real evils. Believe me, that kings in the plenitude of power, if immersed in ignorance and prejudice, are less free than sages in a dungeon, and loaded with material chains. Towards this true happiness it is mine to guide you—be it yours to attend to my instructions."

"And it is to such philosophical freedom that your lessons would have guided me?" said the king, very bitterly. "I would you had told me at Plessis, that the dominion promised me so liberally was an empire over my own passions; that the success of which I was assured, related to my progress in philosophy; and that I might become as wise and as learned as a strolling mountebank of Italy, at the pitiful price of forfeiting the fairest crown in Christendom, and becoming tenant of a dungeon in Peronne! Go, sir, and think not to escape condign punishment—*There is a Heaven above us!*"

"I leave you not to your fate," replied Martius, "until I have vindicated, even in your own eyes, darkened as they are, that reputation, a brighter gem than the brightest in thy crown, and at which the world shall wonder, ages after all the race of Capet are mouldered into oblivion in the charnels of Saint Denis."

"Speak on," said Louis; "thine impudence cannot make me change my purposes or my opinion—Yet as I may never again pass judgment as a king, I will not censure thee unheard. Speak, then—though the best thou canst say will be to speak the truth. Confess that I am a dupe, thou an impostor, thy pretended science a dream, and the planets which shine above us as little influential of our destiny, as their shadows, when reflected in the river, are capable of altering its course."

"And how know'st thou," answered the astrologer, boldly, "the secret influence of yonder blessed lights? Speak'st thou of their inability to influence waters, when yet thou knowest that even the weakest, the moon herself,—weakest because nearest to this wretched earth of ours—holds under her domination, not such poor streams as the Somme, but the tides of the mighty ocean itself, which ebb and increase as her disk waxes and wanes, and watch her influence as a slave waits the nod of a sultana? And now, Louis of Valois, answer my parable in turn—Confess, art thou not like the foolish passenger, who becomes wroth with his pilot because he cannot bring the vessel into harbour, without experiencing occasionally the adverse force of winds and currents? I could indeed point to thee the probable issue of thine enterprise as prosperous, but it was in the power of Heaven alone to conduct thee thither; and if the path be rough and dangerous, was it in my power to smooth or render it more safe?"

Where is thy wisdom of yesterday, which taught thee so truly to discern that the ways of destiny are often ruled to our advantage, though in opposition to our wishes?"

"You remind me—you remind me," said the king, hastily, "of one specific falsehood. You foretold, yonder Scot should accomplish his enterprise fortunately for my interest and honour; and thou knowest it has so terminated, that no more mortal injury could I have received, than from the impression which the issue of that affair is like to make on the excited brain of the Mad Bull of Burgundy. This is a direct falsehood—Thou canst plead no evasion here—canst refer to no remote favourable turn of the tide, for which, like an idiot sitting on the bank until the river shall pass away, thou wouldst have me wait contentedly.—Here thy craft deceived thee—Thou wert weak enough to make a specific prediction, which has proved directly false."

"Which will prove most firm and true," answered the astrologer, boldly. "I would desire no greater triumph of art over ignorance, than that prediction and its accomplishment will afford. I told thee he would be faithful in any honourable commission—Hath he not been so?—I told thee he would be scrupulous in aiding any evil enterprise—Hath he not proved so? If you doubt it, go ask the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin."

The king here coloured deeply with shame and anger.

"I told thee," continued the astrologer, "that the conjunction of planets under which he set forth augured danger to the person—and hath not his path been beset by danger?—I told thee, that it augured an advantage to the sender,—and of that thou wilt soon have the benefit."

"Soon have the benefit!" exclaimed the king; "Have I not the result already, in disgrace and imprisonment?"

"No," answered the astrologer, "the end is not as yet—thine own tongue shall ere long confess the benefit which thou hast received, from the manner in which the messenger bore himself in discharging thy commission."

"This is too—too insolent," said the king, "at once to deceive and to insult—But hence!—think not my wrongs shall be unavenged.—*There is a Heaven above us!*"

Galeotti turned to depart. "Yet stop—thou bearst thine imposture bravely out.—Let me hear your answer to one question, and think ere you speak.—Can thy pretended skill ascertain the hour of thine own death?"

"Only by referring to the fate of another," said Galeotti.

"I understand not thine answer," said Louis.

"Know then, O king," said Martius, "that this only I can tell with certainty concerning mine own death, that it shall take place exactly twenty-four hours before that of your majesty."

"Ha! sayest thou?" said Louis, his countenance again altering.—"Hold—hold—go not—wait one moment.—Saidst thou, my death should follow thine so closely?"

"Within the space of twenty-four hours," repeated Galeotti, firmly, "if there be one sparkle of true divi-

nation in those bright and mysterious intelligences, which speak, though without a tongue.—I wish your majesty good rest."

"Hold—hold—go not," said the king, taking him by the arm, and leading him from the door. "Martius Galeotti, I have been a kind master to thee—enriched thee—made thee my friend—my companion—the instructor of my studies.—Be open with me, I entreat you.—Is there aught in this art of yours in very deed?—Shall this Scot's mission be, in fact, propitious to me?—And is the measure of our lives so very—very nearly matched? Confess, my good Martius, you speak after the trick of your trade—Confess, I pray you, and you shall have no displeasure at my hand. I am in years—a prisoner—likely to be deprived of a kingdom—to one in my condition truth is worth kingdoms, and it is from thee, dearest Martius, that I must look for this inestimable jewel."

"And I have laid it before your majesty," said Galeotti, "at the risk that, in brutal passion, you might turn upon me and rend me."

"Who, I, Galeotti?" replied Louis, mildly; "Alas! thou mistakest me!—Am I not captive,—and should not I be patient, especially since my anger can only show my impotence?—Tell me then in sincerity—Have you fooled me?—Or is your science true, and do you truly report it?"

"Your majesty will forgive me if I reply to you," said Martius Galeotti, "that time only—time and the event, will convince incredulity. It suits ill the place of confidence which I have held at the council-table of the renowned conqueror, Matthias Corvinus of Hungary—nay, in the cabinet of the emperor himself—to reiterate assurances of that which I have advanced as true. If you will not believe me, I can but refer to the course of events. A day, or two days' patience, will prove or disprove what I have averred concerning the young Scot; and I will be contented to die on the wheel, and have my limbs broken joint by joint, if your majesty have not advantage, and that in a most important degree, from the dauntless conduct of that Quentin Durward. But if I were to die under such tortures, it would be well your majesty should seek a ghostly father; for, from the moment my last groan is drawn, only twenty-four hours will remain to you for confession and penitence."

Louis continued to keep hold of Galeotti's robe as he led him towards the door, and pronounced as he opened it, in a loud voice, "To-morrow we'll talk more of this. Go in peace, my learned father—*Go in peace—Go in peace!*"

He repeated these words three times; and, still afraid that the provost-marshal might mistake his purpose, he led the astrologer into the hall, holding fast his robe, as if afraid that he should be torn from him, and put to death before his eyes. He did not unloose his grasp until he had not only repeated again and again the gracious phrase, *Go in peace*, but even made a private signal to the provost-marshal, to enjoin a suspension of all proceedings against the person of the astrologer.

Thus did the possession of some secret information, joined to audacious courage and readiness of wit, save Galeotti from the most imminent danger;

and thus was Louis, the most sagacious, as well as the most vindictive, amongst the monarchs of the period, cheated of his revenge by the influence of superstition upon a selfish temper, and a mind to which, from the consciousness of many crimes, the fear of death was peculiarly terrible.

He felt, however, considerable mortification at being obliged to relinquish his purposed vengeance; and the disappointment seemed to be shared by his satellites, to whom the execution was to have been committed. Le Balafré alone, perfectly indifferent on the subject, so soon as the countermanding signal was given, left the door at which he had posted himself, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

The provost-marshal, as the group reclined themselves to repose in the hall after the king retired to his bed-chamber, continued to eye the goodly form of the astrologer, with the look of a mastiff watching a joint of meat which the cook has retrieved from his jaws, while his attendants communicated to each other in brief sentences their characteristic sentiments.

"The poor blinded necromancer," whispered Trois-Éschelles, with an air of spiritual unction and commiseration, to his comrade, Petit-André, "hath lost the fairest chance of expiating some of his vile sorceries, by dying through means of the cord of the blessed Saint Francis! and I had purpose, indeed, to leave the comfortable noose around his neck, to scare the foul fiend from his unhappy carcase."

"And I," said Petit-André, "have missed the rarest opportunity of knowing how far a weight of seventeen stone will stretch a three-ply cord!—It would have been a glorious experiment in our line, —and the jolly old boy would have died so easily!"

While this whispered dialogue was going forward, Martius, who had taken the opposite side of the huge stone fire-place, round which the whole group was assembled, regarded them askance, and with a look of suspicion. He first put his hand into his vest, and satisfied himself that the handle of a very sharp double-edged poniard, which he always carried about him, was disposed conveniently for his grasp; for, as we have already noticed, he was, though now somewhat unwieldy, a powerful, athletic man, and prompt and active at the use of his weapon. Satisfied that this trusty instrument was in readiness, he next took from his bosom a scroll of parchment, inscribed with Greek characters, and marked with cabalistic signs, drew together the wood in the fire-place, and made a blaze by which he could distinguish the features and attitude of all who sat or lay around—the heavy and deep slumbers of the Scottish soldier, who lay motionless, with his rough countenance as immovable as if it were cast in bronze—the pale and anxious face of Oliver, who at one time assumed the appearance of slumber, and again opened his eyes and raised his head hastily, as if stung by some internal throe, or awakened by some distant sound—the discontented, savage, bulldog aspect of the provost, who looked

——frustrate of his will,

Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill—

while the back-ground was filled up by the ghastly hypocritical countenance of Trois-Éschelles, whose

eyes were cast up towards heaven, as if he was internally saying his devotions; and the grim drollery of Petit-André, who amused himself with mimicking the gestures and wry faces of his comrade before he betook himself to sleep.

Amidst these vulgar and ignoble countenances, nothing could show to greater advantage than the stately form, handsome mien, and commanding features of the astrologer, who might have passed for one of the ancient magi, imprisoned in a den of robbers, and about to invoke a spirit to accomplish his liberation. And, indeed, had he been distinguished by nothing else than the beauty of the graceful and flowing beard which descended over the mysterious roll which he held in his hand, one might have been pardoned regretting that so noble an appendage had been bestowed on him, who put both talents, learning, and the advantages of eloquence, and a majestic person, to the mean purposes of a cheat and an impostor.

Thus passed the night in Count Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. When the first light of dawn penetrated the ancient Gothic chamber, the king summoned Oliver to his presence, who found the monarch sitting in his night-gown, and was astonished at the alteration which one night of mortal anxiety had made in his looks. He would have expressed some anxiety on the subject, but the king silenced him by entering into a statement of the various modes by which he had previously endeavoured to form friends at the Court of Burgundy, and which Oliver was charged to prosecute so soon as he should be permitted to stir abroad.

And never was that wily minister more struck with the clearness of the king's intellect, and his intimate knowledge of all the springs which influence human actions, than he was during that memorable consultation.

About two hours afterwards, Oliver accordingly obtained permission from the Count of Crevecœur to go out and execute the commissions which his master had entrusted him with; and Louis, sending for the astrologer, in whom he seemed to have renewed his faith, held with him, in like manner, a long consultation, the issue of which appeared to give him more spirits and confidence than he had at first exhibited; so that he dressed himself, and received the morning compliments of Crevecœur with a calmness, at which the Burgundian lord could not help wondering, the rather that he had already heard that the duke had passed several hours in a state of mind which seemed to render the king's safety very precarious.

CHAPTER XXX.

UNCERTAINTY.

Our counsels waver like the unsteady bark,
That reels amid the strife of meeting currents.

Old Play.

If the night passed by Louis was carefully anxious and agitated, that spent by the Duke of Burgundy, who had at no time the same mastery over his passions, and, indeed, who permitted them almost a

free and uncontrolled dominion over his actions, was still more disturbed.

According to the custom of the period, two of his principal and most favoured counsellors, Hymbercourt and d'Argenton, shared his bed-chamber, couches being prepared for them near the bed of the prince. Their attendance was never more necessary than upon this night, when, distracted by sorrow, by passion, by the desire of revenge, and by the sense of honour, which forbade him to exercise it upon Louis in his present condition, the duke's mind resembled a volcano in eruption, which throws forth all the different contents of the mountain, mingled and molten into one mass.

He refused to throw off his clothes, or to make any preparation for sleep; but spent the night in a violent succession of the most strong passions. In some paroxysms he talked incessantly to his attendants so thick and so rapidly, that they were really afraid his senses would give way; chusing for his theme, the merits and the kindness of heart of the murdered Bishop of Liege, and recalling all the instances of mutual kindness, affection, and confidence, which had passed between them, until he had worked himself into such a transport of grief, that he threw himself upon his face in the bed, and seemed ready to choke with the sobs and tears which he endeavoured to stifle. Then starting from the couch, he gave vent at once to another and more furious mood, and traversed the room hastily, uttering incoherent threats, and still more incoherent oaths of vengeance, while, stamping with his foot, according to his customary action, he invoked Saint George, Saint Andrew, and whomever else he held most holy, to bear witness, that he would take bloody vengeance on De la Marck, on the people of Liege, and on him who was the author of the whole. —These last threats, uttered more obscurely than the others, obviously concerned the person of the king; and at one time the duke expressed his determination to send for the Duke of Normandy, the brother of the king, and with whom Louis was on the worst terms, in order to compel the captive monarch to surrender either the crown itself, or some of its most valuable rights and appanages.

Another day and night passed in the same stormy and fitful deliberations, or rather rapid transitions of passion; for the duke scarcely eat or drank, never changed his dress, and, altogether, demeaned himself like one in whom rage might terminate in utter insanity. By degrees he became more composed, and began to hold, from time to time, consultations with his ministers, in which much was proposed, but nothing resolved upon. Comines assures us, that at one time a courier was mounted in readiness to depart for the purpose of summoning the Duke of Normandy; and in that event, the prison of the deposed monarch would probably have been found, as in similar cases, a brief road to his grave.

At other times, when Charles had exhausted his fury, he sat with his features fixed in stern and rigid immobility, like one who broods over some desperate deed, to which he is as yet unable to work up his resolution. And unquestionably it would have needed little more than an insidious hint from any of the counsellors who attended his person, to

have pushed the duke to some very desperate action. But the nobles of Burgundy, from the sacred character attached to the person of a king, and a lord paramount, and from a regard to the public faith, as well as that of their duke, which had been pledged when Louis threw himself into their power, were almost unanimously inclined to recommend moderate measures; and the arguments which Hymbercourt, and d'Argenton had now and then ventured to insinuate during the night, were, in the cooler hours of the next morning, advanced and urged by Crevecœur and others. Possibly their zeal in behalf of the king might not be entirely disinterested. Many, as we have mentioned, had already experienced the bounty of the king; others had either estates or pretensions in France, which placed them a little under his influence; and it is certain that the treasure, which had loaded four mules when the king entered Peronne, became much lighter in the course of these negotiations.

In the course of the third day, the Count of Campo-basso brought his Italian wit to assist the counsels of Charles; and well was it for Louis, that he had not arrived when the duke was in his first fury. Immediately on his arrival, a regular meeting of the duke's counsellors was convened, for considering the measures to be adopted in this singular crisis.

On this occasion, Campo-basso gave his opinion, couched in the apologue of the Traveller, the Adder, and the Fox; and reminded the duke of the advice which Reynard gave to the man, that he should crush his mortal enemy, now that chance had placed his fate at his disposal. D'Argenton, who saw the duke's eyes sparkle at a proposal which his own violence of temper had already repeatedly suggested, hastened to state the possibility, that Louis might not be, in fact, so directly accessory to the sanguinary action which had been committed at Schouwaldt; that he might be able to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge, and perhaps to make other atonement for the distractions which his intrigues had occasioned in the duke's dominions, and those of his allies; and that an act of violence perpetrated on the king, was sure to bring both on France and Burgundy a train of most unhappy consequences, among which not the least to be feared was, that the English might avail themselves of the commotions and civil discord which must needs ensue, to repossess themselves of Normandy and Guyenne, and renew those dreadful wars, which had only, and with difficulty, been terminated by the union of both France and Burgundy against the common enemy. Finally, he confessed, that he did not mean to urge the absolute and free dismissal of Louis; but only, that the duke should avail himself no farther of his present condition, than merely to establish a fair and equitable treaty between the countries, with such security on the king's part, as should make it difficult for him to break his faith, or disturb the internal peace of Burgundy in future. Hymbercourt, Crevecœur, and others, signified their reprobation of the violent measures proposed by Campo-basso, and their opinion, that in the way of treaty more permanent advantages could be obtained, and in a manner more honourable for Bur-

gundy, than by an action which would stain her with a breach of faith and hospitality.

The duke listened to these arguments with his looks fixed on the ground, and his brows so knitted together as to bring his bushy eye-brows into one mass. But when Crevecœur proceeded to say, that he did not believe Louis either knew of, or was accessory to, the atrocious act of violence committed at Schonwaldt, Charles raised his head, and darting a fierce look at his counsellor, exclaimed, "Have you, too, Crevecœur, heard the gold of France clink?—Methinks it rings in my councils as merrily as ever the bells of Saint Denis—Dare any one say that Louis is not the fomentor of these feuds in Flanders?"

"My gracious lord," said Crevecœur, "my hand has ever been more conversant with steel than with gold; and so far am I from holding that Louis is free from the charge of having caused the disturbances in Flanders, that it is not long since, in the face of his whole court, I charged him with that breach of faith, and offered him defiance in your name. But although his intrigues have been doubtless the original cause of these commotions, I am so far from believing that he authorized the death of the archbishop, that I believe one of his emissaries publicly protested against it; and I could produce the man, were it your grace's pleasure to see him."

"It is our pleasure," said the duke. "Saint George! can you doubt that we desire to act justly?—Even in the highest flight of our passion, we are known for an upright and a just judge. We will see France ourself—we will ourself charge him with our wrongs, and ourself state to him the reparation which we expect and demand. If he shall be found guiltless of this murder, the atonement for other crimes may be more easy;—if he hath been guilty, who shall say that a life of penitence in some retired monastery were not a most deserved and a most merciful doom?—Who," he added, kindling as he spoke—"who shall dare to blame a revenge yet more direct and more speedy? Let your witness attend—we will to the castle at the hour before noon. Some articles we will minute down with which he shall comply, or woe on his head! Break up the council and dismiss yourselves. I will but change my dress, as this is scarce a fitting trim in which to wait on my *most gracious sovereign*."

With a deep and bitter emphasis on the last expression, the duke arose, and strode out of the room.

"Louis's safety, and, what is worse, the honour of Burgundy, depend on a cast of the dice," said Hymbercourt to Crevecœur and to d'Argenton—"Haste thee to the castle, d'Argenton—thou hast a better filed tongue than either Crevecœur or I. Explain to Louis what storm is approaching—he will best know how to pilot himself. I trust this lifeguards-man will say nothing which can aggravate; for who knows what may have been the secret commission with which he was charged?"

"The young man," said Crevecœur, "seems bold, yet prudent and wary far beyond his years. In all which he said to me he was tender of the king's character, as of that of the prince whom he serves. I trust he will be equally so in the duke's

presence. I must go seek him, and also the young Countess of Croye."

"The countess!—you told us you had left her at Saint Bridget's nunnery."

"Ay, but I was obliged," said the count, "to send for her express, by the duke's orders; and she has been brought hither on a litter, as being unable to travel otherwise. She was in a state of the deepest distress, both on account of the uncertainty of the fate of her kinswoman, the Lady Hameline, and the gloom which overhangs her own; guilty as she has been of a feudal delinquency, in withdrawing herself from the protection of her liège lord Duke Charles, who is not the person in the world most likely to view with indifference what trenches on his seignorial rights."

The information that the young countess was in the hands of Charles, added fresh and more pointed thorns to Louis's reflections. He was conscious that, by explaining the intrigues by which he had induced the Lady Hameline and her to resort to Plessis-les-Tours, she might supply that evidence which he had removed by the execution of Zamet Maugrabin; and he knew well how much such proof of his having interfered with the rights of the Duke of Burgundy, would furnish both motive and pretext for Charles's availing himself to the uttermost of his present predicament.

Louis discoursed on these matters with great anxiety to the Sieur d'Argenton, whose acute and political talents better suited the king's temper than the blunt martial character of Crevecœur, or the feudal haughtiness of d'Hymbercourt.

"These iron-handed soldiers, my good friend Commines," he said to his future historian, "should never enter a king's cabinet, but be left with the halberts and partizans in the ante-chamber. Their hands are indeed made for our use, but the monarch who puts their heads to any better occupation than that of anvils for his enemies' swords and maces, ranks with the fool who presented his mistress with a dog-leash for a carcanet. It is with such as thou, Philip, whose eyes are gifted with the quick and keen sense that sees beyond the exterior surface of affairs, that princes should share their council-table, their cabinet—what do I say?—the most secret recesses of their soul."

D'Argenton, himself so keen a spirit, was naturally gratified with the approbation of the most sagacious prince in Europe; and he could not so far disguise his internal satisfaction, that Louis was not aware that he had made some impression on him.

"I would," continued he, "that I had such a servant, or rather that I were worthy to have one! I had not then been in this unfortunate situation; which, nevertheless, I should hardly regret, could I but discover any means of securing the services of so experienced a statist."

D'Argenton said, that all his faculties, such as they were, were at the service of his most christian majesty, saving always his allegiance to his rightful lord, Duke Charles of Burgundy.

"And am I one who would seduce you from that allegiance?" said Louis, pathetically. "Alas! am I not now endangered by having reposed too much confidence in my vassal? and can the cause of

feudal good faith be more sacred with any than with me, whose safety depends on an appeal to it?—No, Philip des Comines—continue to serve Charles of Burgundy; and you will best serve him, by bringing round a fair accommodation with Louis of France. In doing this, you will serve us both, and one, at least, will be grateful. I am told your appointments in this court hardly match those of the grand falconer; and thus the services of the wisest counsellor in Europe are put on a level, or rather ranked below those of a fellow who feeds and physics kites! France has wide lands—her king has much gold. Allow me, my friend, to rectify this scandalous inequality. The means are not distant—Permit me to use them.”

The king produced a weighty bag of money; but Comines, more delicate in his sentiments than most courtiers of that time, declined the proffer, declaring himself perfectly satisfied with the liberality of his native prince, and assuring Louis that his desire to serve him could not be increased by the acceptance of any such gratuity as he had proposed.

“Singular man!” exclaimed the king; “let me embrace the only courtier of his time, at once capable and incorruptible. Wisdom is to be desired more than fine gold; and believe me, I trust in thy kindness, Philip, at this pinch, more than I do in the purchased assistance of many who have received my gifts. I know you will not counsel your master to abuse such an opportunity, as fortune, and to speak plain, Des Comines, as my own folly has afforded him.”

“To *abuse* it, by no means,” answered d’Argenton; “but most certainly to *use* it.”

“How, and in what degree?” said Louis. “I am not ass enough to expect that I shall escape without some ransom—but let it be a reasonable one—reason I am ever willing to listen to—at Paris or at Plessis, equally as at Peronne.”

“Ah, but if it like your majesty,” replied Des Comines, “Reason at Paris or Plessis was used to speak in so low and soft a tone of voice, that she could not always gain an audience of your majesty—at Peronne, she borrows the speaking-trumpet of necessity, and her voice becomes lordly and imperative.”

“You are figurative,” said Louis, unable to restrain an emotion of peevishness; “I am a plain man, Sir of Argenton. I pray you leave your tropes, and come to plain ground. What does your duke expect of me?”

“I am the bearer of no propositions, my lord,” said Des Comines; “the duke will soon explain his own pleasure; but some things occur to me as proposals, for which your majesty ought to hold yourself prepared. As, for example, the final cession of these towns here upon the Somme.”

“I expected so much,” said Louis.

“That you should disown the Liegeois, and William de la Marck.”

“As willingly as I disclaim Hell and Satan,” said Louis.

“Ample security will be required, by hostages, or occupation of fortresses, or otherwise, that France shall in future abstain from stirring up rebellion among the Flemings.”

“It is something new,” answered the king, “that a vassal should demand pledges from his sovereign; but let that pass too.”

“A suitable and independent appanage for your illustrious brother, the ally and friend of my master—Normandy or Champagne. The duke loves your father’s house, my liege.”

“So well,” answered Louis, “that, *mort Dieu!* he’s about to make them all kings.—Is your budget of hints yet emptied?”

“Not entirely,” answered the counsellor: “it will certainly be required that your majesty will forbear molesting, as you have done of late, the Duke de Bretagne, and that you will no longer contest the right which he and other grand feudatories have, to strike money, to term themselves dukes and princes by the grace of God”——

“In a word, to make so many kings of my vassals. Sir Philip, would you make a fratricide of me?—You remember well my brother Charles—he was no sooner Duke of Guyenne than he died.—And what will be left to the descendants of Charlemagne, after giving away these rich provinces, save to smear themselves with oil at Rheims, and to eat their dinner under a high canopy!”

“We will diminish your majesty’s concern on that score, by giving you a companion in that solitary exaltation,” said Philip des Comines.—“The Duke of Burgundy, though he claims not at present the title of an independent king, desires nevertheless to be freed in future from the abject marks of subjection required of him to the crown of France;—it is his purpose to close his ducal coronet with an imperial arch, and surmount it with a globe, in emblem that his dominions are independent.”

“And how dares the Duke of Burgundy, the sworn vassal of France,” exclaimed Louis, starting up, and showing an unwonted degree of emotion—“how dares he propose such terms to his sovereign, as, by every law of Europe, should infer a forfeiture of his fief?”

“The doom of forfeiture it would in this case be difficult to enforce,” answered d’Argenton, calmly.—“Your majesty is aware, that the strict interpretation of the feudal law is becoming obsolete even in the empire, and that superior and vassal endeavour to mend their situation in regard to each other, as they have power and opportunity.—Your majesty’s interferences with the duke’s vassals in Flanders will prove an exculpation of my master’s conduct, supposing him to insist that, by enlarging his independence, France should in future be debarred from any pretext of doing so.”

“D’Argenton, d’Argenton!” said Louis, arising again, and pacing the room in a pensive manner, “this is a dreadful lesson on the text *Vae victis!*—You cannot mean that the duke will insist on all these hard conditions?”

“At least I would have your majesty be in a condition to discuss them all.”

“Yet moderation, d’Argenton, moderation in success, is—no one knows better than you—necessary to its ultimate advantage.”

“So please your majesty, the merit of moderation is, I have observed, most apt to be extolled by the losing party. The winner holds in more esteem the

prudence which calls on him not to leave an opportunity unimproved."

"Well, we will consider"—replied the king; "but at least thou hast reached the extremity of your duke's unreasonable exaction? there can remain nothing—or if there does, for so thy brow intimates—what is it—what indeed can it be—unless it be my crown? which these previous demands, if granted, will deprive of all its lustre!"

"My lord," said d'Argenton, "what remains to be mentioned, is a thing partly—indeed in a great measure—within the duke's own power, though he means to invite your majesty's accession to it, for in truth it touches you nearly."

"*Pasques-Dieu!*" exclaimed the king impatiently, "what is it?—Speak out, Sir Philip,—am I to send him my daughter for a concubine, or what other dishonour is he to put on me?"

"No dishonour, my liege; but your majesty's cousin, the illustrious Duke of Orleans"—

"Ha!" exclaimed the king; but d'Argenton proceeded without heeding the interruption.

"—having conferred his affections on the young Countess Isabelle de Croye, the duke expects your majesty will, on your part, as he on his, yield your assent to the marriage, and unite with him in endowing the right noble couple with such an appanage, as, joined to the countess's estates, may form a fit establishment for a child of France."

"Never, never!"—said the king, bursting out into that emotion which he had of late suppressed with much difficulty, and striding about in a disordered haste, which formed the strongest contrast to the self-command which he usually exhibited,—
"Never, never!—let them bring scissars, and shear my hair like that of the parish-fool, whom I have so richly resembled! let them bid the monastery or the grave yawn for me! let them bring red-hot basins to sear my eyes—axe or aconite—whatever they will—but Orleans shall not break his plighted faith to my daughter, or marry another while she lives!"

"Your majesty," said d'Argenton, "ere you set your mind so keenly against what is proposed, will consider your own want of power to prevent it. Every wise man, when he sees a rock giving way, withdraws from the bootless attempt of preventing the fall."

"But a brave man," said Louis, "will at least find his grave beneath it.—D'Argenton, consider the great loss—the utter destruction, such a marriage will bring upon my kingdom. Recollect, I have but one feeble boy, and this Orleans is the next heir—consider that the church hath consented to his union with Joan, which unites so happily the interests of both branches of my family,—think on all this, and think too that this union has been the favourite scheme of my whole life—that I have schemed for it, fought for it, watched for it, prayed for it,—and sinned for it. Philip des Comines, I will not forego it! Think, man, think!—pity me in this extremity—thy quick brain can speedily find some substitute for this sacrifice—some ram to be offered up instead of that which is dear to me as the Patriarch's only son was to him. Philip, pity me!—you, at least, should know, that to men of judg-

ment and foresight, the destruction of the scheme on which they have long dwelt, and for which they have long toiled, is more inexpressibly bitter than the transient grief of ordinary men, whose pursuits are but the gratification of some temporary passion—you, who know how to sympathize with the deeper, the more genuine distress of baffled prudence and disappointed sagacity,—will you not feel for me?"

"My lord and king!" replied d'Argenton. "I do sympathize with your distress, in so far as duty to my master"—

"Do not mention him!" said Louis, acting, or at least appearing to act, under an irresistible and headlong impulse, which withdrew the usual guard which he maintained over his language—"Charles of Burgundy is unworthy of your attachment. He who can insult and strike his councillors—he who can distinguish the wisest and most faithful among them, by the opprobrious name of Booted-head!"—

The wisdom of Philip des Comines did not prevent his having a high sense of personal consequence; and he was so much struck with the words which the king uttered, as it were, in the career of a passion which overleaped ceremony, that he could only reply by repetition of the words "Booted-head! It is impossible that my master the duke could have so termed the servant who has been at his side since he could mount a palfrey—and that too before a foreign monarch!—it is impossible!"

Louis instantly saw the impression he had made, and avoiding alike a tone of condolence, which might have seemed insulting, and one of sympathy, which might have savoured of affectation, he said, with simplicity, and at the same time with dignity, "My misfortunes make me forget my courtesy, else I had not spoken to you of what it must be unpleasant for you to hear. But you have in reply taxed me with having uttered impossibilities—this touches my honour; yet I must submit to the charge, if I tell you not the circumstances which the duke, laughing until his eyes ran over, assigned for the origin of that opprobrious name, which I will not offend your ears by repeating. Thus, then, it chanced. You, Sir Philip des Comines, were at a hunting-match with the Duke of Burgundy, your master, and when he alighted after the chase, he required your services in drawing off his boots. Reading in your looks, perhaps, some natural resentment of this disparaging treatment, he ordered you to sit down in turn, and rendered you the same office he had just received from you. But offended at your understanding him literally, he no sooner plucked one of your boots off, than he brutally beat it about your head till the blood flowed, exclaiming against the insolence of a subject, who had the presumption to accept of such a service at the hand of his sovereign; and hence he, or his privileged fool Le Glorieux, is in the current habit of distinguishing you by the absurd and ridiculous name of *Tête-bottée*, which makes one of the duke's most ordinary subjects of pleasantry."

While Louis thus spoke, he had the double pleasure of galling to the quick the person whom he addressed—an exercise which it was in his nature to enjoy, even where he had not, as in the present case, the apology, that he did so in pure retaliation,

—and that of observing that he had at length been able to find a point in d'Argenton's character which might lead him gradually from the interests of Burgundy to those of France. But although the deep resentment which the offended courtier entertained against his master induced him at a future period to exchange the service of Charles for that of Louis, yet, at the present moment, he was contented to throw out only some general hints of his friendly inclination towards France, which he well knew the king would understand how to interpret. And indeed it would be unjust to stigmatize the memory of the excellent historian with desertion of his master on this occasion, although he was certainly now possessed with sentiments much more favourable to Louis than when he entered the apartment.

He constrained himself to laugh at the anecdote which Louis had detailed, and then added, "I did not think so trifling a frolic would have dwelt on the mind of the duke so long as to make it worth telling again. Some such passage there was of drawing off boots and the like, as your majesty knows that the duke is fond of rude play; but it has been much exaggerated in his recollection. Let it pass on."

"Ay, *let it pass on*," said the king; "it is indeed shame it should have detained us a minute. And now, Sir Philip, I hope you are French so far as to afford me your best counsel in these difficult affairs. You have, I am well aware, the clew to the labyrinth, if you would but impart it."

"Your majesty may command my best advice and service," replied d'Argenton, "under reservation always of my duty to my own master."

This was nearly what the courtier had before stated; but he now repeated it in a tone so different, that whereas Louis understood from the former declaration, that the reserved duty to Burgundy was the prime thing to be considered, so he now saw clearly that the emphasis was reversed, and that more weight was now given by the speaker to his promise of counsel, than to a restriction which seemed interposed for the sake of form and consistency. The king resumed his own seat, and compelled d'Argenton to sit by him, listening at the same time to that statesman, as if the words of an oracle sounded in his ears. D'Argenton spoke in that low and impressive tone, which implies at once great sincerity and some caution, and at the same time so slowly, as if he was desirous that the king should weigh and consider each individual word as having its own peculiar and determined meaning. "The things," he said, "which I have suggested for your majesty's consideration, harsh as they sound in your ear, are but substitutes for still more violent proposals brought forward in the duke's councils, by those who are more hostile to your majesty. And I need scarce remind your majesty, that the more direct and more violent suggestions find readiest acceptance with our master, who loves brief and dangerous measures better than those that are safe, but at the same time circuitous."

"I remember"—said the king, "I have seen him swim a river at the risk of drowning, though there was a bridge to be found for riding two hundred yards round."

"True, sire; and he that weighs not his life

against the gratification of a moment of impetuous passion, will, on the same impulse, prefer the gratification of his will to the increase of his substantial power."

"Most true," replied the king; "a fool will ever grasp rather at the appearance than the reality of authority. All this I know to be true of Charles of Burgundy. But, my dear friend d'Argenton, what do you infer from these premises?"

"Simply this, my lord," answered d'Argenton, "that as your majesty has seen a skilful angler control a large and heavy fish, and finally draw him to land by a single hair, which fish had broke through a tackle tenfold stronger, had the fisher presumed to strain the line on him, instead of giving him head enough for all his wild flourishes; even so your majesty, by gratifying the duke in those particulars on which he has pitched his ideas of honour, and the gratification of his revenge, may evade many of the other unpalatable propositions at which I have hinted; and which—including, I must state openly to your majesty, some of those through which France would be most especially weakened—will slide out of his remembrance and attention, and, being referred to subsequent conferences and future discussion, may be altogether eluded."

"I understand you, my good Sir Philip; but to the matter," said the king. "To which of those happy propositions is your duke so much wedded, that contradiction will make him unreasonable and untractable?"

"To any or to all of them, if it please your majesty, on which you may happen to contradict him. This is precisely what your majesty must avoid; and to take up my former parable, you must needs remain on the watch, ready to give the duke line enough whenever he shoots away under the impulse of his rage. His fury, already considerably abated, will waste itself if he be unopposed, and you will presently find him become more friendly and more tractable."

"Still," said the king, musing, "there must be some particular demands which lie deeper at my cousin's heart than the other proposals. Were I but aware of these, Sir Philip"—

"Your majesty may make the lightest of his demands the most important, simply by opposing it," said d'Argenton; "nevertheless, my lord, thus far I can say, that every shadow of treaty will be broken off, if your majesty renounce not William de la Marck and the Liegeois."

"I have already said that I will disown them," said the king, "and well they deserve it at my hand; the villains have commenced their uproar at a moment which might have cost me my life."

"He that fires a train of powder," replied d'Argenton, "must expect a speedy explosion of the mine.—But more than mere disavowal of their cause will be expected of your majesty by Duke Charles, for know that he will demand your majesty's assistance to put the insurrection down, and your royal presence to witness the punishment which he destines for the rebels."

"That may scarce consist with our honour, d'Argenton," said the king.

"To refuse it will scarce consist with your majes-

ty's safety," replied Comines. "Charles is determined to show the people of Flanders, that no hope, nay no promise, of assistance from France, will save them in their mutinies from the wrath and vengeance of Burgundy."

"But, d'Argenton, I will speak plainly," answered the king—"Could we but procrastinate the matter, might not these rogues of Liege make their own part good against Duke Charles? The knaves are numerous and steady—Can they not hold out their town against him?"

"With the help of the thousand archers of France whom your majesty promised them they might have done something; but"—

"Whom I promised them!" said the king—"Alas! good Sir Philip! you much wrong me in saying so."

"But without whom," continued d'Argenton, not heeding the interruption,—“as your majesty will not *now* likely find it convenient to supply them,—what chance will the burghers have in making good their town, in whose walls the large breaches made by Charles after the battle of St Tron are still unrepaired; so that the lances of Hainault, Brabant, and Burgundy, may advance to the attack twenty men in front?"

"The improvident idiots!" said the king—"If they have thus neglected their own safety, they deserve not my protection. Pass on—I will make no quarrel for their sake."

"The next point, I fear, will sit closer to your majesty's heart," said Des Comines.

"Ah!" replied the king, "you mean that infernal marriage! I will not consent to the breach of the contract betwixt my daughter Joan and my cousin of Orleans—it would be wresting the sceptre of France from me and my posterity; for that feeble boy the dauphin is a blighted blossom, which will wither without fruit. This match between Joan and Orleans has been my thought by day, my dream by night—I tell thee, d'Argenton, I cannot give it up!—Besides, it is inhuman to require me, with my own hand, to destroy at once my own scheme of policy, and the happiness of a pair brought up for each other."

"Are they then so much attached?" said d'Argenton.

"One of them at least is," said the king, "and the one for whom I am bound to be most anxious. But you smile, Sir Philip—you are no believer in the force of love."

"Nay," said d'Argenton, "if it please you, sire, I am so little an infidel in that particular, that I was about to ask whether it would reconcile you in any degree to your acquiescing in the proposed marriage betwixt the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle de Croye, were I to satisfy you that the countess's inclinations are so much fixed on another, that it is likely it will never be a match?"

King Louis sighed.—"Alas!" he said, "my good and dear friend, from what sepulchre have you drawn such dead man's comfort? *Her* inclination, indeed!—Why, to speak truth, supposing that Orleans detested my daughter Joan, yet, but for this ill-raveled web of mischance, he must needs have married her; so you may conjecture how little

chance there is of this damsel being able to refuse him under a similar compulsion, and he a child of France besides.—Ah, no, Philip!—little fear of her standing obstinate against the suit of such a lover.—*Varium et mutabile*, Philip."

"Your majesty may, in the present instance, undervalue the obstinate courage of this young lady. She comes of a race determinately wilful; and I have picked out of Crevecœur that she has formed a romantic attachment to a young squire, who, to say truth, rendered her many services on the road."

"Ha!" said the king—"an archer of my guards, by name Quentin Durward?"

"The same, as I think," said d'Argenton; "he was made prisoner along with the countess, traveling almost alone together."

"Now, our Lord and our Lady, and Monseigneur Saint Martin, and Monseigneur Saint Julian, be praised, every one of them!" said the king, "and all laud and honour to the learned Galeotti, who read in the stars that this youth's destiny was connected with mine! If the maiden be so attached to him as to make her refractory to the will of Burgundy, this Quentin hath indeed been rarely useful to me."

"I believe, my lord, in Crevecœur's report that there is some chance of her being sufficiently obstinate; besides, doubtless, the noble duke himself, notwithstanding what your majesty was pleased to hint in way of supposition, will not willingly renounce his fair cousin, to whom he has been long engaged."

"Umph!" answered the king—"But you have never seen my daughter Joan.—An owl, man!—an absolute owl, whom I am ashamed of! But let him be only a wise man, and marry her, I will give him leave to be mad *par amours* for the fairest lady in France.—And now, Philip, have you given me the full map of your master's mind?"

"I have possessed you, sire, of those particulars on which he is at present most disposed to insist. But your majesty well knows that the duke's disposition is like a sweeping torrent, which only passes smoothly forward when its waves encounter no opposition; and what may be presented to chafe him into fury, it is impossible even to guess. Were more distinct evidence of your majesty's practices (pardon the phrase, where there is so little time for ceremony), with the Liegeois and William de la Marck to occur unexpectedly, the issue might be terrible.—There are strange news from that country—they say La Marck hath married Hameline, the elder Countess of Croye."

"That old fool was so mad on marriage, that she would have accepted the hand of Satan," said the king; "but that La Marck, beast as he is, should have married her, rather more surprises me."

"There is a report also," continued Comines, "that an envoy or herald, on La Marck's part, is approaching Peronne;—this is like to drive the duke frantic with rage—I trust that he has no letters, or the like, to show on your majesty's part?"

"Letters to a Wild Boar!" answered the king.—"No, no, Sir Philip, I was no such fool as to cast pearls before swine—What little intercourse I had

with the brute animal was by message, in which I always employed such low-bred slaves and vagabonds, that their evidence would not be received in a trial for robbing a hen-roost."

"I can then only further recommend," said d'Argenton, taking his leave, "that your majesty should remain on your guard, be guided by events, and, above all, avoid using any language or argument with the duke which may better become your dignity than your present condition."

"If my dignity," said the king, "grow troublesome to me,—which it seldom doth while there are deeper interests to think of,—I have a special remedy for that swelling of the heart—It is but looking into a ruinous closet, Sir Philip, and thinking of the death of Charles the Simple; and it cures me as effectually as the cold bath would cool a fever.—And now, my friend and monitor, must thou be gone? Well, Sir Philip, the time must come when thou wilt tire reading lessons of state policy to the Bull of Burgundy, who is incapable of comprehending your most simple argument—If Louis of Valois then lives, thou hast a friend in the court of France. I tell thee, my Philip, it would be a blessing to my kingdom should I ever acquire thee; who, with a profound view of subjects of state, hast also a conscience, capable of feeling and discerning between right and wrong. So help me, our Lord and Lady, and Monseigneur Saint Martin, Oliver and Balue have hearts as hardened as the nether mill-stone; and my life is embittered by remorse and penances for the crimes they make me commit. Thou, Sir Philip, possessed of the wisdom of present and past times, canst teach how to become great without ceasing to be virtuous."

"A hard task, and which few have attained," said the historian; "but which is yet within the reach of princes, who will strive for it. Meantime, sire, be prepared, for the duke will presently confer with you."

Louis looked long after Philip when he left the apartment, and at length burst into a bitter laugh.

"He spoke of fishing—I have sent him home, a trout properly tickled!—And he thinks himself virtuous because he took no bribe, but contented himself with flattery and promises, and the pleasure of avenging an affront to his vanity!—Why, he is but so much the poorer for the refusal of the money—not a jot the more honest. He must be mine though, for he hath the shrewdest head among them. Well, now for a nobler game! I must face this leviathan Charles, who will presently swim hitherward, cleaving the deep before him. I must, like a trembling sailor, throw a tub overboard to amuse him. But I may one day find the chance of driving a harpoon into his entrails!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE INTERVIEW.

Hold fast thy truth, young soldier.—Gentle maiden,
Keep you your promise plight—leave age its subtleties,
And grey-hair'd policy its maze of falsehood;
But be you candid as the morning sky,
Ere the high sun sucks vapours up to stain it.

The Trial.

ON the perilous and important morning which preceded the meeting of the two princes in the Castle of Peronne, Oliver le Dain did his master the service of an active and skilful agent, making interest for Louis in every quarter, both with presents and promises; so that when the duke's anger should blaze forth, all around should be interested to smother, and not to increase, the conflagration. He glided like night, from tent to tent, from house to house, making himself friends, but not in the apostle's sense, with the Mammon of unrighteousness. As was said of another active political agent, "his finger was in every man's palm, his mouth was in every man's ear;" and for various reasons, some of which we have formerly hinted at, he secured the favour of many Burgundian nobles, who either had something to hope or fear from France, or who thought that, were the power of Louis too much reduced, their own duke would be likely to pursue the road to despotic authority, to which his heart naturally inclined him, with a daring and unopposed pace.

Where Oliver thought his own presence or arguments might be less acceptable, he employed that of other servants of the king; and it was in this manner that he obtained, by the favour of the Count de Crevecœur, an interview betwixt Lord Crawford, accompanied by Le Balafre, and Quentin Durward, who, since he had arrived at Peronne, had been detained in a sort of honourable confinement. Private affairs were assigned as the cause of requesting this meeting; but it is probable that Crevecœur, who was afraid that his master might be stirred up in passion to do something dishonourably violent towards Louis, was not sorry to afford an opportunity to Crawford to give some hints to the young archer, which might prove useful to his master.

The meeting between the countrymen was cordial and even affecting.

"Thou art a singular youth," said Crawford, stroking the head of young Durward, as a grandsire might do that of his descendant; "Certes, you have had as meikle good fortune as if you had been born with a lucky-hood on your head."

"All comes of his gaining an archer's place at such early years," said Le Balafre; "I never was so much talked of, fair nephew, because I was five-and-twenty years old before I was *hors de page*."

"And an ill-looking mountainous monster of a page thou wert, Ludovic," said the old commander, "with a beard like a baker's shool, and a back like old Wallace Wight."

"I fear," said Quentin, with downcast eyes, "I shall enjoy that title to distinction but a short time

—since it is my purpose to resign the service of the archer-guard.”

Le Balafré was struck almost mute with astonishment, and Crawford's ancient features gleamed with displeasure. The former at length mustered words enough to say, “Resign!—leave your place in the Scottish archers!—such a thing was never dreamed of.—I would not give up my situation, to be made Constable of France.”

“Hush! Ludovic,” said Crawford; “this youngster knows better how to shape his course with the wind than we of the old world do. His journey hath given him some pretty tales to tell about King Louis; and he is turning Burgundian, that he may make his own little profit by telling them to Duke Charles.”

“If I thought so,” said Le Balafré, “I would cut his throat with my own hand, were he fifty times my sister's son.”

“But you would first inquire, whether I deserved to be so treated, fair kinsman?” answered Quentin. —“And you, my lord, know that I am no tale-bearer; nor shall either question or torture draw out of me a word to King Louis's prejudice, which may have come to my knowledge while I was in his service.—So far my oath of duty keeps me silent. But I will not remain in that service, in which, besides the perils of fair battle with mine enemies, I am to be exposed to the dangers of ambushade on the part of my friends.”

“Nay, if he objects to lying in ambushade,” said le Balafré, looking sorrowfully at the Lord Crawford, “I am afraid, my lord, that all is over with him! I myself have had thirty 'bushments break upon me, and truly I think I have laid in ambushade twice as often myself, it being a favourite practice in our king's mode of making war.”

“It is so indeed, Ludovic,” answered Lord Crawford; “nevertheless, hold your peace, for I believe I understand this gear better than you do.”

“I wish to Our Lady you may, my lord,” answered Ludovic; “but it wounds me to the very midriff, to think my sister's son should fear an ambushment.”

“Young man,” said Crawford, “I partly guess your meaning. You have met foul play on the road where you traveled by the king's commands, and you think you have reason to charge him with being the author of it.”

“I have been threatened with foul play in the execution of the king's commission; but I have had the good fortune to elude it—whether his majesty be innocent or guilty in the matter, I leave to God and his own conscience. He fed me when I was a hungered—received me when I was a wandering stranger. I will never load him in his adversity with accusations which may indeed be unjust, since I heard them only from the vilest mouths.”

“My dear boy—my own lad!” said Crawford, taking him in his arms—“Ye think like a Scot, every joint of you!—Like one that will forget a cause of quarrel with a friend whose back is already at the wall, and remember nothing but his kindness.”

“Since my Lord Crawford has embraced my nephew,” said Ludovic Lesly, “I will embrace him also—though I would have you to know, that

to understand the service of an ambushment is as necessary to a soldier, as it is to a priest to be able to read his breviary.”

“Be hushed, Ludovic,” said Crawford; “ye are an ass, my friend, and ken not the blessing Heaven has sent you in this braw callant.—And now tell me, Quentin, my man, hath the king any advice of this brave, christian, and manly resolution of yours? for, poor man, he had need, in his strait, to ken what he has to reckon upon. Had he but brought the whole brigade of guards with him!—But God's will be done—Kens he of your purpose, think you?”

“I really can hardly tell,” answered Quentin; “but I assured his learned astrologer, Martius Galeotti, of my resolution to be silent on all that could injure the king with the Duke of Burgundy. The particulars which I suspect, I will not (under your favour) communicate even to your lordship; and to the philosopher I was, of course, far less willing to unfold myself.”

“Ha!—ay!—” answered Lord Crawford—“Oliver did indeed tell me that Galeotti prophesied most stoutly concerning the line of conduct you were to hold; and I am truly glad to find he did so on better authority than the stars.”

“He prophesy!” said Le Balafré, laughing; “the stars never told him that honest Ludovic Lesly used to help yonder wench of his to spend the fair ducats he flings into her lap.”

“Hush! Ludovic,” said his captain, “hush! thou beast, man!—If thou dost not respect my grey hairs, because I have been e'en too much of a *routier* myself, respect the boy's youth and innocence, and let us have no more of such unbecoming daffing.”

“Your honour may say your pleasure,” answered Ludovic Lesly; “but, by my faith, second-sighted Saunders Souplejaw, the town-souter of Glen-houlakin, was worth Galotti, or Galipotty, or whatever ye call him, twice told, for a prophet. He foretold that all my sister's children would die some day; and he foretold it in the very hour that the youngest was born, and that is this lad Quentin—who, no doubt, will one day die, to make up the prophecy—the more's the pity—the whole curney of them is gone but himself. And Saunders foretold to myself one day, that I should be made by marriage, which, doubtless, will also happen in due time, though it hath not yet come to pass—though how or when I can hardly guess, as I care not myself for the wedded state, and Quentin is but a lad. Also, Saunders predicted”——

“Nay,” said Lord Crawford, “unless the prediction be singularly to the purpose, I must cut you short, my good Ludovic; for both you and I must now leave your nephew, with prayers to Our Lady to strengthen him in the good mind he is in; for this is a case in which a light word might do more mischief than all the Parliament of Paris could mend.—My blessing with you, my lad; and be in no hurry to think of leaving our body; for there will be good blows going presently in the eye of day, and no ambushade.”

“And my blessing too, nephew,” said Ludovic Lesly; “for, since you have satisfied our most noble

captain, I also am satisfied, as in duty bound."

"Stay, my lord," said Quentin, and led Lord Crawford a little apart from his uncle. "I must not forget to mention, that there is a person besides in the world, who, having learned from me these circumstances, which it is essential to King Louis's safety should at present remain concealed, may not think that the same obligation of secrecy, which attaches to me as the king's soldier, and as having been relieved by his bounty, is at all binding on her."

"On her!" replied Crawford; "nay, if there be a woman in the secret, the Lord ha' mercy, for we are all on the rocks again!"

"Do not suppose so, my lord," replied Durward, "but use your interest with the Count of Crevecœur to permit me an interview with the Countess Isabelle of Croye, who is the party possessed of my secret, and I doubt not that I can persuade her to be as silent as I shall unquestionably myself remain, concerning whatsoever may incense the duke against King Louis."

The old soldier mused for a long time—looked up to the ceiling, then down again upon the floor—then shook his head, and at length said,—“There is something in all this, which, by my honour, I do not understand. The Countess Isabelle of Croye!—an interview with a lady of her birth, blood, and possessions!—and thou, a raw Scottish lad, so certain of carrying thy point with her? Thou art either strangely confident, my young friend, or else you have used your time well upon the journey. But, by the Cross of Saint Andrew! I will move Crevecœur in thy behalf; and, as he truly fears that the Duke Charles may be provoked against the king to the extremity of falling foul, I think it likely he may grant thy request, though, by my honour, it is a comical one!”

So saying, and shrugging up his shoulders, the old lord left the apartment, followed by Ludovic Lesly, who, forming his looks on those of his principal, endeavoured, though knowing nothing of the cause of his wonder, to look as mysterious and important as Crawford himself.

In a few minutes Crawford returned, but without his attendant, Le Balafre. The old man seemed in a singular humour, laughing and chuckling to himself in a manner which strangely distorted his old and rigid features, and at the same time shaking his head, as at something which he could not help condemning, while he found it irresistibly ludicrous. “My certes, countryman,” said he, “but you are not blate—you will never lose fair lady for faint heart. Crevecœur swallowed your proposal as he would have done a cup of vinegar, and swore to me roundly, by all the saints in Burgundy, that, but that the honour of princes and the peace of kingdoms were at stake, you should never see even so much as the print of the Countess Isabelle’s foot on the clay. Were it not that he had a dame, and a fair one, I would have thought that he meant to break a lance for the prize himself. Perhaps he thinks of his nephew, the County Stephen. A countess!—would no less serve you to be minting at?—But come along—your interview with her must be brief—But I fancy you know how to make the most

of little time—Ho! ho! ho!—By my faith, I can hardly chide thee for the presumption, I have such a good will to laugh at it!”

With a brow like scarlet, at once offended and disconcerted by the blunt inferences of the old soldier, and vexed at beholding in what an absurd light his passion was viewed by every person of experience, Durward followed Lord Crawford in silence to the Ursuline convent, in which the countess was lodged, and in the parlour of which he found the Count de Crevecœur.

“So, young gallant,” said the latter, sternly, “you must see the fair companion of your romantic expedition once more, it seems?”

“Yes, my lord count,” answered Quentin, “and what is more, I must see her alone.”

“That shall never be,” said the Count de Crevecœur. “Lord Crawford, I make you judge. This young lady, the daughter of my old friend and companion in arms, the richest heiress in Burgundy, has confessed a sort of a—what was I going to say?—in short, she is a fool, and your man-at-arms here a presumptuous coxcomb—In a word, they shall not meet alone.”

“Then will I not speak a single word to the countess in your presence,” said Quentin, much delighted. “You have told me much that I did not dare, presumptuous as I may be, even to hope.”

“Ay, truly said, my friend,” said Crawford. “You have been imprudent in your communications; and, since you refer to me, and there is a good stout grating across the parlour, I would advise you to trust to it, and let them do the worst with their tongues. What, man! the life of a king, and many thousands besides, is not to be weighed with the chance of two young things whilly-whawing in ilk other’s ears for a minute.”

So saying, he dragged off Crevecœur, who followed very reluctantly, and casting many angry glances at the young archer as he left the room.

In a moment after, the Countess Isabelle entered on the other side of the grate, and no sooner saw Quentin alone in the parlour, than she stopped short, and cast her eyes on the ground for the space of half a minute. “Yet why should I be ungrateful,” she said, “because others are unjustly suspicious?—My friend—my preserver, I may almost say, *so much* have I been beset by treachery—my only faithful and constant friend!”

As she spoke thus, she extended her hand to him through the grate, nay, suffered him to retain it, until he had covered it with kisses, not unmingled with tears. She only said, “Durward, were we ever to meet again, I would not permit this folly.”

If it be considered that Quentin had guarded her through so many perils—that he had been, in truth, her only faithful and zealous protector, perhaps my fair readers, even if countesses and heiresses should be of the number, will pardon the derogation.

But the countess extricated her hand at length, and, stepping a pace back from the grate, asked Durward, in a very embarrassed tone, what boon he had to ask of her?—“For that you have a request to make, I have learned from the old Scottish lord, who came here but now with my cousin of Crevecœur. Let it be but reasonable,” she said, “but

such as poor Isabelle can grant with duty and honour unfringed, and you cannot tax my slender powers too highly. But, O! do not speak hastily—do not say,” she added, looking around with timidity, “aught that might, if overheard, do prejudice to us both.”

“Fear not, noble lady,” said Quentin, sorrowfully; “it is not *here* that I can forget the distance which fate has placed between us, or expose you to the censures of your proud kindred, as the object of the most devoted love to one, poorer and less powerful—not perhaps less noble than themselves. Let that pass like a dream of the night to all but one bosom, where, dream as it is, it will fill up the room of all existing realities.”

“Hush! hush!” said Isabelle; “for your own sake,—for mine,—be silent on such a theme. Tell me rather what it is you have to ask of me.”

“Forgiveness to one, who, for his own selfish views, hath conducted himself as your enemy.”

“I trust I forgive all my enemies,” answered Isabelle; “but oh, Durward, through what scenes have your courage and presence of mind protected me!—Yonder bloody hall—the good bishop—I knew not till yesterday half the horrors I had unconsciously witnessed!”

“Do not think on them,” said Quentin, who saw the transient colour which had come to her cheek during their conference, fast fading into the most deadly paleness—“Do not look back, but look steadily forward, as they needs must who walk in a perilous road. Harken to me. King Louis deserves nothing better at your hand, of all others, than to be proclaimed the wily and insidious politician which he really is. But to tax him as the encourager of your flight—still more as the author of a plan to throw you into the hands of De la Marck—will at this moment produce perhaps the king’s death or dethronement; and, at all events, the most bloody war between France and Burgundy which the two countries have ever been engaged in.”

“These evils shall not arrive for my sake, if they can be prevented,” said the Countess Isabelle; “and indeed your slightest request were enough to make me forego my revenge, were that at any time a passion which I deeply cherish. Is it possible I would rather remember King Louis’s injuries, than your invaluable services?—Yet how is this to be?—When I am called before my sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy, I must either stand silent, or speak the truth. The former would be contumacity; and to a false tale you will not desire me to train my tongue.”

“Surely not,” said Durward; “but let your evidence concerning Louis be confined to what you yourself positively know to be truth; and when you mention what others have reported, no matter how credibly, let it be as reports only, and beware of pledging your own personal evidence to that, which, though you may fully believe, you cannot personally know. The assembled council of Burgundy cannot refuse to a monarch the justice, which in my country is rendered to the meanest person under accusation. They must esteem him innocent, until direct and sufficient proof shall demonstrate his guilt. Now, what does not consist with your own certain knowledge, should be proved by

other evidence than your report from hearsay.”

“I think I understand you,” said the Countess Isabelle.

“I will make my meaning plainer,” said Quentin; and was illustrating it accordingly by more than one instance, when the convent-bell tolled.

“That,” said the countess, “is a signal that we must part—part for ever!—But do not forget me, Durward; I will never forget you—your faithful services”——

She could not speak more, but again extended her hand, which was again pressed to his lips; and I know not how it was, that, in endeavouring to withdraw her hand, the countess came so close to the grating, that Quentin was encouraged to press the adieu on her lips. The young lady did not chide him—perhaps there was no time; for Crevecœur and Crawford, who had been from some loop-hole eye-witnesses, if not ear-witnesses also, of what was passing, rushed into the apartment, the first in a towering passion, the latter laughing, and holding him back.

“To your chamber, young mistress—to your chamber!” exclaimed the count to Isabelle, who, flinging down her veil, retired in all haste,—“which should be exchanged for a cell, and bread and water.—And you, gentle sir, who are so malapert, the time will come when the interests of kings and kingdoms may not be connected with such as you are, and you shall then learn the penalty of your audacity in raising your beggarly eyes”——

“Hush! hush!—enough said—rein up—rein up,” said the old lord;—“and you, Quentin, I command you be silent, and begone to your quarters.—There is no such room for scorn neither, Sir Count of Crevecœur—Quentin Durward is as much a gentleman as the king, only, as the Spaniard says, not so rich. He is as noble as myself, and I am chief of my name. Tush, tush! man, you must not speak to us of penalties.”

“My lord, my lord,” said Crevecœur, impatiently, “the insolence of these foreign mercenaries is proverbial, and should receive rather rebuke than encouragement from you, who are their leader.”

“My lord count,” answered Crawford, “I have ordered my command for these fifty years, without advice either from Frenchman or Burgundian; and I intend to do so, under your favour, so long as I shall continue to hold it.”

“Well, well, my lord,” said Crevecœur, “I meant you no disrespect; your nobleness, as well as your age, entitle you to be privileged in your impatience; and for these young people, I am satisfied to overlook the past, since I will take care that they never meet again.”

“Do not take that upon your salvation, Crevecœur,” said the old lord, laughing, “mountains, it is said, may meet, and why not mortal creatures that have legs, and life and love to put those legs in motion? Yon kiss, Crevecœur, came tenderly off—methinks it was ominous.”

“You are striving again to disturb my patience,” said Crevecœur, “but I will not give you that advantage over me.—Hark! they toll the summons to the castle—an awful meeting, of which God only can foretel the issue.”

"This issue I can foretel," said the old Scottish lord, "that if violence is to be offered to the person of the king, few as his friends are, and surrounded by his enemies, he shall neither fall alone nor un-avenged; and grieved I am, that his own positive orders have prevented my taking measures to prepare for such an issue."

"My Lord of Crawford," said the Burgundian, "to anticipate such evil is the sure way to give occasion to it. Obey the orders of your royal master, and give no pretext for violence by taking hasty offence, and you will find that the day will pass over more smoothly than you now conjecture."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE INVESTIGATION.

Me rather had, my heart might feel your love,
Than my displeased eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up—your heart is up, I know,
Thus high at least—although your knee—

King Richard II.

At the first toll of the bell, which was to summon the great nobles of Burgundy together in council, with the very few French peers who were to be present on the occasion, Duke Charles, followed by a part of his train, armed with partizans and battle-axes, entered the hall of Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. King Louis, who had expected the visit, arose and made two steps towards the duke, and then remained standing with an air of dignity, which, in spite of the meanness of his dress, and the familiarity of his ordinary manners, he knew very well how to assume when he judged it necessary. Upon the present important crisis, the composure of his demeanour had an evident effect upon his rival, who changed the abrupt and hasty step with which he entered the apartment, into one more becoming a great vassal entering the presence of his lord paramount. Apparently the duke had formed the internal resolution to treat Louis, in the outset at least, with the formalities due to his high station; but at the same time it was evident, that, in doing so, he put no small constraint upon the fiery impatience of his own disposition, and was scarce able to control the feelings of resentment, and the thirst of revenge, which boiled in his bosom. Hence, though he compelled himself to use the outward acts, and in some degree the language, of courtesy and reverence, his colour came and went rapidly—his voice was abrupt, hoarse, and broken—his limbs shook, as impatient of the curb imposed on his motions—he frowned, and bit his lip until the blood came—and every look and movement showed, that the most passionate prince that ever lived was under the dominion of one of his most violent accesses of fury.

The king marked this war of passion with a calm and untroubled eye; for though he gathered from the duke's looks a foretaste of the bitterness of death, which he dreaded alike as a mortal and a sinful man, yet he was resolved, like a wary and skilful pilot, neither to suffer himself to be disconcerted by his own fears, nor to abandon the helm,

while there was a chance of saving the vessel. When the duke, in a hoarse and broken tone, said something of the scarcity of his accommodation, he answered with a smile, that he could not complain, since he had as yet found Herbert's Tower a better residence than it had proved to one of his ancestors.

"They told you the tradition then?" said Charles—"Yes—here he was slain—but it was because he refused to take the cowl and finish his days in a monastery."

"The more fool he," said Louis, affecting unconcern, "since he gained the torment of being a martyr, without the merit of being a saint."

"I come," said the duke, "to pray your majesty to attend a high council, at which things of weight are to be deliberated upon concerning the welfare of France and Burgundy. You will presently meet them—that is, if such be your pleasure"—

"Nay, my fair cousin," said the king, "never strain courtesy so far, as to entreat what you may so boldly command—To council, since such is your grace's pleasure. We are somewhat shorn of our train," he added, looking upon the small suit that arranged themselves to attend him—"but you, cousin, must shine out for us both."

Marshaled by Toison d'Or, chief of the heralds of Burgundy, the princes left the Earl Herbert's Tower, and entered the castle-yard, which Louis observed was filled with the duke's body-guard and men-at-arms, splendidly accoutred, and drawn up in martial array. Crossing the court, they entered the council-hall, which was in a much more modern part of the building than that of which Louis had been the tenant, and, though in disrepair, had been hastily arranged for the solemnity of a public council. Two chairs of state were erected under the same canopy, that for the king being raised two steps higher than that which the duke was to occupy; about twenty of the chief nobility sat, arranged in due order, on either hand of the chairs of state; and thus, when they were both seated, the person for whose trial, as it might be called, the council was summoned, held the highest place, and appeared to preside in it.

It was perhaps to get rid of this inconsistency, and the scruples which might have been inspired by it, that Duke Charles, having bowed slightly to the royal chair, bluntly opened the sitting with the following words:—

"My good vassals and councillors, it is not unknown to you what disturbances have arisen in our territories, both in our father's time, and in our own, from the rebellion of vassals against superiors, and subjects against their princes. And lately, we have had the most dreadful proof of the height to which these evils have arrived in our case, by the scandalous flight of the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and her aunt the Lady Hameline, to take refuge with a foreign power, thereby renouncing their fealty to us, and inferring the forfeiture of their fiefs; and in another more dreadful and deplorable instance, by the sacrilegious and bloody murder of our beloved brother and ally the Bishop of Liege, and the rebellion of that treacherous city, which was but too mildly punished for the last insurrection. We

have been informed that these sad events may be traced, not merely to the inconstancy and folly of women, and the presumption of pampered citizens, but to the agency of foreign power, and the interference of a mighty neighbour, from whom, if good deeds could merit any return in kind, Burgundy could have expected nothing but the most sincere and devoted friendship. If this should prove truth," said the duke, setting his teeth, and pressing his heel against the ground, "what consideration shall withhold us—the means being in our power—from taking such measures, as shall effectually, and at the very source, close up the main spring, from which these evils have yearly flowed on us?"

The duke had begun his speech with some calmness, but he elevated his voice at the conclusion; and the last sentence was spoken in a tone which made all the councillors tremble, and brought a transient fit of paleness across the king's cheek. He instantly recalled his courage, however, and addressed the council in his turn, in a tone evincing so much ease and composure, that the duke, though he seemed desirous to interrupt or stop him, found no decent opportunity to do so.

"Nobles of France and of Burgundy," he said, "knights of the Holy Spirit and of the Golden Fleece! since a king must plead his cause as an accused person, he cannot desire nobler judges, than the flower of nobleness, and muster and pride of chivalry. Our fair cousin of Burgundy hath but darkened the dispute between us, in so far as his courtesy has declined to state it in precise terms. I, who have no cause for observing such delicacy, nay, whose condition permits me not to do so, crave leave to speak more precisely. It is to us, my lords—to us, his liege lord, his kinsman, his ally, that unhappy circumstances, perverting our cousin's clear judgment and better nature, have induced him to apply the hateful charges of seducing his vassals from their allegiance, stirring up the people of Liege to revolt, and stimulating the outlawed William de la Marck to commit a most cruel and sacrilegious murder. Nobles of France and Burgundy, I might truly appeal to the circumstances in which I now stand, as being in themselves a complete contradiction of such an accusation; for is it to be supposed, that, having the sense of a rational being left me, I should have thrown myself unreservedly into the power of the Duke of Burgundy, while I was practising treachery against him, such as could not fail to be discovered, and which, being discovered, must place me, as I now stand, in the power of a justly exasperated prince? The folly of one who should seat himself quietly down to repose on a mine, after he had lighted the match which was to cause instant explosion, would have been wisdom compared to mine. I have no doubt, that, amongst the perpetrators of those horrible treasons at Schonwaldt, villains have been busy with my name—but am I to be answerable, who have given them no right to use it?—If two silly women, disgusted on account of some romantic cause of displeasure, sought refuge at my court, does it follow that they did so by my direction?—It will be found, when inquired into, that, since honour and chivalry forbade my sending them back prisoners to the court

of Burgundy,—which, I think, gentlemen, no one who wears the collar of these orders would suggest,—that I came as nearly as possible to the same point, by placing them in the hands of the venerable father in God, who is now a saint in heaven."—Here Louis seemed much affected, and pressed his kerchief to his eyes—"In the hands, I say, of a member of my own family, and still more closely united with that of Burgundy, whose situation, exalted condition in the church, and, alas! whose numerous virtues, qualified him to be the protector of these unhappy wanderers for a little while, and the mediator betwixt them and their liege lord. I say, therefore, the only circumstances which seem in my brother of Burgundy's hasty view of this subject, to argue unworthy suspicions against me, are such as can be explained on the fairest and most honourable motives; and I say, moreover, that no one particle of credible evidence can be brought to support the injurious charges which have induced my brother to alter his friendly looks towards one who came to him in full confidence of friendship—have caused him to turn his festive hall into a court of justice, and his hospitable apartments into a prison."

"My lord, my lord," said Charles, breaking in as soon as the king paused, "for your being here at a time so unluckily coinciding with the execution of your projects, I can only account by supposing, that those who make it their trade to impose on others, do sometimes egregiously delude themselves. The engineer is sometimes killed by the springing of his own petard.—For what is to follow, let it depend on the event of this solemn inquiry.—Bring hither the Countess Isabelle of Croye!"

As the young lady was introduced, supported on the one side by the Countess of Crevecœur, who had her husband's commands to that effect, and on the other by the Abbess of the Ursuline convent, Charles exclaimed, with his usual harshness of voice and manner,—“Soh! sweet princess—you, who could scarce find breath to answer us when we last laid our just and reasonable commands on you, yet have had wind enough to run as long a course as ever did hunted doe—what think you of the fair work you have made between two great princes, and two mighty countries, that have been like to go to war for your baby face?”

The publicity of the scene, and the violence of Charles's manner, totally overcame the resolution which Isabelle had formed of throwing herself at the duke's feet, and imploring him to take possession of her estates, and permit her to retire into a cloister. She stood motionless, like a terrified female in a storm, who hears the thunder roll on every side of her, and apprehends, in every fresh peal, the bolt which is to strike her dead. The Countess of Crevecœur, a woman of spirit equal to her birth and to the beauty which she preserved even in her matronly years, judged it necessary to interfere. “My lord duke,” she said, “my fair cousin is under my protection. I know better than your grace how women should be treated, and we will leave this presence instantly, unless you use a tone and language more suitable to our rank and sex.”

The duke burst out into a laugh. “Crevecœur,” he said, “thy tameness hath made a lordly dame of

thy countess; but that is no affair of mine. Give a seat to yonder simple girl, to whom, so far from feeling enmity, I design the highest grace and honour.—Sit down, mistress, and tell us at your leisure what fiend possessed you to fly from your native country, and embrace the trade of a damsel adventurous.”

With much pain, and not without several interruptions, Isabelle confessed, that, being absolutely determined against a match proposed to her by the Duke of Burgundy, she had indulged the hope of obtaining protection of the court of France.

“And under protection of the French monarch,” said Charles—“Of that, doubtless, you were well assured?”

“I did indeed so think myself assured,” said the Countess Isabelle, “otherwise I had not taken a step so decided.”—Here Charles looked upon Louis with a smile of inexpressible bitterness, which the king supported with the utmost firmness, excepting that his lip grew something whiter than it was wont to be.—“But my information concerning King Louis’s intentions towards us,” continued the countess, after a short pause, “was almost entirely derived from my unhappy aunt, the Lady Hameline, and her opinions were formed upon the assertions and insinuations of persons whom I have since discovered to be the vilest traitors, and most faithless wretches in the world.” She then stated, in brief terms, what she had since come to learn of the treachery of Marthon, and of Hyraddin Maugrabin, and added, that she entertained no doubt that the elder Maugrabin, called Zamet, the original adviser of their flight, was capable of every species of treachery, as well as of assuming the character of an agent of Louis without authority.

There was a pause while the countess had continued her story, which she prosecuted, though very briefly, from the time she left the territories of Burgundy, in company with her aunt, until the storming of Schonwaldt, and her final surrender to the Count of Crevecœur. All remained mute after she had finished her brief and broken narrative, and the Duke of Burgundy bent his fierce dark eyes on the ground, like one who seeks for a pretext to indulge his passion, but finds none sufficiently plausible to justify himself in his own eyes. “The mole,” he said at length, looking upwards, “winds not his dark subterranean path beneath our feet the less certainly, that we, though conscious of his motions, cannot absolutely trace them. Yet I would know of King Louis, wherefore he maintained these ladies at his court, had they not gone thither by his own invitation?”

“I did not so entertain them, fair cousin,” answered the king. “Out of compassion, indeed, I received them in privacy, but took an early opportunity of placing them under the protection of the late excellent bishop, your own ally, and who was (may God assoil him!) a better judge than I, or any secular prince, how to reconcile the protection due to fugitives, with the duty which a king owes to his ally, from whose dominions they have fled. I boldly ask this young lady, whether my reception of them was cordial, or whether it was not, on the contrary, such as made them express regret that they had made my court their place of refuge.”

“So much was it otherwise than cordial,” answered the countess, “that it induced me, at least, to doubt how far it was possible that your majesty should have actually given the invitation of which we had been assured, by those who called themselves your agents; since, supposing them to have proceeded only as they were duly authorized, it would have been hard to reconcile your majesty’s conduct with that to be expected from a king, a knight, and a gentleman.”

The countess turned her eyes to the king as she spoke, with a look which was probably intended as a reproach, but the breast of Louis was armed against all such artillery. On the contrary, waving slowly his expanded hands, and looking around the circle, he seemed to make a triumphant appeal to all present, upon the testimony borne to his innocence in the countess’s reply.

Burgundy, meanwhile, cast on him a look which seemed to say, that if in some degree silenced, he was as far as ever from being satisfied, and then said abruptly to the countess,—“Methinks, fair mistress, in this account of your wanderings, you have forgot all mention of certain love-passages—So, ho! blushing already?—Certain knights of the forest, by whom your quiet was for a time interrupted. Well—that incident hath come to our ear, and something we may presently form out of it.—Tell me, King Louis, were it not well, before this vagrant Helen of Troy, or of Croye, set more kings by the ears, were it not well to carve out a fitting match for her?”

King Louis, though conscious what ungrateful proposal was like to be made next, gave a calm and silent assent to what Charles said; but the countess herself was restored to courage by the very extremity of her situation. She quitted the arm of the Countess of Crevecœur, on which she had hitherto leaned, came forward timidly, yet with an air of dignity, and, kneeling before the duke’s throne, thus addressed him:—“Noble Duke of Burgundy, and my liege lord; I acknowledge my fault in having withdrawn myself from your dominions without your gracious permission, and will most humbly acquiesce in any penalty you are pleased to impose. I place my lands and castles at your rightful disposal, and pray you only of your own bounty, and for the sake of my father’s memory, to allow the last of the line of Croye such a moderate maintenance as may find her admission into a convent for the remainder of her life.”

“What think you, sire, of the young person’s petition to us?” said the duke, addressing Louis.

“As of a holy and humble motion,” said the king, “which doubtless comes from that grace which ought not to be resisted or withstood.”

“The humble and lowly shall be exalted,” said Charles. “Arise, Countess Isabelle—we mean better for you than you have devised for yourself. We mean neither to sequester your estates, nor to abase your honours, but, on the contrary, will add largely to both.”

“Alas! my lord,” said the countess, continuing on her knees, “it is even that well-meant goodness which I fear still more than your grace’s displeasure, since it compels me”——

"Saint George of Burgundy!" said Duke Charles, "is our will to be thwarted, and our commands disputed, at every turn? Up, I say, minion, and withdraw for the present—when we have time to think of thee, we will so order matters, that, *Teste-Saint-Gris!* you shall either obey us, or do worse."

Notwithstanding this stern answer, the Countess Isabelle remained at his feet, and would probably, by her pertinacity, have driven him to say something yet more severe, had not the Countess of Crevecœur, who better knew that prince's humour, interfered to raise her young friend, and to conduct her from the hall.

Quentin Durward was now summoned to appear, and presented himself before the king and duke with that freedom, distant alike from bashful reserve and intrusive boldness, which becomes a youth at once well-born and well-nurtured, who gives honour where it is due, but without permitting himself to be dazzled or confused by the presence of those to whom it is to be rendered. His uncle had furnished him with the means of again equipping himself in the arms and dress of an archer of the Scottish Guard, and his complexion, mien, and air, singularly fitted his splendid appearance. His great youth, too, prepossessed the councillors in his favour, the rather that no one could easily believe that the sagacious Louis would have chosen so very young a person to become the confidant of political intrigues; and thus the king enjoyed, in this as in other cases, considerable advantage from his singular choice of agents, in the class of age as well as of rank, where such election seemed least likely to be made. At the command of the duke, sanctioned by that of Louis, Quentin commenced an account of his journey with the Ladies of Croye to the neighbourhood of Liege, premising a statement of King Louis's instructions, which were, that he should escort them safely to the castle of the bishop.

"And you obeyed my orders accordingly," said the king.

"I did, sire," replied the Scot.

"You omit a circumstance," said the duke. "You were set upon in the forest by two wandering knights."

"It does not become me to remember or to proclaim such an incident," said the youth, blushing ingenuously.

"But it doth not become me to forget it," said the Duke of Orleans. "This youth discharged his commission manfully, and maintained his trust in a manner that I shall long remember.—Come to my apartment, archer, when this matter is over, and thou shalt find I have not forgot thy brave bearing, while I am glad to see it equalled by thy modesty."

"And come to mine," said Dunois. "I have a helmet for thee, since I think I owe thee one." Quentin bowed low, and the examination was resumed. At the command of Duke Charles, he produced the written instructions which he had received for the direction of his journey.

"Did you follow these instructions literally, soldier?" said the duke.

"No, if it please your grace," replied Quentin. "They directed me, as you may be pleased to observe, to cross the Maes near Namur; whereas I

kept the left bank, as being both the nigher and the safer road to Liege."

"And wherefore that alteration?" said the duke.

"Because I began to suspect the fidelity of my guide," answered Quentin.

"Now mark the questions I have next to ask thee," said the duke. "Reply truly to them, and fear nothing from the resentment of any one. But if you palter or double in your answers, I will have thee hung alive in an iron chain from the steeple of the market-house, where thou shalt wish for death for many an hour ere he come to relieve you!"

There was a deep silence ensued. At length, having given the youth time, as he thought, to consider the circumstances in which he was placed, the duke demanded to know of Durward, who his guide was, by whom supplied, and wherefore he had been led to entertain suspicion of him? To the first of these questions, Quentin Durward answered, by naming Hayraddin Maugrabin, the Bohemian; to the second, that the guide had been recommended by Tristan l'Hermite; and in reply to the third point, he mentioned what had happened in the Franciscan convent, near Namur; how the Bohemian had been expelled from the holy house; and how, jealous of his behaviour, he had dogged him to a rendezvous with one of William de la Marck's lanzknechts, where he overheard them arrange a plan for surprising the ladies who were under his protection.

"Now, hark thee," said the duke, "and once more remember thy life depends on thy veracity; did these villains mention their having this king's—I mean this very King Louis of France's authority, for their scheme of surprising the escort, and carrying away the ladies?"

"If such infamous fellows had said so," replied Quentin, "I know not how I should have believed them, having the words of the king himself to place in opposition to theirs."

Louis, who had listened hitherto with most earnest attention, could not help drawing his breath deeply, when he heard Durward's answer, in the manner of one from whose bosom a heavy weight has been at once removed. The duke again looked disconcerted and moody; and, returning to the charge, questioned Quentin still more closely, whether he did not understand, from these men's private conversation, that the plots which they meditated had King Louis's sanction?

"I repeat, that I heard nothing which could authorize me to say so," answered the young man, who, though internally convinced of the king's accession to the treachery of Hayraddin, yet held it contrary to his allegiance to bring forward his own suspicions on the subject; "and if I *had* heard such men make such an assertion, I again say, that I would not have given their testimony weight against the instructions of the king himself."

"Thou art a faithful messenger," said the duke, with a sneer; "and I venture to say, that, in obeying the king's instructions, thou hast disappointed his expectations in a manner that thou mightst have smarted for, but that subsequent events have made thy bull-headed fidelity seem like good service."

"I understand you not, my lord," said Quentin

Durward; "all I know is, that my master King Louis sent me to protect these ladies, and that I did so accordingly, both in the journey to Schonwaldt, and through the subsequent scenes which took place. I understood the instructions of the king to be honourable, and I executed them honourably; had they been of a different tenor, they would not have suited one of my name or nation."

"*Fier comme un Écossais*," said Charles, who, however disappointed at the tenor of Durward's reply, was not unjust enough to blame him for his boldness. "But, hark thee, archer, what instructions were those which made thee, as some sad fugitives from Schonwaldt have informed us, parade the streets of Liege, at the head of those mutineers, who afterwards cruelly murdered their temporal prince and spiritual father? And what harangue was it which thou didst make after that murder was committed, in which you took upon you, as agent for Louis, to assume authority among the villains who had just perpetrated so great a crime?"

"My lord," said Quentin, "there are enough to testify that I assumed not the character of an envoy of France in the town of Liege, but had it fixed upon me by the obstinate clamours of the people themselves, who refused to give credit to any disclamation which I could make. This I told to the domestics of the bishop when I had made my escape from the city, and recommended their attention to the security of the castle, which might have prevented the calamity and horror of the succeeding night. It is, no doubt, true that I did, in the extremity of danger, avail myself of the influence which my imputed character gave me to save the Countess Isabelle, to protect my own life, and, so far as I could, to rein in the humour for slaughter which had already broke out in so dreadful an instance. I repeat, and will maintain it with my body, that I had no commission from the King of France; and that, finally, when I did avail myself of that imputed character, it was as if I had snatched up a shield to protect myself in a moment of emergency, and used it, as I should surely have done, for defence of myself and others, without inquiring whether I had right to the heraldic emblazonments which it displayed."

"And therein my young companion and prisoner," said Crevecœur, unable any longer to remain silent, "acted with equal spirit and good sense; and his doing so cannot justly be imputed as blame to King Louis."

There was a murmur of assent among the surrounding nobility which sounded joyfully in the ears of King Louis, whilst it gave no little offence to those of Charles. He rolled his eyes angrily around—and the sentiments so generally expressed by so many of his highest vassals and wisest councillors would not, perhaps, have prevented his giving way to his violent and despotic temper, had not d'Argenton, who foresaw the danger, prevented it, by suddenly announcing a herald from the city of Liege.

"A herald from weavers and nailers!" exclaimed the duke—"admit him instantly. By Our Lady, I will learn from this same herald something farther of his employers' hopes and projects than this young French-Scottish man-at-arms seems desirous to tell me!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE HERALD.

Ariel. ——— Hark! they roar.

Prospero. Let them be hunted soundly.

The Tempest.

THERE was room made in the assembly, and no small curiosity evinced by those present to see the herald whom the insurgent Liegeois had ventured to send to so haughty a prince as the Duke of Burgundy, while in such high indignation against them. For it must be remembered, that at this period heralds were only dispatched from sovereign princes to each other upon solemn occasions; and that the inferior nobility employed pursuivants, a lower rank of officers-at-arms. It may be also noticed in passing, that Louis XI., an habitual derider of whatever did not promise real power or substantial advantage, was in especial a professed contemner of heralds and heraldry, "red, blue, and green, with all their trumpery," to which the pride of his rival Charles, which was of a very different kind, attached no small degree of ceremonious importance.

The herald, who was now introduced into the presence of the monarchs, was dressed in a tabard, or coat, embroidered with the arms of his master, in which the boar's-head made a distinguished appearance, in blazonry, which, in the opinion of the skilful, was more showy than accurate. The rest of his dress—a dress always sufficiently tawdry—was overcharged with lace, embroidery, and ornament of every kind; and the plume of feathers which he wore was so high, as if intended to sweep the roof of the hall. In short, the usual gaudy splendour of the heraldic attire was caricatured and overdone. The boar's-head was not only repeated on every part of his dress, but even his bonnet was formed into that shape, and it was represented with bloody tusks, or, in proper language, *langed and dentated gules*; and there was something in the man's appearance which seemed to imply a mixture of boldness and apprehension, like one who has undertaken a dangerous commission, and is sensible that audacity alone can carry him through it with safety. Something of the same mixture of fear and effrontery was visible in the manner in which he paid his respects, and he showed also a grotesque awkwardness, not usual amongst those who were accustomed to be received in the presence of princes.

"Who art thou, in the devil's name?" was the greeting with which Charles the Bold received this singular envoy.

"I am Rouge Sanglier," answered the herald, "the officer-at-arms of William de la Marck, by the grace of God, and the election of the chapter, Prince Bishop of Liege."

"Ha!" exclaimed Charles, but, as if subduing his own passion, he made a sign to him to proceed.

"And, in right of his wife, the honourable Countess Hameline of Croye, Count of Croye, and Lord of Bracquemont."

The utter astonishment of Duke Charles at the extremity of boldness with which these titles were

announced in his presence, seemed to strike him dumb; and the herald, conceiving, doubtless, that he had made a suitable impression by the annunciation of his character, proceeded to state his errand.

"*Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum*," he said; "I let you, Charles of Burgundy and Earl of Flanders, to know, in my master's name, that, under favour of a dispensation of our Holy Father of Rome, presently expected, and appointing a fitting substitute *ad sacra*, he proposes to exercise at once the office of prince bishop, and maintain the rights of Count of Croye."

The Duke of Burgundy, at this and other pauses in the herald's speech, only ejaculated "Ha!" or some similar interjection, without making any answer; and the tone of exclamation was that of one who, though surprised and moved, is willing to hear all that is to be said ere he commits himself by making an answer. To the farther astonishment of all who were present, he forbore from his usual abrupt and violent gesticulations, remaining with the nail of his thumb pressed against his teeth, which was his favourite attitude when giving attention, and keeping his eyes bent on the ground, as if unwilling to betray the passion which might gleam in them.

The envoy, therefore, proceeded boldly and unabashed in the delivery of his message. "In the name, therefore, of the Prince Bishop of Liege, and Count of Croye, I am to require of you, Duke Charles, to desist from those pretensions and encroachments which you have made on the free and imperial city of Liege, by connivance with the late Louis of Bourbon, unworthy bishop thereof."

"Ha!" again exclaimed the duke.

"Also to restore the banners of the community, which you took violently from the town, to the number of six-and-thirty;—to rebuild the breaches in their walls, and restore the fortifications which you tyrannically dismantled,—and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as prince bishop, lawfully elected in a free chapter of canons, of which behold the *procès-verbal*."

"Have you finished?" said the duke.

"Not yet," replied the envoy: "I am further to require your grace, on the part of the said right noble and venerable prince, bishop, and count, that you do presently withdraw the garrison from the Castle of Bracquemont, and other places of strength, belonging to the Earldom of Croye, which have been placed there, whether in your own most gracious name, or in that of Isabelle, or any other; until it shall be decided by the imperial diet, whether the fiefs in question shall not pertain to the sister of the late count, my most gracious Lady Hameline, rather than to his daughter, in respect of the *jus emphyteusis*."

"Your master is most learned," replied the duke.

"Yet," continued the herald, "the noble and venerable prince and count will be disposed, all other disputes betwixt Burgundy and Liege being settled, to fix upon the Lady Isabelle such an appanage as may become her quality."

"He is generous and considerate," said the duke, in the same tone.

"Now, by a poor fool's conscience," said Le Glorieux apart, to the Count of Crevecoeur, "I

would rather be in the worst cow's hide that ever died of the murrain, than in that fellow's painted coat! The poor man goes on like drunkards, who only look to the other pot, and not to the score which mine host chalks up behind the lattice."

"Have you yet done?" said the duke to the herald.

"One word more," answered Rouge Sanglier, "from my noble and venerable lord aforesaid, respecting his worthy and trusty ally, the most christian king"—

"Ha!" exclaimed the duke, starting, and in a fiercer tone than he had yet used; but checking himself, he instantly composed himself again to attention.

"Which most christian king's royal person it is rumoured that you, Charles of Burgundy, have placed under restraint, contrary to your duty as a vassal of the crown of France, and to the faith observed among christian sovereigns. For which reason, my said noble and venerable master, by my mouth, charges you to put his royal and most christian ally forthwith at freedom, or to receive the defiance which I am authorized to pronounce to you."

"Have you yet done?" said the duke.

"I have," answered the herald, "and await your grace's answer, trusting it may be such as will save the effusion of christian blood."

"Now, by Saint George of Burgundy"—said the duke;—but ere he could proceed farther, Louis arose, and struck in with a tone of so much dignity and authority, that Charles could not interrupt him.

"Under your favour, fair cousin of Burgundy," said the king; "we ourselves crave priority of voice in replying to this insolent fellow.—Sirrah herald, or whatever thou art, carry back notice to the perjured outlaw and murderer, William de la Marck, that the King of France will be presently before Liege, for the purpose of punishing the sacrilegious murderer of his late beloved kinsman, Louis of Bourbon; and that he purposes to gibbet De la Marck alive, for the insolence of terming himself his ally, and putting his royal name into the mouth of one of his own base messengers."

"Add whatever else on my part," said Charles, "which it may not misbecome a prince to send to a common thief and murderer.—And begone!—Yet stay.—Never herald went from the court of Burgundy without having cause to cry, *Largesse*!—Let him be scourged till the bones are laid bare!"

"Nay, but if it please your grace," said Crevecoeur and d'Hymbercourt together, "he is a herald, and so far privileged."

"It is you, messires," replied the duke, "who are such owls as to think that the tabard makes the herald. I see by that fellow's blazoning he is a mere impostor. Let Toison d'Or step forward, and question him in your presence."

In spite of his natural effrontery, the envoy of the Wild Boar of Ardennes now became pale; and that notwithstanding some touches of paint with which he had adorned his countenance. Toison d'Or, the chief herald, as we have elsewhere said, of the duke, and king-at-arms within his dominions, stepped forward with the solemnity of one who knew what was

due to his office, and asked his supposed brother, in what college he had studied the science which he professed.

"I was bred a pursuivant at the Heraldic College of Ratisbon," answered Rouge Sanglier, "and received the diploma of Ehrenhold from that same learned fraternity."

"You could not derive it from a source more worthy," answered Toison d'Or, bowing still lower than he had done before; "and if I presume to confer with you on the mysteries of our sublime science, in obedience to the orders of the most gracious duke, it is not in hopes of giving, but of receiving knowledge."

"Go to," said the duke, impatiently. "Leave off ceremony, and ask him some questions that may try his skill."

"It were injustice to ask a disciple of the worthy College of Arms at Ratisbon, if he comprehendeth the common terms of blazonry," said Toison d'Or; "but I may, without offence, crave of Rouge Sanglier to say if he is instructed in the more mysterious and secret terms of the science, by which the more learned do emblematically, and as it were parabolically, express to each other what is conveyed to others in the ordinary language, taught in the very accident as it were of heraldry?"

"I understand one sort of blazonry as well as another," answered Rouge Sanglier, boldly; "but it may be we have not the same terms in Germany which you have here in Flanders."

"Alas, that you will say so!" replied Toison d'Or; "our noble science, which is indeed the very banner of nobleness, and glory of generosity, being the same in all christian countries, nay, known and acknowledged even by the Saracens and Moors. I would, therefore, pray of you to describe what coat you will after the celestial fashion, that is, by the planets."

"Blazon it yourself as you will," said Rouge Sanglier; "I will do no such apish tricks upon commandment, as an ape is made to come aloft."

"Show him a coat, and let him blazon it his own way," said the duke; "and if he fails, I promise him that his back shall be gules, azure and sable."

"Here," said the herald of Burgundy, taking from his pouch a piece of parchment, "is a scroll in which certain considerations led me to prick down, after my own poor fashion, an ancient coat. I will pray my brother, if indeed he belong to the honourable College of Arms at Ratisbon, to decipher it in fitting language."

Le Glorieux, who seemed to take great pleasure in this discussion, had by this time bustled himself close to the two heralds. "I will help thee, good fellow," said he to Rouge Sanglier, as he looked hopelessly upon the scroll. "This, my lords and masters, represents the cat looking out at the dairy-window."

This sally occasioned a laugh, which was something to the advantage of Rouge Sanglier, as it led Toison d'Or, indignant at the misconstruction of his drawing, to explain it as the coat-of-arms assumed by Childebert, King of France, after he had taken prisoner Gandemar, King of Burgundy; representing an ounce, or tiger-cat, the emblem of the captive prince, behind a grating, or, as Toison d'Or techni-

cally defined it, "Sable, a musion passant Or, oppressed with a trellis gules, cloué of the second."

"By my bauble," said Le Glorieux, "if the cat resemble Burgundy, she has the right side of the grating now-a-days."

"True, good fellow," said Louis, laughing, while the rest of the presence, and even Charles himself, seemed disconcerted at so broad a jest,—"I owe thee a piece of gold for turning something that looked like sad earnest, into the merry game which I trust it will end in."

"Silence, Le Glorieux," said the duke; "and you, Toison d'Or, who are too learned to be intelligible, stand back,—and bring that rascal forward, some of you.—Hark ye, villain," he said, in his harshest tone, "do you know the difference between argent and or?"

"For pity's sake, your grace, be good unto me! noble King Louis, speak for me!"

"Speak for thyself," said the duke—"In a word, art thou herald or not?"

"Only for this occasion," said the detected official.

"Now, by St George!" said the duke, eyeing Louis askance, "we know no king—no gentleman—save one, who would have so prostituted the noble science on which royalty and gentry rest! save that king, who sent to Edward of England a serving-man disguised as a herald."

"Such a stratagem," said Louis, "could only be justified at a court where no heralds were at the time, and when the emergency was urgent. But, though it might have passed on the blunt and thick-witted islander, no one with brains a whit better than those of a wild boar would have thought of passing such a trick upon the accomplished court of Burgundy."

"Send him who will," said the duke, fiercely, "he shall return on their hands in poor case.—Here!—drag him to the market-place!—slash him with bridle-reins and dog-whips until the tabard hang about him in tatters!—Upon the Rouge Sanglier!—ça, ça!—Haloo, haloo!"

Four or five large hounds, such as are painted in hunting-pieces upon which Rubens and Schneiders laboured in conjunction, caught the well-known notes with which the duke concluded, and began to yell and bay as if the boar were just roused from his lair.

"By the rood!" said King Louis, observant to catch the vein of his dangerous cousin, "since the ass has put on the boar's hide, I would set the dogs on him to bait him out of it!"

"Right! right!" exclaimed Duke Charles, the fancy exactly chiming in with his humour at the moment—"it shall be done!—Uncouple the hounds!—Hyke a Talbot! hyke a Beaumont!—We will course him from the door of the castle to the east gate."

"I trust your grace will treat me as a beast of chase," said the fellow, putting the best face he could upon the matter, "and allow me fair law?"

"Thou art but vermin," said the duke, "and entitled to no law, by the letter of the book of hunting; nevertheless, thou shalt have sixty yards in advance, were it but for the sake of thy unparalleled

impudence.—Away, away, sirs;—we will see this sport.”—And the council breaking up tumultuously, all hurried, none faster than the two princes, to enjoy the humane pastime which King Louis had suggested.

The Rouge Sanglier showed excellent sport; for, winged with terror, and having half-a-score of fierce boar-hounds hard at his haunches, encouraged by the blowing of horns and the woodland cheer of the hunters, he flew like the very wind, and, had he not been encumbered with his herald's coat (the worst possible habit for a runner), he might fairly have escaped dog-free; he also doubled once or twice, in a manner much approved of by the spectators. None of these, nay, not even Charles himself, was so delighted with the sport as King Louis, who, partly from political considerations, and partly as being naturally pleased with the sight of human suffering when ludicrously exhibited, laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, and, in his ecstasies of rapture, caught hold of the duke's ermine cloak, as if to support himself; whilst the duke, no less delighted, flung his arm round the king's shoulder, making thus an exhibition of confidential sympathy and familiarity, very much at variance with the terms on which they had so lately stood together.

At length the speed of the pseudo-herald could save him no longer from the fangs of his pursuers; they seized him, pulled him down, and would probably soon have throttled him, had not the duke called out—“Stave and tail!—stave and tail!—Take them off him!—He hath shown so good a course, that, though he has made no sport at bay, we will not have him dispatched.”

Several officers accordingly busied themselves in taking off the dogs; and they were soon seen coupling some up, and pursuing others which ran through the streets, shaking in sport and triumph the tattered fragments of painted cloth and embroidery rent from the tabard, which the unfortunate wearer had put on in an unlucky hour.

At this moment, and while the duke was too much engaged with what passed before him to mind what was said behind him, Oliver le Dain, gliding behind King Louis, whispered into his ear—“It is the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin—It were not well he should come to speech of the duke.”

“He must die,” answered Louis, in the same tone—“dead men tell no tales.”

One instant afterwards, Tristan l'Hermite, to whom Oliver had given the hint, stepped forward before the king and the duke, and said in his blunt manner, “So please your majesty and your grace, this piece of game is mine, and I claim him—he is marked with my stamp—the fleur-de-lys is branded on his shoulder, as all men may see.—He is a known villain, and hath slain the king's subjects, robbed churches, deflowered virgins, slain deer in the royal parks”——

“Enough, enough,” said Duke Charles, “he is my royal cousin's property by many a good title.—What will your majesty do with him?”

“If he is left to my disposal,” said the king, “I will only give him one lesson in the science of heraldry, in which he is so ignorant—only to explain

to him practically the meaning of a cross *potence*, with a noose dangling proper.”

“Not as to be by him borne, but as to bear him. Let him take the degrees under your gossip Tristan—he is a deep professor in such mysteries.”

Thus answered the duke, with a burst of discordant laughter at his own wit, which was so cordially chorussed by Louis that his rival could not help looking kindly at him while he said—

“Ah, Louis, Louis! would to God thou wert as faithful a monarch as thou art a merry companion! I cannot but think often on the jovial time we used to spend together.”

“You may bring it back when you will,” said Louis;—“I will grant you as fair terms as for very shame's sake you ought to ask in my present condition, without making yourself the fable of Christendom; and I will swear to observe them upon the holy relic which I have ever the grace to bear about my person, being a fragment of the true cross.”

Here he took a small golden reliquary, which was suspended from his neck next to his shirt by a chain of the same metal, and, having kissed it devoutly, continued—

“Never was false oath sworn on this most sacred relic, but it was avenged within the year.”

“Yet,” said the duke, “it was the same on which you swore amity to me when you left Burgundy, and shortly after sent the Bastard of Rubempré to murder or kidnap me.”

“Nay, gracious cousin, now you are ripping up ancient grievances,” said the king; “I promise you that you were deceived in that matter. Moreover, it was not upon *this* relic, which I then wore, but upon another fragment of the true cross which I got from the Grand Signior, weakened in virtue, doubtless, by sojourning with infidels. Besides, did not the war of the Public Good break out within the year; and was not a Burgundian army encamped at Saint Denis, backed by all the great feudatories of France; and was not I obliged to yield up Normandy to my brother? O God, shield us from perjury on such a warrant as this!”

“Well, cousin,” answered the duke, “I do believe thou hadst a lesson to keep faith another time. And now, for once, without finesse and doubling, will you make good your promise, and go with me to punish this murdering La Marck and the Liegeois?”

“I will march against them,” said Louis, “with the ban and arrière-ban of France, and the oriflamme displayed.”

“Nay, nay,” said the duke, “that is more than is needful or may be advisable. The presence of your Scottish Guard and two hundred choice lances will serve to show that you are a free agent. A large army might”——

“Make me so in effect, you would say, my fair cousin?” said the king. “Well, thou shalt dictate the numbers of my attendants.”

“And to put this fair cause of mischief out of the way, you will agree to the Countess Isabelle of Croye wedding with the Duke of Orleans?”

“Fair cousin,” said the king, “you drive my courtesy to extremity. The duke is the betrothed bridegroom of my daughter Joan. Be generous—

yield up this matter, and let us speak rather of the towns on the Somme."

"My council will talk to your majesty of these," said Charles; "I myself have less at heart the acquisition of territory, than the redress of injuries. You have tampered with my vassals, and your royal pleasure must needs dispose of the hand of a ward of Burgundy. Your majesty must bestow it within the pale of your own royal family, since you have meddled with it—otherwise, our conference breaks off."

"Were I to say I did this willingly," said the king, "no one would believe me; therefore do you, my fair cousin, judge of the extent of my wish to oblige you, when I say, most reluctantly, that the parties consenting, and a dispensation from the pope being attained, my own wishes shall be no bar to this match which you propose."

"All besides can be easily settled by our ministers," said the duke, "and we are once more cousins and friends."

"May Heaven be praised!" said Louis, "who, holding in his hand the hearts of princes, doth mercifully incline them to peace and clemency, and prevent the effusion of human blood.—Oliver," he added apart to that favourite, who ever waited around him like the familiar beside a sorcerer, "hark thee, tell Tristan to be speedy in dealing with yonder runagate Bohemian."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE EXECUTION.

I'll take thee to the good green-wood,
And make thine own hand chuse the tree.
Old Ballad

"Now God be praised, that gave us the power of laughing, and making others laugh, and shame to the dull cur who scorns the office of a jester! Here is a joke, and that none of the brightest (though it may pass, since it hath amused two princes), which hath gone farther than a thousand reasons of state to prevent a war between France and Burgundy."

Such was the inference of Le Glorieux, when, in consequence of the reconciliation, of which we gave the particulars in the last chapter, the Burgundian guards were withdrawn from the Castle of Peronne, the abode of the king removed from the ominous Tower of Count Herbert, and, to the great joy both of French and Burgundians, an outward show at least of confidence and friendship seemed so established between Duke Charles and his liege lord. Yet still the latter, though treated with ceremonial observance, was sufficiently aware that he continued to be the object of suspicion, though he prudently affected to overlook it, and seemed to consider himself as entirely at his ease.

Meanwhile, as frequently happens in such cases, whilst the principal parties concerned had so far made up their differences, one of the subaltern agents concerned in their intrigues was bitterly experiencing the truth of the political maxim, that if the great have frequent need of base tools, they make amends to society by abandoning them to

their fate, so soon as they find them no longer useful.

This was Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, surrendered by the duke's officers to the king's provost-marshal, was by him placed in the hands of his two trusty aides-de-camp, Trois-Éschelles and Petit-André, to be dispatched without loss of time. One on either side of him, and followed by a few guards and a multitude of rabble,—this playing the Allegro, that the Penseroso, he was marched off (to use a modern comparison, like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy) to the neighbouring forest; where, to save all farther trouble and ceremonial of a gibbet, and so forth, the disposers of his fate proposed to knit him up to the first sufficient tree.

They were not long in finding an oak, as Petit-André facetiously expressed it, fit to bear such an acorn; and, placing the wretched criminal on a bank, under a sufficient guard, they began their extemporaneous preparations for the final catastrophe. At that moment, Hayraddin, gazing on the crowd, encountered the eyes of Quentin Durward, who, thinking he recognized the countenance of his faithless guide in that of the detected impostor, had followed with the crowd to witness the execution, and assure himself of the identity.

When the executioners informed him that all was ready, Hayraddin, with much calmness, asked a single boon at their hands.

"Anything, my son, consistent with our office," said Trois-Éschelles.

"That is," said Hayraddin, "anything but my life."

"Even so," said Trois-Éschelles, "and something more; for, as you seem resolved to do credit to our mystery, and die like a man, without making wry mouths—why, though our orders are to be prompt, I care not though I indulge you ten minutes longer."

"You are even too generous," said Hayraddin.

"Truly we may be blamed for it," said Petit-André; "but what of that?—I could consent almost to give my life for such a jerry-come-tumble, such a smart, tight, firm lad, who proposes to come from aloft with a grace, as an honest fellow should do."

"So that if you want a confessor," said Trois-Éschelles—

"Or a *lire* of wine," said his facetious companion—

"Or a psalm," said Tragedy—

"Or a song," said Comedy—

"Neither, my good, kind, and most expeditious friends," said the Bohemian—"I only pray to speak a few minutes with yonder archer of the Scottish Guard."

The executioners hesitated a moment; but Trois-Éschelles, recollecting that Quentin Durward was believed, from various circumstances, to stand high in the favour of their master, King Louis, they resolved to permit the interview.

When Quentin, at their summons, approached the condemned criminal, he could not but be shocked at his appearance, however justly his doom might have been deserved. The remnants of his heraldic finery, rent to tatters by the fangs of the dogs, and the clutches of the bipeds, who had rescued him from their fury to lead him to the gallows, gave him at once a ludicrous and a wretched appearance. His face was discoloured with paint, and with some remnants of a fictitious beard, assumed for the pur-

pose of disguise, and there was the paleness of death upon his cheek and upon his lip; yet, strong in passive courage, like most of his tribe, his eye, while it glistened and wandered, as well as the contorted smile of his mouth, seemed to bid defiance to the death he was about to die.

Quentin was struck partly with horror, partly with compassion, as he approached the miserable man; and these feelings probably betrayed themselves in his manner, for Petit-André called out, "Trip it more smartly, jolly archer—This gentleman's leisure cannot wait for you, if you walk as an the pebbles were eggs, and you afraid of breaking them."

"I must speak with him in privacy," said the criminal, despair seeming to croak in his accent as he uttered the words.

"That may hardly consist with our office, my merry leap-the-ladder," said Petit-André; "we know you for a slippery eel of old."

"I am tied with your horse-girths, hand and foot," said the criminal—"You may keep guard around me, though out of ear-shot—the archer is your own king's servant—And if I give you ten guilders"—

"Laid out in masses, the sum may profit his poor soul," said Trois-Éschelles.

"Laid out in wine or brantwein, it will comfort my poor body," responded Petit-André. "So let them be forthcoming, my little crack-rope."

"Pay the blood-hounds their fee," said Hayraddin to Durward; "I was plundered of every stiver when they took me—it shall avail thee much."

Quentin paid the executioners their guerdon, and, like men of promise, they retreated out of hearing—keeping, however, a careful eye on the criminal's motions. After waiting an instant till the unhappy man should speak, as he still remained silent, Quentin at length addressed him, "And to this conclusion thou hast at length arrived?"

"Ay," answered Hayraddin, "it required neither astrologer, nor physiognomist, nor chiromantist, to foretel that I should follow the destiny of my family."

"Brought to this early end by thy long course of crime and treachery?" said the Scot.

"No; by the bright Aldeboran and all his brother twinklers!" answered the Bohemian. "I am brought hither by my folly, in believing that the blood-thirsty cruelty of a Frank could be restrained even by what they themselves profess to hold most sacred. A priest's vestment would have been no safer guard for me than a herald's tabard, however sanctimonious are your professions of devotion and chivalry."

"A detected impostor has no right to claim the immunities of the disguise he has usurped," said Durward.

"Detected!" said the Bohemian. "My jargon was as good as yonder old fool of a herald's:—but let it pass.—As well now as hereafter."

"You abuse time," said Quentin. "If you have aught to tell me, say it quickly, and then take some care of your soul."

"Of my soul?" said the Bohemian, with a hideous laugh. "Think ye a leprosy of twenty years can be cured in an instant?—If I have a soul, it

hath been in such a course since I was ten years old and more, that it would take me one month to recal all my crimes, and another to tell them to the priest;—and were such space granted me, it is five to one I would employ it otherwise."

"Hardened wretch, blaspheme not! Tell me what thou hast to say, and I leave thee to thy fate," said Durward, with mingled pity and horror.

"I have a boon to ask,—but first I will buy it of you; for your tribe, with all their professions of charity, give nought for nought."

"I could well nigh say, thy gifts perish with thee, but that thou art on the very verge of eternity. Ask thy boon—reserve thy bounty—it can do me no good—I remember enough of your good offices of old."

"Why, I loved you," said Hayraddin, "for the matter that chanced on the banks of the Cher; and I would have helped you to a wealthy dame. You wore her scarf, which partly misled me; and indeed I thought that Hameline, with her portable wealth, was more for your market-penny than the other hen-sparrow, with her old roost at Bracquemont, which Charles has clutched, and is like to keep his claws upon."

"Talk not so idly, unhappy man," said Quentin; "yonder men become impatient."

"Give them ten guilders for ten minutes more," said the culprit,—who, like most in his situation, mixed with his hardihood a desire of procrastinating his fate,—“I tell thee it shall avail thee much."

"Use then well the minutes so purchased," said Durward, and easily made a new bargain with the marshal's-men.

This done, Hayraddin continued.—“Yes, I assure you I meant you well; and Hameline would have proved an easy and convenient spouse. Why, she has reconciled herself even with the Boar of Ardennes, though his mode of wooing was somewhat of the roughest, and queens it yonder in his stithe, as if she had fed on mast-husks and acorns all her life."

"Cease this brutal and untimely jesting," said Quentin, "or, once more I tell you, I will leave you to your fate."

"You are right," said Hayraddin, after a moment's pause; "what cannot be postponed must be faced!—Well, know then, I came hither in this accursed disguise, moved by a great reward from De la Marck, and hoping a yet mightier one from King Louis, not merely to bear the message of defiance which you may have heard of, but to tell the king an important secret."

"It was a fearful risk," said Durward.

"It was paid for as such, and such it hath proved," answered the Bohemian. "De la Marck attempted before to communicate with Louis by means of Marthon; but she could not, it seems, approach nearer to him than the astrologer, to whom she told all the passages of the journey, and of Schonwaldt; but it is a chance if her tidings ever reach Louis, except in the shape of a prophecy. But hear my secret, which is more important than aught she could tell. William de la Marek has assembled a numerous and strong force within the city of Liege, and augments it daily by means of the old priest's treasures. But he proposes not to hazard a battle with the chivalry

of Burgundy, and still less to stand a siege in the dismantled town. This he will do—he will suffer the hot-brained Charles to sit down before the place without opposition; and in the night, make an out-fall or sally upon the leaguer with his whole force. Many he will have in French armour, who will cry France, Saint Louis, and Denis Montjoye, as if there were a strong body of French auxiliaries in the city. This cannot chuse but strike utter confusion among the Burgundians; and if King Louis, with his guards, attendants, and such soldiers as he may have with him, shall second his efforts, the Boar of Ardenne nothing doubts the discomfiture of the whole Burgundian army.—There is my secret, and I bequeath it to you. Forward or prevent the enterprise—sell the intelligence to King Louis, or to Duke Charles, I care not—save or destroy whom thou wilt; for my part, I only grieve that I cannot spring it like a mine, to the destruction of them all!”

“It is indeed an important secret,” said Quentin, instantly comprehending how easily the national jealousy might be awakened in a camp consisting partly of French, partly of Burgundians.

“Ay, so it is,” answered Hayraddin; “and, now you have it, you would fain begone, and leave me without granting the boon for which I have paid before-hand.”

“Tell me thy request,” said Quentin—“I will grant it if it is in my power.”

“Nay, it is no mighty demand—it is only in behalf of poor Klepper, my palfrey, the only living thing that may miss me.—A due mile south, you will find him feeding by a deserted collier’s hut; whistle to him thus (he whistled a peculiar note), and call him by his name, Klepper, he will come to you; here is his bridle under my gaberline—it is lucky the hounds got it not, for he obeys no other. Take him, and make much of him—I do not say for his master’s sake,—but because I have placed at your disposal the event of a mighty war. He will never fail you at need—night and day, rough and smooth, fair and foul, warm stables and the winter sky, are the same to Klepper; had I cleared the gates of Peronne, and got so far as where I left him, I had not been in this case.—Will you be kind to Klepper?”

“I swear to you that I will,” answered Quentin, affected by what seemed a trait of tenderness in a character so hardened.

“Then fare thee well!—Yet stay—stay—I would not willingly die in discourtesy, forgetting a lady’s commission.—This billet is from the very gracious and extremely silly Lady of the Wild Boar of Ardenne, to her black-eyed niece—I see by your look I have chosen a willing messenger—And one word more—I forgot to say, that in the stuffing of my saddle you will find a rich purse of gold pieces, for the sake of which I put my life on the venture which has cost me so dear. Take them, and replace a hundred-fold the guilders you have bestowed on these bloody slaves—I make you mine heir.”

“I will bestow them in good works, and masses for the benefit of thy soul,” said Quentin.

“Name not that word again,” said Hayraddin, his countenance assuming a dreadful expression; “there is—there can be—there shall be—no such thing!—it is a dream of priest-craft!”

“Unhappy—most unhappy being! Think better!—let me send for a priest—these men will delay yet a little longer—I will bribe them to it,” said Quentin—“What canst thou expect, dying in such opinions, and impenitent?”

“To be resolved into the elements,” said the hardened atheist, pressing his fettered arms against his bosom; “my hope, trust, and expectation is, that the mysterious frame of humanity shall melt into the general mass of nature, to be recomposed in the other forms with which she daily supplies those which daily disappear,—the watery particles to streams and showers, the earthly parts to enrich their mother earth, the airy portions to wanton in the breeze, and those of fire to supply the blaze of Aldeboran and his brethren—In this faith have I lived, and I will die in it!—Hence! begone!—disturb me no farther!—I have spoken the last word that mortal ears shall listen to!”

Deeply impressed with the horrors of his condition, Quentin Durward yet saw that it was vain to hope to awaken him to a sense of his fearful state. He bid him, therefore, farewell; to which the criminal only replied by a short and sullen nod, as one who, plunged in reverie, bids adieu to company which distracts his thoughts. He bent his course towards the forest, and easily found where Klepper was feeding. The creature came at his call, but was for some time unwilling to be caught, snuffing and starting when the stranger approached him. At length, however, Quentin’s general acquaintance with the habits of the animal, and perhaps some particular knowledge of those of Klepper, which he had often admired while Hayraddin and he traveled together, enabled him to take possession of the Bohemian’s dying bequest. Long ere he returned to Peronne, the Bohemian had gone where the vanity of his dreadful creed was to be put to the final issue—a fearful experience for one who had neither expressed remorse for the past, nor apprehension for the future!

CHAPTER XXXV.

A PRIZE FOR HONOUR.

’T is brave for beauty when the best blade wins her.

The Count Palatine.

WHEN Quentin Durward reached Peronne, a council was sitting, in the issue of which he was interested more deeply than he could have apprehended, and which, though held by persons of a rank with whom one of his could scarce be supposed to have community of interest, had nevertheless the most extraordinary influence on his fortunes.

King Louis, who, after the interlude of De la Marck’s envoy, had omitted no opportunity to cultivate the returning interest which that circumstance had given him in the duke’s opinion, had been engaged in consulting him, or, it might be almost said, receiving his opinion, upon the number and quality of the troops, by whom, as auxiliary to the Duke of Burgundy, he was to be attended in their joint expedition against Liege. He plainly saw the wish of

Charles was to call into his camp such Frenchmen as, from their small number and high quality, might be considered rather as hostages than as auxiliaries; but, observant of Crevecœur's advice, he assented as readily to whatever the duke proposed, as if it had arisen from the free impulse of his own mind.

The king failed not, however, to indemnify himself for his complaisance, by the indulgence of his vindictive temper against Balue, whose counsels had led him to repose such exuberant trust in the Duke of Burgundy. Tristan, who bore the summons for moving up his auxiliary forces, had the farther commission to carry the cardinal to the castle of Loches, and there shut him up in one of those iron cages, which he himself is said to have invented.

"Let him make proof of his own devices," said the king; "he is a man of holy church—we may not shed his blood; but, *Pasques-Dieu!* his bishopric, for ten years to come, shall have an impregnable frontier to make up for its small extent!—And see the troops are brought up instantly."

Perhaps, by this prompt acquiescence, Louis hoped to evade the more displeasing condition with which the duke had clogged their reconciliation. But if he so hoped, he greatly mistook the temper of his cousin; for never man lived more tenacious of his purpose than Charles of Burgundy, and least of all was he willing to relax any stipulation which he had made in resentment, or revenge, of a supposed injury.

No sooner were the necessary expresses dispatched to summon up the forces who were selected to act as auxiliaries, than Louis was called upon by his host to give public consent to the espousals of the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye. The king complied with a heavy sigh, and presently after urged a slight expostulation, founded upon the necessity of observing the wishes of the duke himself.

"These have not been neglected," said the Duke of Burgundy; "Crevecœur hath communicated with Monsieur d'Orleans, and finds him (strange to say) so dead to the honour of wedding a royal bride, that he acceded to the proposal of marrying the Countess of Croye, as the kindest offer which father could have made to him."

"He is the more ungracious and thankless," said Louis; "but the whole shall be as you, my cousin, will; if you can bring it about with consent of the parties themselves."

"Fear not that," said the duke; and accordingly, not many minutes after the affair had been proposed, the Duke of Orleans and the Countess of Croye, the latter attended, as on the preceding occasion, by the Countess of Crevecœur, and the Abbess of the Ursulines, were summoned to the presence of the princes, and heard from the mouth of Charles of Burgundy, unobjected to by that of Louis, who sat in silent and moody consciousness of diminished consequence, that the union of their hands was designed by the wisdom of both princes, to confirm the perpetual alliance which in future should take place betwixt France and Burgundy.

The Duke of Orleans had much difficulty in suppressing the joy which he felt upon the proposal, and which delicacy rendered improper in the presence of Louis; and it required his habitual awe

for that monarch, to enable him to rein in his delight, so much as merely to reply, that his duty compelled him to place his choice at the disposal of his sovereign."

"Fair cousin of Orleans," said Louis, with sullen gravity, "since I must speak on so unpleasant an occasion, it is needless for me to remind you, that my sense of your merits had led me to propose for you a match into my own family. But, since my cousin of Burgundy thinks, that the disposing of your hand otherwise is the surest pledge of amity between his dominions and mine, I love both too well not to sacrifice to them my own hopes and wishes."

The Duke of Orleans threw himself on his knees, and kissed,—and, for once, with sincerity of attachment,—the hand which the king, with averted countenance, extended to him. In fact, he, as well as most present, saw, in the reluctant acquiescence of this accomplished dissembler, who, even with that very purpose, had suffered his reluctance to be visible, a king relinquishing his favourite project, and subjugating his paternal feelings to the necessities of state, and interest of his country. Even Burgundy was moved, and Orleans' heart smote him for the joy which he involuntarily felt on being freed from his engagement with the Princess Joan. If he had known how deeply the king was cursing him in his soul, and what thoughts of future revenge he was agitating, it is probable his own delicacy on the occasion would not have been so much hurt.

Charles next turned to the young countess, and bluntly announced the proposed match to her, as a matter which neither admitted delay nor hesitation; adding, at the same time, that it was but a too favourable consequence of her intractability on a former occasion.

"My lord duke and sovereign," said Isabelle, summoning up all her courage, "I observe your grace's commands, and submit to them."

"Enough, enough," said the duke, interrupting her, "we will arrange the rest.—Your majesty," he continued, addressing King Louis, "hath had a boar's hunt in the morning, what say you to rousing a wolf in the afternoon?"

The young countess saw the necessity of decision.—"Your grace mistakes my meaning," she said, speaking, though timidly, yet loudly and decidedly enough to compel the duke's attention, which, from some consciousness, he would otherwise have willingly denied to her.—"My submission," she said, "only respected those lands and estates which your grace's ancestors gave to mine, and which I resign to the house of Burgundy, if my sovereign thinks my disobedience in this matter renders me unworthy to hold them."

"Ha! Saint George!" said the duke, stamping furiously on the ground, "does the fool know in what presence she is—And to whom she speaks?"

"My lord," replied she, still undismayed, "I am before my suzerain, and, I hope, a just one. If you deprive me of my lands, you take away all that your ancestors' generosity gave, and you break the only bonds which attach us together. You gave not this poor and persecuted form, still less the spirit which animates me—And these it is my purpose to dedicate

to Heaven in the convent of the Ursulines, under the guidance of this holy mother abbess."

The rage and astonishment of the duke can hardly be conceived, unless we could estimate the surprise of a falcon, against whom a dove should ruffle its pinions in defiance.—"Will the holy mother receive you without an appanage?" he said, in a voice of scorn.

"If she doth her convent, in the first instance, so much wrong," said the Lady Isabelle, "I trust there is charity enough among the noble friends of my house, to make up some support for the orphan of Croye."

"It is false!" said the duke; "it is a base pretext to cover some secret and unworthy passion.—My Lord of Orleans, she shall be yours, if I drag her to the altar with my own hands!"

The Countess of Crevecœur, a high-spirited woman, and confident in her husband's merits and favour, could keep silent no longer.—"My lord," she said, "your passions transport you into language utterly unworthy—The hand of no gentlewoman can be disposed of by force."

"And it is no part of the duty of a christian prince," added the abbess, "to thwart the wishes of a pious soul, who, broken with the cares and persecutions of the world, is desirous to become the bride of Heaven."

"Neither can my cousin of Orleans," said Dunois, "with honour accept a proposal, to which the lady has thus publicly stated her objections."

"If I were permitted," said Orleans, on whose facile mind Isabelle's beauty had made a deep impression, "some time to endeavour to place my pretensions before the countess in a more favourable light"—

"My lord," said Isabelle, whose firmness was now fully supported by the encouragement which she received from all around, "it were to no purpose—my mind is made up to decline this alliance, though far above my deserts."

"Nor have I time," said the duke, "to wait till those whimsies are changed with the next change of the moon.—Monsieur d'Orleans, she shall learn within this hour, that obedience becomes matter of necessity."

"Not in my behalf, sire," answered the prince, who felt that he could not, with any show of honour, avail himself of the duke's obstinate disposition;—"to have been once openly and positively refused is enough for a Son of France. He cannot prosecute his addresses farther."

The duke darted one furious glance at Orleans, another at Louis; and reading in the countenance of the latter, in spite of his utmost efforts to suppress his feelings, a look of secret triumph, he became outrageous.

"Write," he said to the secretary, "our doom of forfeiture and imprisonment against this disobedient and insolent minion. She shall to the Zucht-haus, to the penitentiary, to herd with those whose lives have rendered them her rivals in effrontery!"

There was a general murmur.

"My lord duke," said the Count of Crevecœur, taking the word for the rest, "this must be better thought on. We, your faithful vassals, cannot suffer

such a dishonour to the nobility and chivalry of Burgundy. If the countess hath done amiss, let her be punished—but in the manner that becomes her rank, and ours, who stand connected with her house by blood and alliance."

The duke paused a moment, and looked full at his councillor with the stare of a bull, which, when compelled by the neat-herd from the road which he wishes to go, deliberates with himself whether to obey, or to rush on his driver, and toss him into the air.

Prudence, however, prevailed over fury—he saw the sentiment was general in his council—was afraid of the advantages which Louis might derive from seeing dissension among his vassals; and probably—for he was rather of a coarse and violent, than of a malignant temper—felt shame of his own dishonourable proposal.

"You are right," he said, "Crevecœur, and I spoke hastily. Her fate shall be determined according to the rules of chivalry. Her flight to Liege hath given the signal for the bishop's murder. He that best avenges that deed, and brings us the head of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, shall claim her hand of us; and if she denies it, we can at least grant him her fiefs, leaving it to his generosity to allow her what means he will to retire into a convent."

"Nay!" said the countess, "think I am the daughter of Count Reinold—of your father's old, valiant, and faithful servant. Would you hold me out as a prize to the best sword-player?"

"Your ancestress," said the duke, "was won at a tourney—you shall be fought for in real *mêlée*. Only thus far, for Count Reinold's sake, the successful prizier shall be a gentleman, of unimpeached birth, and unstained bearings; but, be he such, and the poorest who ever drew the tongue of a buckle through the strap of a sword-belt, he shall have at least the proffer of your hand. I swear it, by St George, by my ducal crown, and by the Order that I wear!—Ha! messires," he added, turning to the nobles present, "this at least is, I think, conform to the rules of chivalry?"

Isabelle's remonstrances were drowned in a general and jubilant assent, above which was heard the voice of old Lord Crawford, regretting the weight of years that prevented his striking for so fair a prize. The duke was gratified by the general applause, and his temper began to flow more smoothly, like that of a swollen river when it hath subsided within its natural boundaries.

"Are we, to whom fate has given dames already," said Crevecœur, "to be by-standers at this fair game? It does not consist with my honour to be so, for I have myself a vow to be paid at the expense of that tusked and bristled brute, De la Marck."

"Strike boldly in, Crevecœur," said the duke; "win her, and if thou canst not wear her thyself, bestow her where thou wilt—on Count Stephen, your nephew, if you list."

"Gramercy, my lord!" said Crevecœur, "I will do my best in the battle; and, should I be fortunate enough to be foremost, Stephen shall try his eloquence against that of the lady abbess."

"I trust," said Dunois, "that the chivalry of

France are not excluded from this fair contest?"

"Heaven forbid! brave Dunois," answered the duke, "were it but for the sake of seeing you do your uttermost.—But," he added, "though there be no fault in the Lady Isabelle wedding a Frenchman, it will be necessary that the Count of Croye must become a subject of Burgundy."

"Enough, enough," said Dunois, "my bar sinister may never be surmounted by the coronet of Croye—I will live and die French. But yet, if I am to lose the lands, I will strike a blow for the lady."

Le Balafre dared not speak aloud in such a presence, but he muttered to himself—

"Now, Saunders Souplejaw, hold thine own!—thou always saidst the fortune of our house was to be won by marriage, and never had you such a chance to keep your word with us."

"No one thinks of me," said Le Glorieux, "who am sure to carry off the prize from all of you."

"Right, my sapient friend," said Louis; "when a woman is in the case, the greatest fool is ever the first in favour."

While the princes and their nobles thus jested over her fate, the abbess and the Countess of Crevecoeur endeavoured in vain to console Isabelle, who had withdrawn with them from the council-presence. The former assured her, that the Holy Virgin would frown on every attempt to withdraw a true votaress from the shrine of Saint Ursula; while the Countess of Crevecoeur whispered more temporal consolation, that no true knight who might succeed in the emprise proposed, would avail himself, against her inclinations, of the duke's award; and that perhaps the successful competitor might prove one who should find such favour in her eyes as to reconcile her to obedience. Love, like despair, catches at straws; and faint and vague as was the hope which this insinuation conveyed, the tears of the Countess Isabelle flowed more placidly while she dwelt upon it.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SALLY.

The wretch, condemn'd with life to part,
Still, still on hope relies,
And every pang that rends the heart
Bids expectation rise.

Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, the darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

GOLDSMITH.

FEW days had passed ere Louis had received, with a smile of gratified vengeance, the intelligence, that his favourite and his councillor, the Cardinal Balue, was groaning within a cage of iron, so disposed as scarce to permit him to enjoy repose in any posture except when recumbent; and of which, be it said in passing, he remained the unpitied tenant for nearly twelve years. The auxiliary forces which the duke had required him to bring up had also appeared; and he comforted himself that their numbers were sufficient to protect his person against

violence, although too limited to cope, had such been his purpose, with the large army of Burgundy. He saw himself also at liberty, when time should suit, to resume his project of marriage between his daughter and the Duke of Orleans; and, although he was sensible of the indignity of serving with his noblest peers under the banners of his own vassal, and against the people whose cause he had abetted, he did not allow these circumstances to embarrass him in the meantime, trusting that a future day would bring him amends.—"For chance," said he to his trusty Oliver, "may, indeed, gain one hit, but it is patience and wisdom which win the game at last."

With such sentiments, upon a beautiful day in the latter end of harvest, the king mounted his horse; and, indifferent that he was looked upon rather as a part of the pageant of a victor, than in the light of an independent sovereign surrounded by his guards and his chivalry, King Louis sallied from under the Gothic gate-way of Peronne, to join the Burgundian army, which commenced at the same time its march against Liege.

Most of the ladies of distinction who were in the place, attended, dressed in their best array, upon the battlements and defences of the gate, to see the gallant show of the warriors setting forth on the expedition. Thither had the Countess Crevecoeur brought the Countess Isabelle. The latter attended very reluctantly; but the peremptory order of Charles had been, that she who was to bestow the palm in the tourney should be visible to the knights who were about to enter the lists.

As they thronged out from under the arch many a pennon and shield was to be seen, graced with fresh devices, expressive of the bearer's devoted resolution to become a competitor for a prize so fair. Here a charger was painted starting for the goal,—there an arrow aimed at a mark,—one knight bore a bleeding heart, indicative of his passion,—another a skull, and a coronet of laurels, showing his determination to win or die. Many others there were; and some so cunningly intricate and obscure, that they might have defied the most ingenious interpreter. Each knight, too, it may be presumed, put his courser to his mettle, and assumed his most gallant seat in the saddle, as he passed for a moment under the view of the fair bevy of dames and damsels, who encouraged their valour by their smiles, and the waving of kerchiefs and of veils. The archer-guard, selected almost at will from the flower of the Scottish nation, drew general applause, from the gallantry and splendour of their appearance.

And there was one among these strangers who ventured on a demonstration of acquaintance with the Lady Isabelle, which had not been attempted even by the most noble of the French nobility. It was Quentin Durward who, as he passed the ladies in his rank, presented to the Countess of Croye, on the point of his lance, the letter of her aunt.

"Now, by my honour," said the Count of Crevecoeur, "that is over insolent in an unworthy adventurer!"

"Do not call him so, Crevecoeur," said Dunois; "I have good reason to bear testimony to his gallantry, and in behalf of that lady, too."

"You make words of nothing," said Isabelle, blushing with shame and partly with resentment;—"it is a letter from my unfortunate aunt—she writes cheerfully, though her situation must be dreadful."

"Let us hear, let us hear what says the Boar's bride," said Crevecœur.

The Countess Isabelle read the letter, in which her aunt seemed determined to make the best of a bad bargain, and, to console herself for the haste and indecorum of her wedding, by the happiness of being wedded to one of the bravest men of the age, who had just acquired a principedom by his valour. She implored her niece not to judge of her William (as she called him) by the report of others, but to wait till she knew him personally. He had his faults, perhaps, but they were such as belonged to characters whom she had ever venerated. William was rather addicted to wine—but so was the gallant Sir Godfrey, their grandsire; he was something hasty and sanguinary in his temper—such had been her brother, Reinold, of blessed memory; he was blunt in speech—few Germans were otherwise; and a little wilful and peremptory, but she believed all men loved to rule. More there was to the same purpose, and the whole concluded with the hope and request that Isabelle would, by means of the bearer, endeavour her escape from the tyrant of Burgundy, and come to her loving kinswoman's court of Liege, where any little differences concerning their mutual rights of succession to the earldom might be adjusted by Isabelle's marrying Carl Eberson—a bridegroom younger, indeed, than his bride, but that, as she (the Lady Hameline) might perhaps say from experience, was an inequality more easy to be endured than Isabelle could be aware of.

Here the Countess Isabelle stopped, the abbess observing, with a prim aspect, that she had read quite enough concerning such worldly vanities; and the Count of Crevecœur breaking out—"Aroint thee, deceitful witch! Why, this device smells rank as the toasted cheese in a rat-trap.—Now fie, and double fie, upon the old decoy-duck!"

The Countess of Crevecœur gravely rebuked her husband for his violence—"The Lady Hameline," she said, "must have been deceived by De la Marck with a show of courtesy."

"He show courtesy!" said the count—"I acquit him of all such dissimulation. You may as well expect courtesy from a literal wild boar—you may as well try to lay leaf-gold on old rusty gibbet-irons. No—idiot as she is, she is not quite goose enough to fall in love with the fox who has snapped her, and that in his very den. But you women are all alike—fair words carry it—and, I dare say, here is my pretty cousin impatient to join her aunt in this fool's paradise, and marry the Boar-Pig."

"So far from being capable of such folly," said Isabelle, "I am doubly desirous of vengeance on the murderers of the excellent bishop, because it will, at the same time, free my aunt from the villain's power."

"Ah! there indeed spoke the voice of Croye!" exclaimed the count; and no more was said concerning the letter.

But while Isabelle read her aunt's epistle to her friends, it must be observed that she did not think it necessary to recite a certain *postscript*, in which the Countess Hameline, lady-like, gave an account of her occupations, and informed her niece, that she had laid aside for the present a surcoat which she was working for her husband, bearing the arms of Croye and La Marck in conjugal fashion, parted per pale, because her William had determined, for purposes of policy, in the first action, to have others dressed in his coat-armour, and himself to assume the arms of Orleans, with a bar sinister—in other words, those of Dunois. There was also a slip of paper in another hand, the contents of which the countess did not think it necessary to mention, being simply these words—"If you hear not of me soon, and that by the trumpet of fame, conclude me dead but not unworthy."

A thought, hitherto repelled as wildly incredible, now glanced with double keenness through Isabelle's soul. As female wit seldom fails in the contrivance of means, she so ordered it that, ere the troops were fully on march, Quentin Durward received from an unknown hand the billet of Lady Hameline, marked with three crosses opposite to the postscript, and having these words subjoined:—"He who feared not the arms of Orleans when on the breast of their gallant owner, cannot dread them when displayed on that of a tyrant and murderer." A thousand thousand times was this intimation kissed and pressed to the bosom of the young Scot! for it marshaled him on the path where both honour and love held out the reward, and possessed him with a secret unknown to others, by which to distinguish him whose death could alone give life to his hopes, and which he prudently resolved to lock up in his own bosom.

But Durward saw the necessity of acting otherwise respecting the information communicated by Hayraddin, since the proposed sally of De la Marck, unless heedfully guarded against, might prove the destruction of the besieging army; so difficult was it, in the tumultuous warfare of those days, to recover from a nocturnal surprise. After pondering on the matter, he formed the additional resolution, that he would not communicate the intelligence save personally, and to both the princes while together; perhaps, because he felt that to mention so well-contrived and hopeful a scheme to Louis whilst in private, might be too strong a temptation to the wavering probity of that monarch, and lead him to assist, rather than repel, the intended sally. He determined, therefore, to watch for an opportunity of revealing the secret whilst Louis and Charles were met, which, as they were not particularly fond of the constraint imposed by each other's society, was not likely soon to occur.

Meanwhile the march continued, and the confederates soon entered the territories of Liege. Here the Burgundian soldiers, at least a part of them, composed of those bands who had acquired the title of *écorcheurs*, or flayers, showed, by the usage which they gave the inhabitants, under pretext of avenging the bishop's death, that they well deserved that honourable title; while their conduct greatly prejudiced the cause of Charles, the aggrieved inhabitants, who might otherwise have been passive

in the quarrel, assuming arms in self-defence, harassing his march, by cutting off small parties, and falling back before the main body upon the city itself, thus augmenting the numbers and desperation of those who resolved to defend it. The French, few in number, and those the choice soldiers of the country, kept, according to the king's orders, close by their respective standards, and observed the strictest discipline; a contrast which increased the suspicions of Charles, who could not help remarking, that the troops of Louis demeaned themselves as if they were rather friends to the Liegeois, than allies of Burgundy.

At length, without experiencing any serious opposition, the army arrived in the rich valley of the Maes, and before the large and populous city of Liege. The Castle of Schonwaldt they found had been totally destroyed, and learned that William de la Marck, whose sole virtues were of a military cast, had withdrawn his whole forces into the city, and was determined to avoid the encounter of the chivalry of France and Burgundy in the open field. But the invaders were not long of experiencing the danger which must always exist in attacking a large town, however open, if the inhabitants are disposed to defend it desperately.

A part of the Burgundian van-guard, conceiving that, from the dismantled and breached state of the walls, they had nothing to do but to march into Liege at their ease, entered one of the suburbs with the shouts of "Burgundy, Burgundy! Kill, kill—all is ours—Remember Louis of Bourbon!" But as they marched in disorder through the narrow streets, and were partly dispersed for the purpose of pillage, a large body of the inhabitants issued suddenly from the town, fell furiously upon them, and made considerable slaughter. De la Marck even availed himself of the breaches in the walls, which permitted the defenders to issue out at different points, and, by taking separate routes into the contested suburb, to assail, in the front, flank, and rear, at once, the assailants, who, stunned by the furious, unexpected, and multiplied nature of the resistance offered, could hardly stand to their arms. The evening, which began to close, added to the confusion.

When this news was brought to Duke Charles, he was furious with rage, which was not much appeased by the offer of King Louis, to send the French men-at-arms into the suburbs, to rescue and bring off the Burgundian van-guard. Rejecting this offer briefly, he would have put himself at the head of his own guards; but Hymbercourt and Creve-cœur entreated him to leave the service to them, and, marching into the scene of action at two points, with more order and proper arrangement for mutual support, these two celebrated captains succeeded in repulsing the Liegeois, and in extricating the van-guard, who lost, besides prisoners, no fewer than eight hundred men, of whom about a hundred were men-at-arms. The prisoners, however, were not numerous, most of them having been rescued by Hymbercourt, who now proceeded to occupy the contested suburb, and to place guards opposite to the town, from which it was divided by an open space, or esplanade, of five or six hundred yards,

VOL. III.

left free of buildings for the purposes of defence. There was no moat betwixt the suburb and town, the ground being rocky in that place. A gate fronted the suburb, from which sallies might be easily made, and the wall was pierced by two or three of those breaches which Duke Charles had caused to be made after the battle of Saint Tron, and which had been hastily repaired with mere barricades of timber. D'Hymbercourt turned two culverins on the gate, and placed two others opposite to the breach, to repel any sally from the city, and then returned to the Burgundian army, which he found in great disorder.

In fact, the main body and rear of the numerous army of the duke had continued to advance, while the broken and repulsed van-guard was in the act of retreating; and they had come into collision with each other, to the great confusion of both. The necessary absence of Hymbercourt, who discharged all the duties of *maréchal du camp*, or, as we should now say, of quarter-master-general, augmented the disorder; and, to complete the whole, the night sunk down dark as a wolf's mouth; there fell a thick and heavy rain, and the ground on which the beleaguering army must needs take up their position, was muddy and intersected with many canals. It is scarce possible to form an idea of the confusion which prevailed in the Burgundian army, where leaders were separated from their soldiers, and soldiers from their standards and officers; where every one, from the highest to the lowest, was seeking shelter and accommodation where he could find it; where the wearied and wounded, who had been engaged in the battle, were calling in vain for shelter and refreshment; and while those who knew nothing of the disaster, were pressing on to have their share in the sack of the place, which they had no doubt was proceeding merrily.

When Hymbercourt returned, he had a task to perform of incredible difficulty, and embittered by the reproaches of his master, who made no allowance for the still more necessary duty in which he had been engaged, until the temper of the gallant soldier began to give way under his unreasonable reproaches.—"I went hence to restore some order in the van," he said, "and left the main body under your grace's own guidance; and now, on my return, I can neither find that we have front, flank, nor rear, so utter is the confusion."

"We are the more like a barrel of herrings," answered Le Glorieux, "which is the most natural resemblance for a Flemish army."

The jester's speech made the duke laugh, and perhaps prevented a farther prosecution of the altercation betwixt him and his general.

By dint of great exertion, a small *lust-haus*, or country villa of some wealthy citizen of Liege, was secured and cleared of other occupants, for the accommodation of the duke and his immediate attendants; and the authority of Hymbercourt and Creve-cœur at length established a guard in the vicinity, of about forty men-at-arms, who lighted a very large fire, made with the timber of the out-houses, which they pulled down for the purpose.

A little to the left of this villa, and betwixt it and the suburb, which, as we have said, was opposite

to the city-gate, and occupied by the Burgundian van-guard, lay another pleasure-house, surrounded by a garden and court-yard, and having two or three small closes or fields in the rear of it. In this the King of France established his own head-quarters. He did not himself pretend to be a soldier, farther than a natural indifference to danger and much sagacity qualified him to be called such; but he was always careful to employ the most skilful in that profession, and reposed in them the confidence they merited. Louis and his immediate attendants occupied the house; a part of his Scottish Guard were placed in the court, where there were out-houses and sheds to shelter them from the weather; the rest were stationed in the garden. The rest of the French were quartered closely together and in good order, with alarm-posts appointed, in case of their having to sustain an attack.

Dunois and Crawford, assisted by several old officers and soldiers, amongst whom Le Balafré was conspicuous for his diligence, contrived, by breaking down walls, making openings through hedges, filling up ditches, and the like, to facilitate the communication of the troops with each other, and the orderly combination of the whole, in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, the king judged it proper to go without farther ceremony to the quarters of the Duke of Burgundy, to ascertain what was to be the order of proceeding, and what co-operation was expected from him. His presence occasioned a sort of council of war to be held, of which Charles might not otherwise have dreamed. It was then that Quentin Durward prayed earnestly to be admitted, as having something of importance to deliver to the two princes. This was obtained without much difficulty; and great was the astonishment of Louis, when he heard him calmly and distinctly relate the purpose of William de la Marck, to make a sally upon the camp of the besiegers, under the dress and banners of the French. Louis would probably have been much better pleased to have had such important news communicated in private; but as the whole story had been publicly told, he only observed, "that, whether true or false, such a report concerned them most materially."

"Not a whit, not a whit," said the duke, carelessly. "Had there been such a purpose as this young man announces, it had not been communicated to me by an archer of the Scottish Guard."

"However that may be," answered Louis, "I pray you, fair cousin, you and your captains, to attend, that, to prevent the unpleasing consequences of such an attack, should it be made unexpectedly, I will cause my soldiers to wear white scarfs over their armour—Dunois, see it given out on the instant—that is," he added, "if our brother and general approves of it."

"I see no objection," replied the duke, "if the chivalry of France are willing to run the risk of having the name of Knights of the Smock-sleeve bestowed on them in future."

"It would be a right well adapted title, friend Charles," said Le Glorieux, "considering that a woman is the reward of the most valiant."

"Well spoken, Sagacity," said Louis—"Cousin, good night; I will go arm me.—By the way, what

if I win the countess with mine own hand?"

"Your majesty," said the duke, in an altered tone of voice, "must then become a true Fleming."

"I cannot," answered Louis, in a tone of the most sincere confidence, "be more so than I am already, could I but bring you, my dear cousin, to believe it."

The duke only replied by wishing the king good night, in a tone resembling the snort of a shy horse, starting from the caress of the rider when he is about to mount, and is soothing him to stand still.

"I could pardon all his duplicity," said the duke to Crevecœur, "but cannot forgive his supposing me capable of the gross folly of being duped by his professions."

Louis, too, had his confidences with Oliver le Dain when he returned to his own quarters.—"This Scot," he said, "is such a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity, that I know not what to make of him. *Pasques-Dieu!* think of his unpardonable folly in bringing out honest De la Marck's plan of a sally, before the face of Burgundy, Crevecœur, and all of them, instead of rounding it in my ear, and giving me at least the choice of abetting or defeating it!"

"It is better as it is, sire," said Oliver; "there are many in your present train who would scruple to assail Burgundy undefied, or to ally themselves with De la Marck."

"Thou art right, Oliver. Such fools there are in the world, and we have no time to reconcile their scruples by a little dose of self-interest. We must be true men, Oliver, and good allies of Burgundy, for this night at least,—time may give us chance of a better game. Go, tell no man to unarm himself; and let them shoot, in case of necessity, as sharply on those who cry *France and St Denis!* as if they cried Hell and Satan! I will myself sleep in my armour. Let Crawford place Quentin Durward on the extreme point of our line of sentinels, next to the city. Let him e'en have the first benefit of the sally which he has announced to us—if his luck bear him out, it is the better for him. But take an especial care of Martius Galeotti, and see he remain in the rear, in a place of the most absolute safety—he is even but too venturesome; and, like a fool, would be both swordsman and philosopher. See to these things, Oliver, and good night—Our Lady of Clery, and Monseigneur Saint Martin of Tours, be gracious to my slumbers!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SALLY.

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
The city-gates outpour'd.

Paradise Regained.

A DEAD silence soon reigned over that great host which lay in leaguer before Liege. For a long time the cries of the soldiers repeating their signals, and seeking to join their several banners, sounded like the howling of bewildered dogs seeking their masters. But at length, overcome with weariness through the fatigues of the day, the dispersed soldiers crowded under such shelter as they could light upon, and

those who could find none, sunk down through very fatigue under walls, hedges, and such temporary protection, there to await for morning,—a morning which some of them were never to behold. A dead sleep fell on almost all, excepting those who kept a faint and weary watch by the lodgings of the king and the duke. The dangers and hopes of the morrow—even the schemes of glory which many of the young nobility had founded upon the splendid prize held out to him who should avenge the murdered Bishop of Liege—glided from their recollection as they lay stupified with fatigue and sleep. But not so with Quentin Durward. The knowledge that he alone was possessed of the means of distinguishing La Marck in the contest—the recollection by whom that information had been communicated, and the fair augury which might be drawn from her conveying it to him—the thought that his fortune had brought him to a most perilous and doubtful crisis indeed, but one where there was still at least a chance of his coming off triumphant, banished every desire to sleep, and strung his nerves with vigour, which defied fatigue.

Posted, by the king's express order, on the extreme point between the French quarters and the town, a good way to the right of the suburb which we have mentioned, he sharpened his eye to penetrate the mass which lay before him, and excited his ears, to catch the slightest sound which might announce any commotion in the beleaguered city. But its huge clocks had successively knelled three hours after midnight, and all continued still and silent as the grave.

At length, and when he began to think the attack would be deferred till day-break, and joyfully recollected that there would be then light enough to descry the band sinister across the fleur-de-lys of Orleans, he thought he heard in the city a humming murmur, like that of disturbed bees mustering for the defence of their hives. He listened—the noise continued; but it was of a character so undistinguished by any peculiar or precise sound, that it might be the murmur of a wind arising among the boughs of a distant grove, or perhaps some stream, swollen by the late rain, which was discharging itself into the sluggish Maes with more than usual sound. Quentin was prevented by these considerations from instantly giving the alarm, which, if done carelessly, would have been a heavy offence. But, when the noise rose louder, and seemed pouring at the same time towards his own post, and towards the suburb, he deemed it his duty to fall back as silently as possible, and call his uncle, who commanded the small body of archers destined to his support. All were on their feet in a moment, and with as little noise as possible. In less than a second, Lord Crawford was at their head, and, dispatching an archer to alarm the king and his household, drew back his little party to some distance behind their watch-fire, that they might not be seen by its light. The rushing sound, which had approached them more nearly, seemed suddenly to have ceased; but they still heard distinctly the more distant heavy tread of a large body of men approaching the suburb.

“The lazy Burgundians are asleep on their post,”

whispered Crawford; “make for the suburb, Cunningham, and awaken the stupid oxen.”

“Keep well to the rear as you go,” said Durward; “if ever I heard the tread of mortal men, there is a strong body interposed between us and the suburb.”

“Well said, Quentin, my dainty callant,” said Crawford; “thou art a soldier beyond thy years. They only make halt till the others come forward.—I would I had some knowledge where they are!”

“I will creep forward, my lord,” said Quentin, “and endeavour to bring you information.”

“Do so, my bonny chield; thou hast sharp ears and eyes, and good will—but take heed—I would not lose thee for two and a plack.”

Quentin, with his harquebuss ready prepared, stole forward, through ground which he had reconnoitred carefully in the twilight of the preceding evening, until he was not only certain that he was in the neighbourhood of a very large body of men, who were standing fast betwixt the king's quarters and the suburbs, but also that there was a detached party of smaller number in advance, and very close to him. They seemed to whisper together, as if uncertain what to do next. At last, the steps of two or three *enfants perdus*, detached from that smaller party, approached him so near as twice a pike's length. Seeing it impossible to retreat undiscovered, Quentin called out aloud, “*Qui vive?*” and was answered by “*Vive Li—Li—ege—c'est-à-dire*” (added he who spoke, correcting himself), “*Vive la France!*”—Quentin instantly fired his harquebuss—a man groaned and fell, and he himself, under the instant but vague discharge of a number of pieces, the fire of which ran in a disorderly manner amongst the column, and showed it to be very numerous, hastened back to the main guard.

“Admirably done, my brave boy!” said Crawford,—“Now, callants, draw in within the courtyard—they are too many to mell with in the open field.”

They drew within the court-yard and garden accordingly, where they found all in great order, and the king prepared to mount his horse.

“Whither away, sire?” said Crawford; “you are safest here with your own people.”

“Not so,” said Louis; “I must instantly to the duke. He must be convinced of our good faith at this critical moment, or we shall have both Liegeois and Burgundians upon us at once.” And, springing on his horse, he bade Dunois command the French troops without the house, and Crawford the archer-guard and other household troops within the lusthaus and its enclosures. He commanded them to bring up two sakers, and as many falconets (pieces of cannon for the field), which had been left about half a mile in the rear; and, in the meantime, to make good their posts, but by no means to advance, whatever success they might obtain; and having given these orders, he rode off to the duke's quarters.

The delay which permitted these arrangements to be carried fully into effect, was owing to Quentin's having fortunately shot the proprietor of the house, who acted as guide to the column which was designed to attack it, and whose attack, had it been made instantly, might have been successful.

Durward, who, by the king's order, attended him to the duke's, found the latter in a state of choleric distemperature, which almost prevented his discharging the duties of a general, which were never more necessary; for, besides the noise of a close and furious combat which had now taken place in the suburb upon the left of their whole army,—besides the attack upon the king's quarters, which was fiercely maintained in the centre,—a third column of Liegeois, of even superior numbers, had filed out from a more distant breach, and, marching by lanes, vineyards, and passes, known to themselves, had fallen upon the right flank of the Burgundian army who, alarmed at their war-cries of *Vive la France!* and *Denis Montjoye!* which mingled with those of *Liege* and *Rouge Sanglier*, and at the idea thus inspired, of treachery on the part of the French confederates, made a very desultory and imperfect resistance; while the duke, foaming and swearing, and cursing his liege lord and all that belonged to him, called out to shoot with bow and gun on all that was French, whether black or white,—alluding to the sleeves with which Louis's soldiers had designated themselves.

The arrival of the king, attended only by Le Balafré and Quentin, and half a score of archers, restored confidence. Hymbercourt, Crevecœur, and others of the Burgundian leaders, whose names were then the praise and dread of war, rushed devotedly into the conflict; and, while some hastened to bring up more distant troops, to whom the panic had not extended, others threw themselves into the tumult, re-animated the instinct of discipline, and, while the duke toiled in the front like an ordinary man-at-arms, brought their men by degrees into array, and dismayed the assailants by the use of their artillery. The conduct of Louis, on the other hand, was that of a calm, collected, sagacious leader, who neither sought nor avoided danger, but showed so much self-possession and sagacity, that the Burgundian leaders readily obeyed the orders which he issued.

The scene was now become in the utmost degree animated and horrible. On the left, the suburb, after a fierce contest, had been set on fire, and a wide and dreadful conflagration did not prevent the burning ruins from being still disputed. On the centre, the French troops, though pressed by immense odds, kept up so close and constant a fire, that the little pleasure-house shone bright with the glancing flashes, as if surrounded with a martyr's crown of flames. On the right, the battle swayed backwards and forwards with varied success, as fresh reinforcements poured out of the town, or were brought forward from the rear of the Burgundian host; and the strife continued with unremitting fury for three mortal hours, which at length brought the dawn, so much desired by the besiegers. The enemy, at this period, seemed to be slackening their efforts upon the right and in the centre, and several discharges of cannon were heard from the lust-haus.

"Go," said the king, to Le Balafré and Quentin, the instant his ear had caught the sound; "they have got up the sakers and falconets—the lust-haus is safe, blessed be the Holy Virgin!—Tell Dunois to move this way, but rather nearer the city, with all

our men-at-arms, excepting what he may leave for the defence of the house, and cut in between those thick-headed Liegeois on the right and the city, from which they are supplied with recruits."

The uncle and nephew galloped off to Dunois and Crawford, who, tired of their defensive war, joyfully obeyed the summons, and, filing out at the head of a gallant body of two hundred French gentlemen, besides squires, and the greater part of the archers, marched across the field, trampling down the wounded, till they gained the flank of the large body of Liegeois, by whom the right of the Burgundians had been so fiercely assailed. The increasing day-light discovered that the enemy were continuing to pour out from the city, either for the purpose of continuing the battle on that point, or of bringing safely off the forces who were already engaged.

"By Heaven!" said old Crawford to Dunois, "were I not certain it is *thou* that art riding by my side, I would say I saw thee among yonder banditti and burghers, marshaling and arraying them with thy mace—only, if yon be thou, thou art bigger than thou art wont to be. Art thou sure yonder armed leader is not thy wraith, thy double-man, as these Flemings call it?"

"My wraith!" said Dunois; "I know not what you mean. But yonder is a caitiff with my bearings displayed on crest and shield, whom I will presently punish for his insolence."

"In the name of all that is noble, my lord, leave the vengeance to me!" said Quentin.

"To thee indeed, young man!" said Dunois; "that is a modest request!—No—these things brook no substitution."—Then turning on his saddle, he called out to those around him, "Gentlemen of France, form your line, level your lances! Let the rising sun-beams shine through the battalions of yonder swine of Liege, and hogs of Ardennes, that masquerade in our ancient coats."

The men-at-arms answered with a loud shout of "A Dunois! a Dunois!—Long live the bold Bastard!—Orleans to the rescue!"—And, with their leader in the centre, charged at full gallop. They encountered no timid enemy. The large body which they charged consisted (excepting some mounted officers) entirely of infantry, who, setting the butt of their lances against their feet, the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and those behind presenting their spears over their heads, offered such resistance to the rapid charge of the men-at-arms as the hedge-hog presents to his enemy. Few were able to make way through that iron-wall; but of those few was Dunois, who, giving spur to his horse, and making the noble animal leap more than twelve feet at a bound, fairly broke his way into the middle of the phalanx, and made toward the object of his animosity. What was his surprise to find Quentin still by his side, and fighting in the same front with himself—youth, desperate courage, and the determination to do or die, having still kept him abreast with the best knight in Europe; for such was Dunois reported, and truly reported, at the period.

Their spears were soon broken; but the lanz-knechts were unable to withstand the blows of their long heavy swords; while the horses and riders, armed in complete steel, sustained little injury from

their lances. Still they were contending with rival efforts to burst forward to the spot where he who had usurped the armorial bearings of Dunois was doing the duty of a good and valiant leader, when Dunois, observing the boar's-head and tusks in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, "Thou art worthy to avenge the arms of Orleans! I leave thee the task.—Balafré, support your nephew; but let none dare to interfere with Dunois' boar-hunt."

That Quentin Durward joyfully acquiesced in this division of labour cannot be doubted, and each pressed forward upon his separate object, followed and defended from behind, by such as were able to keep up with them.

But at this moment the column which De la Marck had proposed to support, when his own course was arrested by the charge of Dunois, had lost all the advantages they had gained during the night; while the Burgundians, with returning day, had resumed those which belong to superior discipline. The great mass of Liegeois were compelled to retreat, and at length to flight; and, falling back on those who were engaged with the French men-at-arms, the whole became a confused tide of fighters, fliers, and pursuers, which rolled itself towards the city-walls, and at last was poured into the ample and undefended breach through which the Liegeois had sallied.

Quentin made more than human exertions to overtake the special object of his pursuit, who was still in his sight, striving, by voice and example, to renew the battle, and bravely supported by a chosen party of lanzknechts. Le Balafré, and several of his comrades, attached themselves to Quentin, much marveling at the extraordinary gallantry displayed by so young a soldier. On the very brink of the breach, De la Marck—for it was himself—succeeded in effecting a momentary stand, and repelling some of the most forward of the pursuers. He had a mace of iron in his hand, before which everything seemed to go down, and was so covered with blood, that it was almost impossible to discern the bearings on his shield which had so much incensed Dunois.

Quentin now found little difficulty in singling him out; for the commanding situation of which he had possessed himself, and the use he made of his terrible mace, caused many of the assailants to seek safer points of attack than that where so desperate a defender presented himself. But Quentin, to whom the importance attached to victory over this formidable antagonist was better known, sprung from his horse at the bottom of the breach, and, letting the noble animal, the gift of the Duke of Orleans, run loose through the tumult, ascended the ruins to measure swords with the Boar of Ardennes. The latter, as if he had seen his intention, turned towards Durward with mace uplifted; and they were on the point of encounter, when a dreadful shout of triumph, of tumult, and of despair, announced that the besiegers were entering the city at another point, and in the rear of those who defended the breach. Assembling around him, by voice and bugle, the desperate partners of his desperate fortune, De la Marck, at those appalling sounds, abandoned the breach, and endeavoured to effect his retreat towards a part of the city from which he might escape

to the other side of the Maes. His immediate followers formed a deep body of well-disciplined men, who, never having given quarter, were resolved now not to ask it, and who, in that hour of despair, threw themselves into such order, that their front occupied the whole breadth of the street, through which they slowly retired, making head from time to time, and checking the pursuers, many of whom began to seek a safer occupation, by breaking into the houses for plunder. It is therefore probable that De la Marck might have effected his escape, his disguise concealing him from those who promised themselves to win honour and grandeur upon his head, but for the staunch pursuit of Quentin, his uncle Le Balafré, and some of his comrades. At every pause which was made by the lanzknechts, a furious combat took place betwixt them and the archers, and in every *mêlée* Quentin sought De la Marck; but the latter, whose present object was to retreat, seemed to evade his purpose of bringing him to single combat. The confusion was general in every direction. The shrieks and cries of women, the yelling of the terrified inhabitants, now subjected to the extremity of military license, sounded horribly shrill amid the shouts of battle,—like the voice of misery and despair contending with that of fury and violence, which should be heard farthest and loudest.

It was just when De la Marck, retiring through this infernal scene, had passed the door of a small chapel of peculiar sanctity, that the shouts of "France! France!—Burgundy! Burgundy!" apprised him that a part of the besiegers were entering the farther end of the street, which was a narrow one, and that his retreat was cut off.—"Conrade," he said, "take all the men with you, and charge yonder fellows roundly, and break through if you can—with me it is over. I am man enough, now that I am brought to bay, to send some of these vagabond Scots to hell before me."

His lieutenant obeyed, and, with most of the few lanzknechts who remained alive, hurried to the farther end of the street, with the purpose of charging those Burgundians who were advancing, and so breaking their way. About six of De la Marck's best men remained to perish with their master, and fronted the archers, who were not many more in number.—"Sanglier! Sanglier!—Hola! gentlemen of Scotland," said he, waving his mace, "who longs to win a coronet,—who strikes at the Boar's-head?—You, young man, have, methinks, a hankering, but you must win ere you wear it."

Quentin heard but imperfectly the words, which were partly lost in the hollow helmet; but the action could not be mistaken, and he had but time to bid his uncle and comrades, as they were gentlemen, to stand back, when De la Marck sprung upon him with a bound like a tiger, aiming at the same time a blow with his mace, so as to make his hand and foot keep time together, and giving his stroke the full advantage of the descent of his leap; but, light of foot and quick of eye, Quentin leaped aside, and disappointed an aim which would have been fatal had it taken effect.

They then closed, like the wolf and the wolf-dog, their comrades on either side remaining inactive spectators, for Le Balafré roared out for fair play,

adding, "that he would venture his nephew on him were he as wight as Wallace."

Neither was his confidence unjustified; for, although the blows of the despairing robber fell like those of the hammer on the anvil, yet the quick motions, and dexterous swordmanship, of the young archer, enabled him to escape, and to requite them with the point of his less noisy, though more fatal weapon; and that so often, and so effectually, that the huge strength of his antagonist began to give way to fatigue, while the ground on which he stood became a puddle of blood. Yet, still unabated in courage and ire, he fought on with as much mental energy as at first, and Quentin's victory seemed dubious and distant, when a female voice behind him called him by his name, ejaculating, "Help! help! for the sake of the blessed virgin!"

He turned his head, and with a single glance beheld Gertrude Pavillon, her mantle stripped from her shoulders, dragged forcibly along by a French soldier; one of several, who, breaking into the chapel close by, had seized, as their prey, on the terrified females who had taken refuge there.

"Wait me but one moment," exclaimed Quentin to De la Marck, and sprung to extricate his benefactress from a situation of which he conjectured all the dangers.

"I wait no man's pleasure," said De la Marck, flourishing his mace, and beginning to retreat—glad, no doubt, at being free of so formidable an assailant.

"You shall wait mine though, by your leave," said Balafre; "I will not have my nephew baulked."—So saying, he instantly assaulted De la Marck with his two-handed sword.

Quentin found, in the meanwhile, that the rescue of Gertrude was a task more difficult than could be finished in one moment. Her captor, supported by his comrades, refused to relinquish his prize; and whilst Durward, aided by one or two of his countrymen, endeavoured to compel him to do so, the former beheld the chance which fortune had so kindly afforded him for fortune and happiness, glide out of his reach; so that when he stood at length in the street with the liberated Gertrude, there was no one near them. Totally forgetting the defenceless situation of his companion, he was about to spring away in pursuit of the Boar of Ardenne, as the greyhound tracks the deer, when, clinging to him in her despair, she exclaimed, "For the sake of your mother's honour, leave me not here!—As you are a gentleman, protect me to my father's house, which once sheltered you and the Lady Isabelle!—For her sake, leave me not!"

Her call was agonizing, but it was irresistible; and, bidding a mental adieu, with unutterable bitterness of feeling, to all the gay hopes which had carried him through that bloody day, and which at one moment seemed to approach consummation, Quentin, like an unwilling spirit, who obeys a talisman which he cannot resist, protected Gertrude to Pavillon's house, and arrived in time to protect that and the syndic himself against the fury of the licentious soldiery.

Meantime, the king and the Duke of Burgundy entered the city on horseback, and through one of

the breaches. They were both in complete armour, but the latter, covered with blood from the plume to the spur, drove his steed furiously up the breach, which Louis surmounted with the stately pace of one who leads a procession. They dispatched orders to stop the sack of the city, which had already commenced, and to assemble their scattered troops. The princes themselves proceeded towards the great church, both for the protection of many of the distinguished inhabitants, who had taken refuge there, and in order to hold a sort of military council after they had heard high mass.

Busied, as other officers of his rank, in collecting those under his command, Lord Crawford, at the turning of one of the streets which leads to the Maes, met Le Balafre sauntering composedly towards the river, holding in his hand, by the gory locks, a human head, with as much indifference as a fowler carries a game-pouch.

"How now, Ludovic!" said his commander; "what are ye doing with that carrion?"

"It is all that is left of a bit of work which my nephew shaped out, and nearly finished, and I put the last hand to," said Le Balafre—"A good fellow that I dispatched yonder, and who prayed me to throw his head into the Maes.—Men have queer fancies when old Small-back is gripping them; but Small-back must lead down the dance with us all in our time."

"And you are going to throw that head into the Maes?" said Crawford, looking more attentively on the ghastly memorial of mortality.

"Ay, truly am I," said Ludovic Lesly. "If you refuse a dying man his boon, you are like to be haunted with his ghost, and I love to sleep sound at nights."

"You must take your chance of the ghaist, man," said Crawford; "for, by my soul, there is more lies on that dead pow than you think for. Come along with me—not a word more—Come along with me."

"Nay, for that matter," said Le Balafre, "I made him no promise; for, in truth, I had off his head before the tongue was well done wagging; and as I feared him not living, by Saint Martin of Tours, I fear him as little when he is dead. Besides, my little gossip, the Friar of St Martin's, will lend me a pot of holy water."

When high mass had been said in the Cathedral Church of Liege, and the terrified town was restored to some moderate degree of order, Louis and Charles, with their peers around, proceeded to hear the claims of those who had any to make for services performed during the battle. Those which respected the County of Croye and its fair mistress were first received, and, to the disappointment of sundry claimants, who had thought themselves sure of the rich prize, there seemed doubt and mystery to involve their several pretensions. Crevecœur showed a boar's hide, such as De la Marck usually wore; Dunois produced a cloven shield, with his armorial bearing; and there were others, who claimed the merit of having dispatched the murderer of the bishop, producing similar tokens—the rich reward fixed on De la Marck's head having brought death to all who were armed in his resemblance.

There was much noise and contest among the competitors, and Charles (internally regretting the rash promise which had placed the hand and wealth of his fair vassal on such a hazard) was in hopes he might find means of evading all these conflicting claims, when Crawford pressed forward into the circle, dragging Le Balafre after him, who, awkward and bashful, followed like an unwilling mastiff towed on in a leash, as his leader exclaimed,—“Away with your hoofs and hides, and painted iron!—No one, save he who slew the Boar, can show the tusks!”

So saying, he flung on the floor the bloody head, easily known as that of De la Marck, by the singular conformation of the jaws, which in reality had a certain resemblance to those of the animal whose name he bore, and which was instantly recognized by all who had seen him.

“Crawford,” said Louis, while Charles sat silent, in gloomy and displeased surprise, “I trust it is one of my trusty Scots who has won this prize?”

“It is Ludovic Lesly, sire, whom we call Le Balafre,” replied the old soldier.

“But is he noble?” said the duke; “is he of gentle blood?—otherwise our promise is void.”

“He is a cross, ungainly piece of wood enough,” said Crawford, looking at the tall, awkward, embarrassed figure of the archer; “but I will warrant him a branch of the tree of Rothes for all that—and they have been as noble as any house in France or Burgundy, ever since it is told of their founder, that,

Between the Less-lee and the mair,
He slew the knight, and left him there.”

“There is then no help for it,” said the duke; “and the fairest and richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rude mercenary soldier like this, or die secluded in a convent—and she the only child of our faithful Reinold de Croye!—I have been too rash.”

And a cloud settled on his brow, to the surprise of his peers, who seldom saw him evince the slightest token of regret for an adopted resolution.

“Hold but an instant,” said the Lord Crawford, “it may be better than your grace conjectures. Hear but what this cavalier has to say.—Speak out, man, and a murrain to thee,” he added, apart to Le Balafre.

But that blunt soldier, though he could make a shift to express himself intelligibly enough to King Louis, to whose familiarity he was habituated, yet found himself incapable of enunciating his resolution before so splendid an assembly as that before which he then stood; and after having turned his shoulder to the princes, and preluded with a hoarse chuckling laugh, and two or three tremendous contortions of countenance, he was only able to pronounce the words, “Saunders Souplejaw”—and then stuck fast.

“May it please your majesty, and your grace,” said Crawford, “I must speak for my countryman and old comrade. You shall understand, that he has had it prophesied to him by a seer in his own land, that the fortune of his house is to be made by marriage; but as he is, like myself, something the worse for the wear,—loves the wine-house better than a

lady’s summer-parlour, and, in short, having some barrack tastes and likings, which would make greatness in his own person rather an encumbrance to him, he hath acted by my advice, and resigns the pretensions acquired by the fate of slaying William de la Marck, to him by whom the Wild Boar was actually brought to bay, who is his maternal nephew.”

“I will vouch for that youth’s services and prudence,” said King Louis, overjoyed to see that fate had thrown so gallant a prize to one over whom he had some influence. “Without his prudence and vigilance we had been ruined—It was he who made us aware of the night-sally.”

“I then,” said Charles, “owe him some reparation for doubting his veracity.”

“And I can attest his gallantry as a man-at-arms,” said Dunois.

“But,” interrupted Crevecoeur, “though the uncle be a Scottish *gentillâtre*, that makes not the nephew necessarily so.”

“He is of the house of Durward,” said Crawford; “descended from that Allan Durward who was High Steward of Scotland.”

“Nay, if it be young Durward,” said Crevecoeur, “I say no more. Fortune has declared herself on his side too plainly, for me to struggle farther with her humoursome ladyship.”

“We have yet to inquire,” said Charles, thoughtfully, “what the fair lady’s sentiments may be towards this fortunate adventurer.”

“By the mass!” said Crevecoeur, “I have but too much reason to believe your grace will find her more amenable to authority than on former occasions.—But why should I grudge this youth his preferment? since, after all, it is sense, firmness, and gallantry, which have put him in possession of WEALTH, RANK, and BEAUTY.”

I HAD already sent these sheets to the press, concluding, as I thought, with a moral of excellent tendency for the encouragement of all fair-haired, light-eyed, long-legged emigrants from my native country, who might be willing in stirring times to take up the gallant profession of cavaleros of fortune. But a friendly monitor, one of those who like the lump of sugar which is found at the bottom of a tea-cup, as well as the flavour of the souchong itself, has entered a bitter remonstrance, and insists that I should give a precise and particular account of the espousals of the young heir of Glen-houlakin and the lovely Flemish countess, and tell what tournaments were held, and how many lances were broken, upon so interesting an occasion; nor withhold from the curious reader the number of sturdy boys, who inherited the valour of Quentin Durward, and of bright damsels, in whom were renewed the charms of Isabelle de Croye. I replied in course of post, that times were changed, and public weddings were entirely out of fashion. In days, traces of which I myself can remember, not only were the “fifteen friends” of the happy pair invited to witness their union, but the bridal minstrelsy still continued, as in the “Ancient Mariner,” to “nod their heads” till morning shone on them. The sack-posset was eaten in the nuptial-chamber—the stock-

ing was thrown—and the bride's garter was struggled for in presence of the happy couple whom Hymen had made one flesh. The authors of the period were laudably accurate in following its fashions. They spared you not a blush of the bride, not a rapturous glance of the bridegroom, not a diamond in her hair, not a button on his embroidered waistcoat; until at length, with Astræa, "they fairly put their characters to bed." But how little does this agree with the modest privacy which induces our modern brides—sweet bashful darlings!—to steal from pomp and plate, and admiration and flattery, and, like honest Shenstone,

Seek for freedom at an inn!

To these, unquestionably, an exposure of the circumstances of publicity with which a bridal in the fifteenth century was always celebrated, must appear in the highest degree disgusting. Isabelle de Croye would be ranked in their estimation far below the maid who milks and does the meanest

chars; for even she, were it in the church-porch, would reject the hand of her journeyman shoemaker, should he propose "*faire des noces*," as it is called in Parisian signs, instead of going down on the top of the long coach to spend the honey-moon *incognito* at Deptford or Greenwich. I will not, therefore, tell more of this matter, but will steal away from the wedding as Ariosto from that of Angelica, leaving it to whom it may please to add farther particulars, after the fashion of their own imagination.

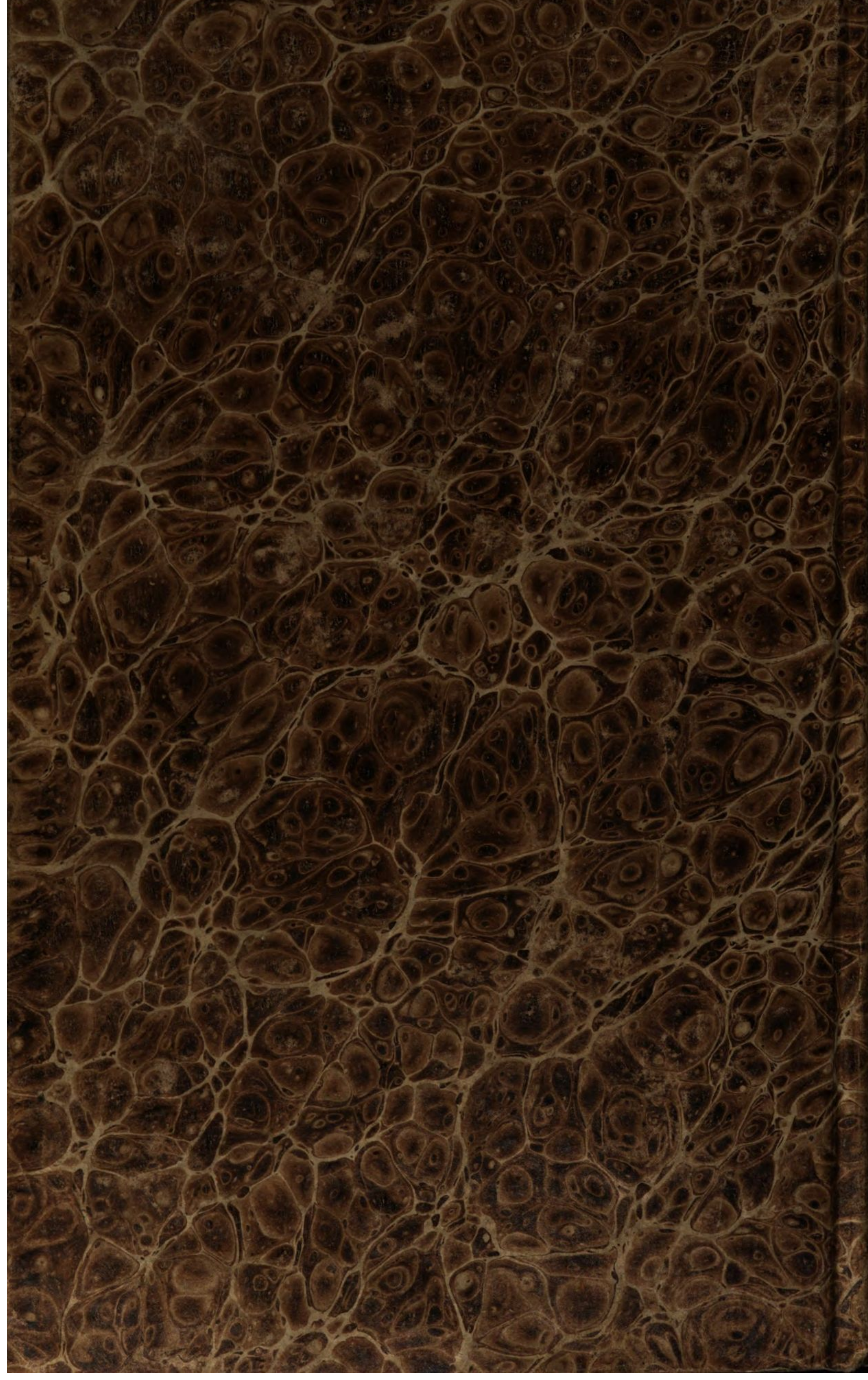
Some better bard shall sing in feudal state
How Bracquemont's Castle oped its Gothic gate,
When on the wand'ring Scot, its lovely heir
Bestow'd her beauty and an earldom fair.*

* E come a ritornare in sua contrada
Trovasse e buon naviglio, e miglior tempo,
E dell' India a Medor desse lo scettro,
Forse altri canterà con miglior plettro.

Orlando Furioso, Canto XXX, Stanza 16.

END OF VOL. III.

Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek
München



Scott, Walter,

The prose works of Sir Walter Scott

Bd.: 3

Paris 1827

Bibl.Mont. 879-3

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10714016-5